Best of Issue

CELEBRATING 10 YEARS OF

ORACLE

THE RESEARCH JOURNAL OF THE ASSOCIATION OF FRATERNITY | SORORITY ADVISORS
THE EFFECTS OF FRATERNITY/SORORITY MEMBERSHIP ON COLLEGE EXPERIENCES AND OUTCOMES: A PORTRAIT OF COMPLEXITY

ASHLEY M. ASELM, TRICIA A. SEIFERT, AND ERNEST T. PASCARELLA

From Volume 4, Issue 2, September 2009. This study estimated the effects of fraternity/sorority membership on a wide range of college experiences and outcomes for first-year and senior college students at a large, public, Midwestern university. The findings suggest a complex portrait of the relationships between affiliation, engagement, and learning outcomes. Fraternity/sorority membership appeared to facilitate social involvement during college but may have limited the diversity of relationships. It was associated with higher levels of community service, but also increased the odds of excessive alcohol use. In the presence of controls for important, confounding influences, being a fraternity/sorority member had little consistent influence on grades or perceived impact of college. There was little support for gender differences in the impact of affiliation. Finally, implications for student affairs professionals in their work with undergraduate fraternity/sorority leaders and members were considered.

A VALUES-BASED LEARNING MODEL TO IMPACT MATURATIONAL CHANGE: THE COLLEGE FRATERNITY AS DEVELOPMENT CRUCIBLE

TIMOTHY RETTER, ELGAN BAKER, MICHAEL HERNANDEZ, AND DANIEL BUREAU

From Volume 7, Issue 2, Fall 2012. The period of late adolescence and early adulthood is a critical time during which individual identity is developed. One fraternity recently implemented a developmental process that facilitated identity maturation within its members by emphasizing self-awareness and reflection. Utilizing a learning model as the core component of all aspects of its programming, the fraternity conducted research to determine the impact of its learning model on the development of self-awareness. This article provides data from three years of implementation that documents significant increases in this critical developmental competency.
AN EXPLORATORY STUDY OF GAY, LESBIAN AND BISEXUAL FRATERNITY AND SORORITY MEMBERS REVISITED

DOUGLAS N. CASE, GRAHAEME A. HESP, AND CHARLES G. EBERLY

From Volume 1, Issue 1, August 2005. The lead author questioned over 500 self-identified gay, lesbian, and bisexual (GLB) fraternity and sorority members to assess their reasons for joining; how their membership affected their sexual identity development and intimate relationships; the degree of homophobia and heterosexism encountered; how sexual orientation affected the quality of their fraternal experiences; and the level of acceptance or rejection they faced. Many respondents were in the early phases of sexual identity development at the time they joined, and most chose to conceal their sexual orientation from their fellow members. This study details the reactions from fellow members, assesses satisfaction with the fraternity or sorority experience, and reports the level of involvement of GLB students in their fraternities or sororities.

DIFFERENCES IN SELF-AWARENESS RELATED MEASURES AMONG CULTURALLY BASED FRATERNITY, SOCIAL FRATERNITY, AND NON-AFFILIATED COLLEGE MEN

TRICIA R. SHALKA AND SUSAN R. JONES

From Volume 1, Issue 5, June 2010. This study examined differences among men affiliated with culturally based fraternities, men affiliated with social fraternities, and non-affiliated men on measures of consciousness of self and congruence. Data were collected in the spring of 2006 from 1,698 undergraduates, representing 46 different higher education institutions, as part of the Multi-Institutional Study of Leadership (MSL). Analysis of data was conducted using MANCOVA to compare independent variable group differences across the two dependent variables, while taking quasi pre-test measures for both items into account as covariates. Significant differences among culturally based fraternity men, social fraternity men, and non-affiliated men were found on the combination of dependent variables. Further analyses revealed culturally based fraternity men scored lower than social fraternity men and non-affiliated men on both consciousness of self and congruence.

TOWARDS A TYPOLOGY OF FRATERNITY/SORORITY PROGRAMS: A CONTENT ANALYSIS

PIETRO A. SASSO

From Volume 7, Issue 1, June Spring 2012. Fraternity/sorority standards have been represented as the answer to the Call for Values Congruence authored by the Franklin Squared Group (2003). The outcome of this document was a proliferation of various styles and models of standards programs utilized to establish community practices with the overarching goal of facilitating values-based fraternity and sorority campus communities. However, fraternity/sorority standards programs answering this call have established higher standards through different methods. This study solicited standards programs from institutions from across the United States. Data from 31 standards programs were collected, cataloged, and analyzed through qualitative inquiry with the use of a rubric developed to establish a typology. Five categories resulted from analysis: evaluation, minimum standards, accreditation, awards, and comprehensive. Implications of the study are included along with future directions for research.
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GENERAL INFORMATION

Oracle: The Research Journal of the Association of Fraternity/Sorority Advisors advances the study of college fraternities and sororities through a peer reviewed academic journal promoting scholarly discourse among partners invested in the college fraternal movement. The vision of Oracle: The Research Journal of the Association of Fraternity/Sorority Advisors is to serve as the premier forum for academic discourse and scholarly inquiry regarding the college fraternity and sorority movement.


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SUBMISSIONS:
Oracle: The Research Journal of the Association of Fraternity/Sorority Advisors accepts submissions focused on articulating research involving fraternity and sorority members at the collegiate, alumni, inter/national organization, and volunteer advisory levels. Manuscripts should be written for the student affairs generalist who has broad responsibility for educational leadership, policy, staff development, and management. Articles on specialized topics should provide the generalist with an understanding of the importance of the program to student affairs overall and fraternity/sorority advising specifically.

