

**Beta Gamma-Utah**

**Fast Facts:**

* Installation date: May 7, 1932
* Location: Salt Lake City, UT
* Region: 7

**History:**

A Board of Regents was organized by Brigham Young to establish a university in the Salt Lake Valley. The university was established on February 28, 1850, as the University of Deseret by the General Assembly of the provisional State of Deseret, and Orson Spencer was appointed as the first chancellor of the university. Early classes were held in private homes or wherever space could be found. The university closed in 1853 due to lack of funds and lack of feeder schools. Following years of intermittent classes in the Salt Lake City Council House, the university began to be re-established in 1867 under the direction of David O. Calder, who was followed by John R. Park in 1869. The university moved out of the council house into the Union Academy building in 1876 and into Union Square in 1884. In 1892, the school's name was changed to the University of Utah, and John R. Park began arranging to obtain land belonging to the U.S. Army's Fort Douglas on the east bench of the Salt Lake Valley, where the university moved permanently in 1900. Additional Fort Douglas land has been granted to the university over the years, and the fort was officially closed on October 26, 1991. Upon his death in 1900, Dr. John R. Park bequeathed his entire fortune to the university.

The local Gamma Sigma Sorority was founded December 27, 1920, at the University of Utah with the hope of someday obtaining a charter from Delta Gamma. During its 11 years of existence, Gamma Sigma was approached by other national sororities offering charters, but the girls steadfastly maintained their original objective – Delta Gamma. Gamma Sigma always ranked high in scholarship and school activities. They were the only Greek letter organization to achieve a straight B average and held more class and student body offices than any other group. Delta Gamma alumnae living in Salt Lake City sponsored Gamma Sigma from the start. They organized Salt Lake City-Ogden alumnae association for the prime purpose of sponsoring the Gamma Sigma group.

Delta Gamma received applications from 28 campuses during 1930-32, but only granted two charters, to Beta Gamma and Beta Delta-Colorado College. Installation weekend was May 6-8, 1932. Delegates from all the chapters in Province VII, with the exception of Upsilon-Stanford, traveled to Salt Lake City to be present at the installation. Seventy-eight girls were initiated on May 7 as members of Beta Gamma chapter. The initiation banquet was held at the country club with the theme "Trail Blazing."

Gamma Sigma had purchased a sorority house at South Temple and Virginia Streets which the chapter only occupied for four years. In May 1936 Beta Gamma had a cornerstone laying ceremony for a new chapter house located at 1373 East 100 South. In the cornerstone was placed documents of the sorority, including local and national histories, the chapter yearbook for 1936 and the Tuesday issue of the Salt Lake City Tribune. The house was constructed in the Old English architectural style. In 1967 the chapter house was expanded and remodeled, doubling the size of the house.

During the 1960s, the chapter had various traditions for Initiation week of its new members. All pledges slept over at the house during the week; on Monday they received a leather band that they wore until Thursday; Tuesday morning the active members sang to the pledges at 6 a.m.; Wednesday evening their big sister read a letter from their parents and from herself, while slides were shown of the pledge; Thursday they took their bands off and tied them together symbolizing unity; and Initiation was on Friday.

Traditions, activities, exchanges and college life are all historically part of Delta Gamma. The dedication of the chapter members who continually strive for excellence and high achievement have made Beta Gamma a respected fraternity/sorority chapter on the University of Utah campus.

The chapter prides itself on their presence and involvement on campus. Members can be found in a variety of student groups and leadership positions across campus including: ASUU, UPC, Student Alumni Board, The MUSS Board, Business Scholars, and the Bennion Center just to name a few. In 2016, they were voted the Most Involved Sorority on campus and one of the sisters was named Greek Woman of the Year. In 2016 they also won the Best Philanthropy award – of which the community voted, and the Commitment to Excellence in Philanthropy and Service Award. In 1992 when a report was compiled about the chapter, it had ranked in either first or second in scholarship for 13 years. Beta Gamma consistently has a GPA higher than the all-women’s GPA for the University of Utah and had the highest sorority GPA on campus in 2016.