

# THE MONITOR

## If you're Latino, should you go Greek?

September 25, 2008 - 1:33PM

[Zack Quaintance](#)

The college student moved from his hometown of Roma to Austin, leaving his strong family support system to chase his dreams.

Danny Garza went away to school at the University of Texas-Austin in the fall of 2004. He planned to study human ecology with an eye on going into pharmaceuticals.

He had grown up in the Rio Grande Valley, surrounded by cousins, neighbors and longtime friends. He'd graduated from Roma High School, in a class of about 350.



Danny Garza, senior member, Alexis Fernandez, Induction Officer, both from the First and Largest Latino Fraternity in the Country, [Lambda Theta Phi](#).

He moved to a campus with about 50,000 other students. It was a jarring move. But Garza found a family away from home. He found a Latino fraternity, and the support was invaluable. Now as he prepares to graduate, he would recommend the experience to anyone like him. But he would also recommend using caution.

Every fall, thousands of students from across the country leave their homes for dorm life, for lecture hall classes, for a new life in a new place. And every fall, Greek organizations, fraternities and sororities work to recruit new members into their ranks.

Like these thousands of young Americans, students from the Valley face the same choice, students at schools such as UT, Baylor and other campuses across the Lone Star State.

But these students also face the prospect of leaving a predominantly Hispanic area. They become the minority on their campuses. But they band together in Latino fraternities and sororities, just as Garza did as a freshman.

He remembers thinking he would never join such an organization. Sure, it was rough being away from home, but Garza said he could handle it. He worked hard at school, and he made friends.

"Coming into college, the decision whether or not to join a fraternity hadn't crossed my mind," he said in a telephone interview from Austin. "It wasn't something I was considering, but I'm definitely a family-oriented person."

Then one day he headed to class. He was walking through a large hall, and a brother from the Lambda Theta Phi Latino fraternity approached him. Garza said the guy treated him respectfully, politely and courteously. So he listened, and he left the brother his phone number, thinking he would never call.

The fraternity called. They piqued Garza's interest. Four years later Garza has a collection of experiences only gained through the fraternity. He even served as chapter president for a time.

But how did he go from no interest to president?

After the initial recruitment, Garza researched the group. He read online about the codes they followed, the community service they did and the activities they involved themselves in. He met the brothers in the chapter, and they clicked right away. He found a good fit.

As a fraternity brother, Garza has worked with needy children at Christmas, cleaned highways in Austin and hosted campus events. Oh yeah, and he's had some fun too.

"I'm not going to sit here and tell you we're all saints, and we do community service every week end," he said. "We do party, we go out to clubs and we do mixers with sororities. It's a lot of fun."

But he didn't rush into it, and that's what he stresses to new freshmen: They should not join a fraternity or sorority until they adjust to campus life. Take a semester to perfect study habits, to learn the city and to acclimate. Then go hunt for a Latino fraternity. Why not?

It's a family away from family.

Original Article: [http://www.themonitor.com/entertainment/garza\\_17788\\_article.html/fraternity\\_latino.html](http://www.themonitor.com/entertainment/garza_17788_article.html/fraternity_latino.html)

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*Founded in 1975 at Kean University in Union, New Jersey, Lambda Theta Phi Latin Fraternity, Inc. is the first and largest nationally recognized Greek-letter organization founded as a Latin Fraternity. The membership of Lambda Theta Phi is open to all college men who support its values of scholarship, respect for all culture, community service, and the advancement and fair treatment of Latinos. Lambda Theta Phi was the first Latin Fraternity to be recognized by the North-American Inter-Fraternity Conference (NIC), is a member of NALFO, and has over 90 Chapters and Colonies in: Arizona, California, Connecticut, Delaware, Georgia, Idaho, Iowa, Florida, Illinois, Maryland, Michigan, Missouri, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, West Virginia, and Wisconsin.*

*For more information about Lambda Theta Phi, please visit: <http://www.Lambda1975.org>.*