Research articles for Oracle: The Research Journal of the Association of Fraternity/Sorority Advisors should stress the underlying issues or problems that stimulated the research; treat the methodology concisely; and, most importantly, offer a full discussion of results, implications, and conclusions. In the belief that AFA readers have much to learn from one another, we also encourage the submission of thoughtful, documented essays or historical perspectives.

HAPPY 10 YEAR ANNIVERSARY

GEORGIANNA L. MARTIN, PH.D., UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN MISSISSIPPI

Happy 10 Year Anniversary Oracle! I am thrilled to be serving as Editor for Oracle: The Research Journal for the Association of Fraternity/Sorority Advisors at such a pivotal a time in our publication’s history. It is hard to believe just 10 short years ago, Oracle came to be from the energy, creative and collaborative thinking, and hard work of many folks - some of who are included in this celebratory issue. This milestone in our journal’s history presents a valuable opportunity for us to reflect on where we’ve come as a journal, where the state of research on fraternity/sorority life has come, and where we are as a field. It also presents the opportunity to look toward where we are headed using research to guide our practice and thought.

This 10th Anniversary Special Issue includes five articles that have previously appeared in Oracle and that have been honored with the Oracle Article of the Year Award. These five articles were selected with input from past Editors and Associate Editors of the journal and members of the current Editorial Board. Each represents an important contribution to the research on fraternities and sororities. Introducing these five articles is an invited contribution reflecting on the process of developing Oracle, and where we’ve come co-authored by Dr. Dan Bureau, Oracle’s first Associate Editor and Dr. Grahaeme Hesp, the first Editor of Oracle. Bureau and Hesp’s retrospective offers insight and a great opportunity for critical reflective practice. Let’s celebrate this important 10 year milestone as we look forward to what the next 10 years brings for Oracle, fraternity/sorority research, and fraternity/sorority advising.
INVITED EDITORIAL

FIVE LESSONS LEARNED FROM TEN YEARS OF
ORACLE: THE RESEARCH JOURNAL OF THE ASSOCIATION OF FRATERNITY/SORORITY ADVISORS

Dan Bureau, Ph.D. and Grahaeme Hesp, Ph.D.

In 2005, the Association set out to develop a journal to both promote and publish research about the experiences of fraternity/sorority members and those who work with these organizations. As written, all those involved in these discussions believed that the mission of Oracle: The Research Journal of the [then] Association of Fraternity Advisors would “advance the study of college fraternities and sororities through a peer-reviewed academic journal promoting scholarly discourse among partners invested in the college fraternal movement” (Association of Fraternity Advisors, 2005, p. iii). Ten years later, we are pleased to confirm that this publication fulfilled its intended purpose.

From email files, it appears that the name was finalized, ironically on Friday, May 13th. When asked to write an editorial for this issue to commemorate this occasion, we examined just how far the journal had come and where it is that we still can go. As the first Editor (Grahaeme) and Associate Editor (Dan) of Oracle: The Research Journal of the Association of Fraternity/Sorority Advisors, we have used this short editorial to outline five lessons we have learned as a result of launching the journal and watching its success (and failures) over the decade. Through these observations we not only reflect on the past but examine future opportunities.

Success must be attributed to many.

To be very clear, Grahaeme and Dan did not just sit in a room and develop a strategy to make this happen. In fact, as far as we can tell, the earliest indicators of the Association’s desire to produce a peer reviewed journal comes from the 2000 strategic plan, crafted under the leadership of Charlie Warner, then President. Additionally, it appears that Rosalind Alderman, former board member, reviewed how the Association could produce a journal. Limited Association resources and industry expectations about what would have been at the time a print journal (in addition to Perspectives) severely limited progress.

However, desires for a journal did not go away and the field of higher education and AFA’s propensity for risk taking was changing with the new millennium. Dan expressed in his 2004 AFA Presidential inauguration speech that the need for fraternity/sorority research-based practice was strengthening. Grahaeme was doing full-time doctoral work at Florida State University and working on the Journal of College and Character, an emerging online-only journal (now published by NASPA: College Student Educators International) connected to Jon Dalton’s Institute on College Student Values. With the Association’s peers moving to models of non-printed, online only (and open-access) journals the AFA leadership determined that it was be the right time to move ahead with plans for our own journal.

Dan gathered a group of experts representing peer associations and higher education faculty at the 2004 Annual Meeting. From that time on, phone calls were made and people signed on to the effort.

And it was not just AFA members: Outreach was made to higher education scholars, including
Susan Komives, Penny Rue, Larry Roper, Nancy Evans, and many others. Shockingly they said yes when asked to serve as part of the Advisory and/or the Peer Review Boards. Many others signed on to serve as editors and recruit articles. Central Office staff, at that time 2.5 individuals, worked with Grahaeme and Dan to develop protocol, guidelines, and layout. It took hours upon hours to bring even the first issue to life.

And the support never stopped. Oracle has had eight editors and associate editors and close to 50 different people served on the advisory, editorial and peer review boards. In addition, numerous central office staff, Association Board leaders, and other invested partners have made Oracle: The Research Journal of the Association of Fraternity/Sorority Advisors what it is today.

**Labors of love can be messy.**

Launching a journal is hard work. Keeping it going is even harder. For the better part of a year, we had to develop style guidelines (even documenting the exact font to be used), review layouts (central office staff proposed more than one that Grahaeme and I debated over), and manage personalities (smart people can have big egos with lots of ownership over even small roles). Reviewing emails for this editorial, there were a number of times that the two of us, friends and colleagues now for 17 years, argued over what might be thought of as small issues or approaches to work. These challenges – to launch the journal but more so to encourage and promote interfraternal research – stand out as messy but they also remain some of our most rewarding professional hurdles to date.

