

## Transcript of Interview with Sofia Almanzan by Natalia Zuniga

**Interviewee:** Sofia Almanzan

**Interviewer:** Natalia Zuniga

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**Location (Interviewee):** San Antonio, TX

**Location (Interviewer):** San Antonio, TX

**Transcriber:** Clinton Roberts

**Abstract:** Sofia Almanzan is a freshman, political science major from El Paso and went through recruitment this semester to become an initiated member of Alpha Sigma Tau. In this oral history, she describes her experience in Greek life during COVID and how it affected her personally, having come from a border city.

**Natalia Zuniga 0:00**

Okay, so if you can say your name, your classification and your major, please.

**Sofia Almanzan 0:04**

Okay, so my name is Sophia Almanzan. I'm a sophomore and I'm a political science major.

**Natalia Zuniga 0:11**

Awesome. And I'm interviewing based off of my Greek life over Alpha Sigma Tau COVID-19 exhibit for the public history course. And it's kind of just getting your perspective on how it's been joining Greek life and how it's helped you be more a part of campus through COVID times.

**Sofia Almanzan 0:33**

Yeah, so definitely. Um, so I transferred here, like I told you about earlier. And so I didn't really know anybody before I went Greek. And so I really wanted to, like make friends and have like a good group of people to talk to and hang out with. And, for me, it was a lot to do with because I'm from El Paso. And so I have- I have a really, really strong connection with my family and my friends from high school and like, things like that. I went to an all girls school, too. And so I had always had like, the strong connection with other girls and having like, a good foundation of friends and family and people who will be there for you, no matter like what's going on, or like things like that, especially since COVID is like such a big deal right now. And like even in an El Paso, it's like so high right now that like, when I do go home, I'm going to have to like pretty much quarantine. I won't be able to go out as- as I've- as like people have been able to in the past couple months, even though it's unsafe right now. But the good thing about rushing during- or going Greek this semester and doing all of that is that we've had everything online and everything virtual. And so when I do go home, I will still be able to like FaceTime with my sisters and still be able to talk and hang out and do everything as I normally would have even if I was like on campus because a lot of the sisters, especially in my pledge class, weren't on campus. And so we did a lot of things where we'd FaceTime and text and a lot of things virtually because of COVID, and all of that uncertainty about that. And so yeah, rushing through- during COVID, it was a lot more low key and a lot more personal in the way that we got to do things because it was very untraditional to how they usually did it. And so I think that was a really cool thing

about doing Greek life during COVID and how we get to experience just a different way of doing things.

**Natalia Zuniga** 3:12

So I know at one point, you ended up going home for like a weekend or so to El Paso-

**Sofia Almanzan** 3:16

Yeah.

**Natalia Zuniga** 3:16

-and you spent some time there. Do you think because of COVID, it kind of made it easier for you to be home with your family, but still be a part of like chapters and sisterhoods and such while you were home?

**Sofia Almanzan** 3:28

Yeah, like definitely. Because of COVID, we've all learned how to go virtual and do our classes and things like that. So yeah, I had to go home for a weekend and we still had sisterhood and chapter and we had our new member meetings. And I was still able to do all of that even though I was home and not on campus. And I really like that, especially because it kind of has been able to promote the safety of a lot of sisters who may not be able to go to campus or go to things in person because they are high risk or their family members are high risk. And so they don't want to be exposed to people, but they don't miss out on the experiences that everybody else is getting, even though they are quarantining themselves, essentially.

**Natalia Zuniga** 4:33

Yeah, of course. And then- So do you think that choosing specifically Alpha Sigma Tau had anything to do with like your experience in high school or how you were- where you're from or anything kind of helped you, especially with the amount of like philanthropy they do and everything else had anything to do with your choice to accept your bid from them specifically?

**Sofia Almanzan** 4:51

Yeah. I think that, for me, it really was a connection thing. Like I said earlier, I have a huge connection to my family cause a lot of my family is really, really Mexican. And we're always together, which has been hard during COVID. But I think a lot of that was one of the reasons why I picked Alpha Sigma Tau was because I had like, a really, really strong connection to the girls, the first meeting that we had for when we were rushing-

**Natalia Zuniga** 5:24

The open house.

**Sofia Almanzan** 5:24

Yeah. Yeah, the open house. And the cool thing about that is the my- when we did the open house, my now, who's my big, was the person that I did the open house with. And so her and her twin, we talked and hung out. And I just was like, it was super easy to talk to them and just connect with them, even though we were on Zoom. And so I just felt that connection, really

strongly. And so that definitely was a big factor for me, in the sense of, I knew that this like doing- going Alpha Sigma Tau would be a good place that I could make connections and people that would be supportive of me and like what I like, want to do in my life, or just in general to like, be there. Even like if we're not a person, like when we go home and just things like that of like my-

**Natalia Zuniga** 6:20

Yeah.

**Sofia Almanzan** 6:21

Yeah.

**Natalia Zuniga** 6:22

Yeah. And then in terms of like, with it, how do you think it's going to help with like you said, in the future with your career, like, what do you specifically want to do you think being in the sorority will kind of help propel that or just facilitate it easier?

**Sofia Almanzan** 6:36

Yeah, I think it's a really, really good way to make connections even after you leave the sorority. Or even if you're out in the real world, as like people say. I think it was kind of cool because the other day I was walking around the mall or something and I was wearing an AST shirt. And this girl stopped me and was like, "Oh, you're an AST." And I was just like, "Yeah." And she was like, "Oh, cool, like, I'm the chapter president at OLLU"(Our Lady of the Lake University), or not OLLU, at Incarnate Word. And it's just that easy, especially like when you are graduating or when you are looking for job opportunities or things like that, it's a very good way to meet other women who are- have that connection with you and who can know that you did participate in philanthropies and you are one of those, like women that is able to connect and work with other women, especially because that's a big part of being in a sorority. So yeah, I think definitely that the connections will be a really good thing.

**Natalia Zuniga** 7:42

Yeah. And then I am aware like that we have sisters from all over the states, and we have a couple international sisters, like we found out during that sisterhood that we had that we have one in Japan and other places that sisters that have Russia. It can definitely help whether or not you want to start your career here in San Antonio, in Texas, or where else- wherever else. Is there anything else you want to add about your experience, going Greek specifically for Alpha Sigma Tau, and how it's helped you or anything specific?

**Sofia Almanzan** 8:14

Um, no, I just think that if you're considering going Greek, and you might not want to do it because of COVID, I think that you should because it may be different from the way going Greek has been in the past, but it's definitely a different- a more- a special way to do it. And I think it's definitely a great opportunity.

**Natalia Zuniga** 8:41

Thank you so much.