Finding suitable research stands out as one of the messiest of our tasks. One of the reasons for not launching an AFA journal back in 2000 was that it was industry standard to have about two years worth of articles in the pipeline. Two years? Launching Oracle, we had enough articles for one issue and then struggled to recruit articles one at a time. Survival of Oracle was often in question. We found theses/dissertations online and begged people to write. We went to sessions at conferences and basically promised anyone from young master’s students to well-known scholars mentoring and support in authoring articles. Our rejection rate was low; we took what we could. We even reprinted articles (Dan always thought we should reprint one article from another journal in each issue to achieve a secondary goal of the journal: to promote existing research) to make sure we got five articles in every issue. Sometimes we got four, but to date there have been 73 articles (not including editorials) printed in 16 issues during these ten years with authors ranging across all aspects of higher education and the fraternal movement. These articles may not have ever been published had it not been for this specific forum for fraternity/sorority research. Some are better than others, but each brings forth new information about how those involved experience the complexities of fraternity and sorority life.

**Sometimes taking the leap is just necessary.**

The publication conditions around us at the time allowed AFA’s leadership to consider launching a journal, but we still had to reconcile one other question: are we best positioned to take this on? To us it seemed The Center for the Study of the College Fraternity was the appropriate forum for such a journal. However, the Center had been relatively dormant for a few years at that point. While it had gained some momentum around the start of the 2000s, it really had not been producing monographs or other publications. It was minimally staffed and its volunteers, Dan one of them, were not able to pull enough resources or person power together to start the journal. AFA took action because the Center could not “own” the journal. To be clear, CSCF board members, most notably Dick McKaig and Chuck Eberly were highly involved in the launch of the journal and each continue to contribute in ways to this day.
Taking the ‘Oracle leap’ also meant that we may fall on our face, particularly since we had not “stockpiled” articles for future issues. We knew that the risk we were taking was that we might have an issue and then need to take some time off to get enough articles for the next one. This indeed happened as we did not produce an issue in 2007. It was not only that we did not get submissions, but also the process of helping emerging authors turn their articles into publishable work was time-consuming. We focused on working with authors very closely to ensure that if the promise was there for an article that it would somehow see the light of day printed in the journal’s pages. Oracle: The Research Journal of the Association of Fraternity/Sorority Advisors has always had this developmental approach and it persists to this day. When some other journals may flat out reject articles, we look for promise. We still have a respectable rejection rate (because that’s important when ensuring scholarly journal publication!), but our approach stands out for the last ten years: we exist to provide the forum for the publication of research into the fraternity/sorority experience. We need to get research out there that provides evidence about experiences in these organizations.

More importantly, we were surprised just how willing other people were to take the leap with us. We mentioned some of the people who were willing to work on our advisory and peer review boards. That list is way too long to print here, but the first issue had 39 experienced higher education professionals listed as contributors in some way. Many were past leaders in other associations such as ACPA and NASPA. Some were working on completing their doctorates. Some submitted articles that may have been better off printed in a more established journal just because they valued the mission of Oracle: The Research Journal of the Association of Fraternity/Sorority Advisors. We are so grateful for those leaps of faith and the people who contribute today. Look at the number of us on the Editorial Board TODAY who started in “the field” of Fraternity/Sorority Advising and now have terminal degrees. We feel like involvement in this journal was a playground for many of us to try things, to prototype approaches, to learn how to conduct good and less-good research.

**Persistence pays off.**

We have established that it was not always easy to pull together issues. We also can see from a basic review that we have had some articles that never would have been seen the light of day in another higher education/student affairs journal. However, examine the research in this issue that highlights five excellent award winning articles. There is good stuff here. We have more evidence of how these students experience the best and worst of these organizations; for example, Asel, Seifert, and Pascarella explored these complexities in their 2009 award winning article.

We have also been able to pull together an entire issue on leadership development, one of two areas identified early in our work as potential focus issues (the other being an issue focused on BGLOs and culturally-based chapters). The current Editorial Board examined some of the best work in our 10 years to select the articles in this anniversary issue. There could have been others as well!

An early goal was open-access to the journal. Grahaeme was particularly passionate about this and fought the good fight to make sure that while the Association staff and leaders were concerned about giving away resources (and possibly undermining potential members who might pay in order to view issues), our leadership was clear on the value of making sure ANYONE can access the research produced by our association. By the third issue, Oracle: The Research Journal of the Association of Fraternity/Sorority Advisors was indeed open-access! While the current issue remains only for members, previous issues were then opened for anyone to access via the AFA Website.

However, another early strategy was to have the journal indexed through ERIC or even the emerg-
ing search engine Google. By indexing the journal, we could make it easier to access for practitioners and students to use these articles. While Oracle: The Research Journal of the Association of Fraternity/Sorority Advisors was indeed open-access, it was not until the leadership of Patrick Biddix as Editor (circa 2010) that the journal became indexed. Now the journal is much more easily found and many of the articles can come up quicker in general searches for “fraternity/sorority research”.

Research on fraternity and sorority life is just complicated.

When recruited to serve as a peer reviewer, Larry Moneta, Vice President for Student Affairs at Duke University, basically told Dan “I will not serve if all you want to do is print articles that promote the good parts of these organizations”. Larry’s intent was that Oracle: The Research Journal of the Association of Fraternity/Sorority Advisors should not glorify only the contributions of these organizations. We know from 10 years of this journal’s articles as well as research from numerous other journals that the fraternity and sorority experience is complicated and to quote one of our reprints in this article “complex”. We never rejected an article due to negative findings. In fact, many of our articles have a finding that fraternity/sorority advocates might find challenging; many acknowledge the nuances of fraternity/sorority research and membership. Oracle has not existed to tout the experience but rather to provide scholarly discourse that is also critical, reflective, and useful.

Next steps.

And complicated describes a little bit of our future. What is next for this journal: more of the same? Yes with some caveats. As AFA has strengthened its relationship with the Center for the Study of the College Fraternity and added Central Office staff to ensure research (and assessment) of the fraternity/sorority experience is an Association priority, we can do more to recruit high quality articles. We can do more to work with researchers of varying experience and expertise in writing to ensure articles see publication. We can do more to make sure search engines allow everyone to easily find these articles. We can make sure we continue to publish a journal with integrity bringing forth new studies on key issues not only in the fraternity/sorority experience, but also how these students experience the broader higher education context. All Association members can better use Oracle to guide their practice and to develop ideas for future research (and not just students but as practitioners infuse research and assessment more and more into their work), after all if this is just printed for prosperity how will we improve our work in advising these organizations?

Conclusion.

In closing, not only had we developed a mission but we also had an end state in mind. We developed a vision for the future of the journal grounded in positioning the Association firmly in higher education and contributing to the body of information about the experiences of fraternity and sorority members. Ten years on the vision continues to read:

Oracle: The Research Journal of the Association of Fraternity Advisors serves as the premier forum for academic discourse and scholarly inquiry regarding the college fraternity and sorority movement. (Association of Fraternity/Sorority Advisors, 2015, p. vi),

The vision may be easy for us to reach: no one else necessarily wants to “own” the research of this functional area. It is not like the Journal for College Student Development is going to stake the claim on advancing fraternity/sorority research when there’s an endless list of possible research topics on the
college experience. However, inherent in this vision was a sense that we wanted to become stabile and relevant. We wanted to be contributory. We wanted to be valued as a publication. We wanted to be respected as a profession. With these end states in mind, we believe we may have not only fulfilled our mission, but have begun to realize our vision. We are thankful to all who have previously led in this effort, those who currently help this journal come to life, and all who will be engaged in the future of Oracle: The Research Journal of the Association of Fraternity/Sorority Advisors.

References


THE EFFECTS OF FRATERNITY/SORORITY MEMBERSHIP ON COLLEGE EXPERIENCES AND OUTCOMES: A PORTRAIT OF COMPLEXITY

ASHLEY M. ASEI, TRICIA A. SEIFERT, AND ERNEST T. PASCARELLA

This study estimated the effects of fraternity/sorority membership on a wide range of college experiences and outcomes for first-year and senior college students at a large, public, Midwestern university. The findings suggest a complex portrait of the relationships between affiliation, engagement, and learning outcomes. Fraternity/sorority membership appeared to facilitate social involvement during college but may have limited the diversity of relationships. It was associated with higher levels of community service, but also increased the odds of excessive alcohol use. In the presence of controls for important, confounding influences, being a fraternity/sorority member had little consistent influence on grades or perceived impact of college. There was little support for gender differences in the impact of affiliation. Finally, implications for student affairs professionals in their work with undergraduate fraternity/sorority leaders and members were considered.

Most institutions of higher education hold student learning and success as parts of their primary missions (Kuh, Kinzie, Schuh, Whitt, & Associates, 2005; Kuh, Schuh, Whitt, & Associates, 1991). Faculty members, staff members, and administrators have attempted to distinguish between the in-class and out-of-class experiences that foster – as well as inhibit – student learning and success (American Association of Colleges & Universities [AAC&U], 2002). Developing a thorough understanding of the relationship between fraternity/sorority membership, student engagement, and student learning has important implications for student affairs practice and institutional policy. The apparent lack of congruence between espoused values and fraternity/sorority members’ behavior, however, has led to debates on many campuses regarding the educational merits of the fraternity/sorority community (Franklin Square Group, 2003). The present study adds to the body of research by examining the complex relationship between fraternity/sorority affiliation and a wide array of college experiences and learning outcomes in students’ first and senior years of college.

Literature Review

A body of research has examined the relationship between fraternity/sorority membership, engagement in educationally-purposeful activities, and student learning and development. Some researchers suggest fraternity/sorority affiliation is associated positively with increased levels of volunteerism and civic responsibility, and increased willingness to donate to charitable and/or religious causes, as well as involvement in student organizations, general education gains (Hayek, Carini, O’Day, & Kuh, 2002; Whipple & Sullivan, 1998), and persistence through the senior year (Nelson, Halperin, Wasserman, Smith, & Graham, 2006). Fraternity/sorority members may also experience greater gains in interpersonal skills than unaffiliated students (Hunt & Rentz, 1994; Pike, 2000). Several other researchers also have reported that fraternity/sorority members tend to be more involved during college (Astin, 1977, 1993; Baier & Whipple, 1990; Pike & Askew, 1990).

Conversely some researchers suggest fraternity/sorority affiliation inhibits student learning and contributes to negative health behaviors. Among the findings, fraternity/sorority members have reported being less open to interacting with diverse peers or being challenged by diverse perspectives than their non-affiliated peers (Antonio, 2001; Milem, 1994; Pascarella, Edison, Nora, Hagedorn, & Terenzini, 1996; Wood & Chesser, 1994). Researchers have also linked affiliation with higher rates of alcohol abuse (Wechsler, 1996; Wechsler, Davenport, Dowdall, Grossman, & Zanakos, 1997; Wechsler,
Dowdall, Maenner, Gledhill-Hoyt, & Lee, 1998; Wechsler, Kuh, & Davenport, 1996), and engaging in higher levels of drinking and unsafe sexual practices (Eberhardt, Rice, & Smith, 2003; Tampke, 1990; Wechsler, Kuh, & Davenport, 1996). Finally, fraternity/sorority members are more likely to admit to academic dishonesty during college than their unaffiliated peers (McCabe & Bowers, 1996; Storch, 2002).

In a major longitudinal study, the report of preliminary results included a negative impact of fraternity membership on men’s critical thinking skills after the first year of college (Pascarella et al., 1996), but the first-year deficit in critical thinking skills did not persist through the rest of the mens’ college experience (Pascarella, Flowers, and Whitt, 1999). There was no evidence to support the assertion that being a member of a sorority had a significant effect on critical thinking skills.

The impact of fraternity/sorority membership on undergraduate student experiences and outcomes has yielded mixed results. The “significant under-representation of research on fraternities/sororities relative to their prevalence in the campus community,” (Molasso, 2005, p. 5), and the fact that “psychosocial, cognitive and identity development issues are as important for this community as they are for the broader campus student body” (Molasso, p. 7), make apparent the need to further study the relationship between fraternity/sorority membership and a myriad of student engagement measures including learning outcomes.

What are some unique effects of fraternity/sorority membership on college first-year and senior students? According to Astin’s theory of involvement (1984), if affiliated students were more engaged in their educational experience they should report greater learning outcomes as a consequence of their greater involvement. Unlike previous research, the rigorous analytic method used in the present study took into account both students’ levels of precollege out-of-class engagement as well as their inclination to report an influential high school education. This analytic approach provided for a conservative estimate of the relationship between affiliation and a wide range of in- and out-of-class experiences as well as desirable outcomes of college for both first-year and senior students, thus painting a relatively comprehensive picture of the effects of fraternity/sorority membership on a large sample of students at a major state research university where fraternity/sorority life involves thousands of students each year.

Methods

Institution

The site for the present study was a large, Midwestern, public, research university of approximately 20,300 undergraduates. Fraternity/sorority life is one of many—but one of the larger—opportunities for student involvement. Roughly 10% of the undergraduate population at the time of the study were members of 13 organizations affiliated with the Interfraternity Council (IFC) and 14 organizations affiliated with the National Panhellenic Conference (NPC). There were also eight National Pan-Hellenic Council, Inc. (NPHC) organizations primarily serving minority students, but the participant group included no more than 25 students total from these eight organizations. While the present study did not distinguish between IFC, NPC, and NPHC organizations, the overwhelming majority of affiliated students were associated with IFC and NPC organizations. There is a more diverse landscape of fraternities/sororities than is discussed in this paper (Torgerson & Parks, 2009), but results of this study are generalizable only to historically white fraternities/sororities.

Sample

The sample for the study consisted of first-year and senior students who completed a 30-minute, web-based survey. Employing questions that have been empirically shown to have the greatest impact on undergraduate student learning and persistence (Pascarella et al., 2006), the survey asked an extensive series of questions
about students’ high school and college experiences. After two follow-up reminders, completed surveys were received from 3,153 students (1,477 first-year students and 1,676 seniors) for a 36.5% response rate.

Variables

The independent variable in all analyses was fraternity/sorority membership, coded 1 for affiliated and 0 for unaffiliated. Approximately 16.4% of first-year students (N = 242) and about 17.4% of senior students (N = 291) indicated that they were fraternity or sorority members. The effects of fraternity/sorority affiliation were examined on two types of dependent measures: college engagement and college outcomes.

The engagement variables measured both in- and out-of-class engagement. The dichotomous engagement measures asked whether or not students had worked on a research project with a faculty member; participated in a cultural or racial awareness workshop; or had participated in a debate or lecture on current social or political issues. A number of single-item, continuous variables asked students to indicate the typical number of hours per week they spent preparing for class, the hours they participated in cocurricular (extracurricular) activities; hours devoted to community service or volunteer activities; the number of books read, essay exams completed, term papers or written reports completed during the current academic year; and binge drinking frequency during a typical two-week semester period. Finally, students were asked to detail their interactions with faculty, student affairs professionals, and peers. The interaction scales measured the quality of personal relationships with peers (α = .85); frequency of contact with faculty (α = .80); quality of nonclassroom relationships with faculty (α = .86); frequency of contact with student affairs professionals (α = .87); and experiences and interactions with diverse others (α = .91). Detailed operational definitions and constituent items for the interaction scales are available by contacting the first author.

Four dependent learning outcomes were assessed. The first outcome was student academic performance, defined as semester grade point average, with data provided by the registrar. Student self-reports of the impact of their undergraduate experience on their development in 36 areas formed the basis for the remaining three outcome measures. A factor analysis indicated three underlying factors: development in general/liberal arts competencies (α = .92); development in career/professional preparation (α = .87); and personal/interpersonal development (α = .85). Constituent items and factor loadings for the scales are available by contacting the first author.

Since students self-selected to affiliate, analyses attempting to estimate the net effect of fraternity/sorority membership on college engagement and outcomes needed to take important confounding influences into account. As many of these potential confounding influences as possible were taken into account; control variables included retrospectively reported parallel measures for each of the dependent variables with high school as the reference point. Additional controls included sex, race, ACT composite score, high school grades, parental education, graduate degree plans, whether the institution was one’s first choice for college, amount of on- and off-campus employment, current place of residence during college, and intended or actual academic major. The possible effects of gender on affiliation and outcome variables were analyzed, as well as for those participants who did and did not binge drink in high school.

Data Analyses

Logistic regression analysis was used to estimate the net relationships between affiliation (vs. being unaffiliated) on all dichotomous college engagement variables and ordinary least squares (OLS) regression was used to estimate the same relationships between continuous college engagement and outcome measures.
Results

High school experiences, even when reported retrospectively, tended to have by far the strongest relationships with college engagement, binge drinking behavior, grades, and perceptions of the impact of participants’ undergraduate experience. Consequently, without controlling for precollege variables, any comparisons between affiliated students and their unaffiliated peers on any self-reports about college learning would likely be confounded in unknown ways (Pas- carella, 2001). Thus, results as reported are conservative estimates of the relationships between fraternity/sorority membership, college engagement, and learning outcomes.

General Relationships

The overall findings suggested affiliated students as a group did not have a discernibly different level of academic engagement than their unaffiliated peers (Table 1, Part A). Accounting for an extensive array of potentially confounding influences, no significant relationship existed between affiliation in both the first and senior years in college and working on a research project with a faculty member, time spent preparing for class, number of books read, number of essay exams completed, and number of term papers/written reports completed. Similarly, fraternity/sorority members in both the first and senior years in college had essentially the same likelihood as their unaffiliated peers of participating in a cultural/social awareness workshop or a debate/lecture on current political or social issues.

A dramatically different picture emerged when the estimated relationships between fraternity/sorority members and binge drinking frequency were considered. Taking into account high school alcohol use (plus other influences), affiliated first-year and senior students were significantly more likely to binge drink in college than their unaffiliated peers. Net of confounding influences, the odds of affiliated, first-year students binge drinking one or more times in a typical two-week period were 1.8 times greater than for their unaffiliated peers. For fraternity/sorority seniors, the odds of binge drinking one or more times in a typical two-week period increased to 2.4 times greater than those of unaffiliated seniors. There was also a tendency for affiliated students to be more likely to binge drink at higher levels than other students. The net odds of first-year fraternity/sorority members binge drinking between two and five times in a two-week period were about twice as high as the odds for their unaffiliated peers doing the same. Even more dramatically, the net odds of senior fraternity/sorority members binge drinking twice, three to five times, and six or more times in a two-week period were respectively 3.0, 2.6, and 3.5 times greater than the odds of unaffiliated seniors doing so.

Fraternity/sorority members as a group appeared to spend substantially more hours per week participating in co-curricular or extra-curricular activities (b=2.359, p<.01 for first-years; b=2.588, p<.01 for seniors) and in community service/volunteer activities (b=1.570, p<.01 for first years; b=1.109, p<.01 for seniors) than other students. One might assume increased levels of participation would be related to increased levels of interaction with peers, faculty, and staff. However, the relationship between affiliation and the quality and frequency of interactions with peers, faculty, and professional staff during college was unclear. Neither first-year nor senior, affiliated students reported the quality and impact of their nonclassroom relationships with faculty significantly differently than their unaffiliated peers. Yet, for seniors, affiliation was related positively to both the quality and impact of personal relationships with peers (b=.254, p<.01) and the frequency of contact with student affairs professionals (b=.235, p<.01). Affiliation during the first year of college was related to increased frequency of contact with faculty (b=.142, p<.01) but tended to significantly inhibit experiences and interactions with diverse others (b= -.151, p<.01).

In general, the relationships between affiliation and the learning outcomes analyzed for the
Table 1
Estimated Net Effects of Fraternal Affiliation on College Engagement and Outcomes
Part A: College Engagement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dependent Variable</th>
<th>First-Year Students</th>
<th>Senior Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b</td>
<td>Effect Size (Odds Ratio)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worked on a research project with a faculty member outside of classa</td>
<td>.069</td>
<td>-.197</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participated in a cultural/racial awareness workshopa</td>
<td>-.079</td>
<td>-.080</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participated in a debate or lecture on current political or social issuea</td>
<td>-.169</td>
<td>-.178</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time spent preparing for classa</td>
<td>-.345</td>
<td>-.238</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of books reada</td>
<td>-.515</td>
<td>-.083</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of essay exams completeda</td>
<td>-.260</td>
<td>-.525</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of term papers/written reports completedb</td>
<td>-.004</td>
<td>.325</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Binge drinking frequency: One or more times vs. Neverb</td>
<td>.588** (.1.800)</td>
<td>.870** (2.386)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Binge drinking frequency: Once vs. Neverb</td>
<td>.393</td>
<td>.548</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Binge drinking frequency: Twice vs. Neverb</td>
<td>.838** (2.312)</td>
<td>1.098** (2.997)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Binge drinking frequency: Three to four times vs. Neverb</td>
<td>.714* (2.043)</td>
<td>.943** (2.567)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Binge drinking frequency: Six or more times vs. Neverb</td>
<td>.472</td>
<td>1.244** (3.471)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation in cocurricular activitiesa</td>
<td>2.359** .540</td>
<td>2.588** .482</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation in community service/volunteer activitiesa</td>
<td>1.570** .530</td>
<td>1.109** .295</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality and impact of personal relationships with peersa</td>
<td>.123</td>
<td>.254** .297</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequency of contact with facultya</td>
<td>.142** .185</td>
<td>.044</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality and impact of nonclassroom relationships with facultya</td>
<td>.068</td>
<td>-.033</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequency of contact with student affairs professionalsa</td>
<td>.122</td>
<td>.235** .258</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experiences and interactions with diverse othersa</td>
<td>-.151** -.188</td>
<td>-.021</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
purposes of this study tended to be either small and nonsignificant or somewhat contradictory (Table 1, Part B). For first-year students, there was essentially parity between affiliated and unaffiliated students on all four outcome measures. Net of other influences, senior, affiliated students tended to report a significantly stronger contribution of their undergraduate experience to personal/interpersonal development than did their unaffiliated peers ($b=1.575$, $p<.01$). At the same time, however, affiliation in the senior year had a modest, but statistically significant negative relationship with academic achievement ($b=-.078$, $p<.01$).

**Conditional Effects**

In general, the relationship between affiliation and outcomes did not differ by student characteristics, with one exception. The positive relationship between affiliation and personal/inter-

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dependent Variable</th>
<th>First-Year Students</th>
<th>Senior Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Academic achievement $^a$</td>
<td>.025</td>
<td>-.078**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contribution of the undergraduate experience to growth in general/liberal arts competencies $^a$</td>
<td>-.821</td>
<td>.787</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contribution of the undergraduate experience to growth in career/professional preparation $^a$</td>
<td>-.326</td>
<td>.159</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contribution of the undergraduate experience to personal/interpersonal growth $^a$</td>
<td>.587</td>
<td>1.575**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1

*Estimated Net Effects of Fraternal Affiliation on College Engagement and Outcomes*

Part B: College Outcomes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dependent Variable</th>
<th>First-Year Students</th>
<th>Senior Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Academic achievement $^a$</td>
<td>.025</td>
<td>-.078**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contribution of the undergraduate experience to growth in general/liberal arts competencies $^a$</td>
<td>-.821</td>
<td>.787</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contribution of the undergraduate experience to growth in career/professional preparation $^a$</td>
<td>-.326</td>
<td>.159</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contribution of the undergraduate experience to personal/interpersonal growth $^a$</td>
<td>.587</td>
<td>1.575**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Regression equations include additional controls for: ACT composite score; high school grades; sex; race; an 11-item scale of high school involvement; reported impact of one's high school education (parallel measure of outcome undergraduate experience scales); father has a bachelor's degree or higher; mother has a bachelor's degree or higher; plans for a graduate degree; institution was a student's first choice for college; hours per week of on-campus work; hours per week of off-campus work; receiving financial aid; was a transfer student (senior sample only); place of residence during college (on campus; off campus within three miles of campus; or off campus greater than three miles from campus vs. fraternity or sorority house); intended or actual academic major (natural or mathematical sciences, social science, nursing, engineering, education, journalism/communications; multiple major; or other vs. business).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dependent Variable</th>
<th>First-Year Students</th>
<th>Senior Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Academic achievement $^a$</td>
<td>.025</td>
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<tr>
<td>Contribution of the undergraduate experience to growth in general/liberal arts competencies $^a$</td>
<td>-.821</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contribution of the undergraduate experience to growth in career/professional preparation $^a$</td>
<td>-.326</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contribution of the undergraduate experience to personal/interpersonal growth $^a$</td>
<td>.587</td>
<td>1.575**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Regression equations include controls for high school binge drinking frequency; ACT composite score; high school grades; sex; race; place of residence during college (same as superscript "a"); hours per week of on-campus work; hours per week of off-campus work; and intended or actual academic major (same as superscript "a").

*The estimated effect size is the regression coefficient ($b$) divided by the standard deviation of the dependent measure. The odds ratio is the odds of fraternity or sorority members being yes (or 1) on a particular dichotomous variable. Only statistically significant effect sizes or odds-ratios are shown. All others are considered chance.

$p < .05$  
$**p < .01$
personal development was significantly stronger for men than for women. In the case of binge drinking, the relationship between affiliation and binge drinking frequency was essentially the same for students who did and did not binge drink in high school.

Discussion

Academic and Social Engagement

Although the findings are limited to a single institution sample, they present a complex portrait of the unique relationships between fraternity/sorority membership and students’ level of engagement during college. Net of important confounding influences, no evidence suggested first-year or senior fraternity/sorority members were less academically engaged than their unaffiliated peers. These findings provide empirical evidence to counter assertions that fraternities/sororities promote an anti-intellectual culture (Thelin, 2004). Student affairs professionals who work with fraternities/sororities may draw on these findings in working with scholarship chairs to more fully include all areas of academic engagement, like connecting members to faculty research and organizing a post-event discussion after a campus presentation. Given fraternities/sororities’ roots in the literary and debating societies of the 19th century (Rudolph, 1990) and the effort to align members’ behaviors with historic chapter values (Franklin Square Group, 2003), promoting enhanced academic engagement among fraternity/sorority members is well founded.

If fraternity/sorority members and their unaffiliated counterparts were generally equal in academic engagement during college, this was not the case for measures of out-of-class engagement and interacting with members of the university community. The study findings suggested at least some support for the notion that the culture and organizational features of undergraduate fraternity/sorority life tend to facilitate social integration and enhance the development of close and influential relationships. Fraternity/sorority members have a long history of being highly engaged in the out-of-class life of the campus (Horowitz, 1986; Thelin, 2004). Student affairs professionals who work in fraternity/sorority life can use these findings to share the positive attributes of these organizations with campus stakeholders. Since fraternity/sorority members have a history of organizing in service to their community, campus fraternity/sorority administrators may find it advantageous to collaborate with the community service/volunteer coordinator, as fraternity/sorority members may be natural partners for serving in leadership roles in university-wide service programs. Additionally, investigating the social and organizational processes through which fraternities/sororities foster high levels of out-of-class engagement may provide the building blocks from which student affairs professionals can best promote out-of-class engagement for all students – affiliated or not.

The close and influential interpersonal relationships that fraternities/sororities encourage may limit the heterogeneity and diversity of a member’s social involvement and relationships, however, at least in the first year of college. The lack of contact with different others underscores a complex and perhaps even contradictory pattern of influences connected to fraternity/sorority life. On the one hand, fraternities/sororities appear to facilitate social engagement during college, while on the other hand they may place normative social and racial parameters around that engagement. The failure to find significant conditional effects by gender further suggests that this contradictory influence of affiliation holds for women as well as men.

Student affairs professionals who work with fraternities/sororities may choose to highlight these findings in their work with chapter officers, particularly new member educators. In an interdependent, global society in which intercultural effectiveness is a key competency for success (AAC&U, 2004; Thomas & Ely, 1996), it is
critical that fraternity/sorority members, especially those in their first year of college, are not hindered in developing meaningful relationships with diverse others. Student affairs professionals can work closely with new member educators to expand the normative social parameters of engagement by providing fraternities/sororities with incentives for collaborating with student organizations with which they do not have a history of collaboration and/or facilitating programs, like intergroup dialogues. These and other efforts are necessary if fraternities/sororities are ever to silence the criticism that they are exclusionary, racist, sexist, and homophobic (e.g., Kuh, Pascarella, & Wechsler, 1996; Maisel, 1990; Rhoads, 1995; Robinson, Gibson-Beverly, & Schwartz, 2004; Syrett, 2009).

A Culture of Drinking
Consistent with Kuh & Arnold (1993) and DeSimone (2007), evidence from this study strongly suggested that the substantial influence of fraternity/sorority membership on excessive alcohol use was a socialization effect rather than merely a recruitment effect. This influence was discernible as early as the second semester of the first year of college, but was even more pronounced in the senior year. Moreover, the failure to detect significant, conditional relationships between fraternity/sorority membership, gender, and level of binge drinking in high school suggested the relationship between fraternity/sorority membership and binge drinking was not confined to fraternities, but rather was essentially the same for sorority women as well as for affiliated students who did and did not binge drink in high school.

These findings call into question the culture that fraternities/sororities create in terms of alcohol use and abuse. Student affairs professionals can use this research with chapter alumni(ae) as well as undergraduate chapter leaders in confronting the convenient myths (i.e., fraternities/sororities simply recruit students who binge drank in high school and that the binge drinking problem is confined to fraternities) that may have previously prevented chapters from making necessary changes for the health of their members. Turning the tide of the alcohol culture in fraternity/sorority life requires a coordinated effort (Turning & Thomas, 2008). Rejecting convenient myths and focusing on evidence can aid campus administrators, inter/national organizations, local chapter alumni(ae), and undergraduate members to promote and foster healthy choices.

College Outcomes
Net of an extensive array of confounding influences, little evidence suggested a relationship between affiliation and three of the four learning outcomes, with one exception; affiliated, senior students reported higher levels of personal/interpersonal development than their unaffiliated peers. These findings were inconsistent with previous research in which fraternity/sorority members reported a greater level of self-reported educational gains during college than their unaffiliated peers (Hayek, et al., 2002). This inconsistency in results may be due to the fact that previous research, using self-reported gains, did not introduce a control for students’ response inclination on the dependent measures. In the present research, students’ inclination to report an influential high school experience acted as a control, and this is likely to have produced a more stringent estimate of the net relationships between fraternity/sorority membership and learning outcomes in both the first and senior years of college.

Finally, while fraternity/sorority membership had only a chance relationship with semester grades in the first year of college, membership had a modest negative relationship with semester grades in the senior year. Even after accounting for binge drinking frequency, the negative relationship between fraternity/sorority membership and grades remained statistically significant and essentially unchanged in magnitude. These findings highlight the need for a four-year aca-
ademic and developmental model for fraternity/sorority life. Student affairs professionals can use evidence from this study to articulate that focusing scholarship efforts on new members alone is not sufficient. These results suggest a four-year, developmental model and chapter-wide, academic achievement goals may best serve fraternity/sorority chapters.

**Conclusion**

Our analyses of fraternity/sorority membership, student engagement, and learning outcomes on a single campus suggested more complexity among the variables analyzed than most existing studies. As a developmental influence, fraternity/sorority life appeared to cut both ways, suggesting fraternity/sorority life warrants neither unreserved praise nor blanket condemnation. Clearly there were areas within fraternity/sorority life where members’ behavior aligned closely with espoused values (influential personal relationships; community/civic engagement; and cocurricular participation), but there are important areas where the Call for Values Congruence (Franklin Square Group, 2003) rings true (addressing alcohol abuse; promoting academic achievement; and, fostering interactions with diverse peers). This present study identified these areas and provided suggestions for student affairs professionals to engage fraternity/sorority members and alumni(ae) to create an experience that supports the host institution’s educational mission.
References


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A VALUES-BASED LEARNING MODEL TO IMPACT MATURATIONAL CHANGE: THE COLLEGE FRATERNITY AS DEVELOPMENTAL CRUCIBLE

TIMOTHY H. REUTER, ELGAN L. BAKER, MICHAEL V. HERNANDEZ, DANIEL A. BUREAU

The period of late adolescence and early adulthood is a critical time during which individual identity is developed. One fraternity recently implemented a developmental process that facilitated identity maturation within its members by emphasizing self-awareness and reflection. Utilizing a learning model as the core component of all aspects of its programming, the fraternity conducted research to determine the impact of its learning model on the development of self-awareness. This article provides data from three years of implementation that documents significant increases in this critical developmental competency.

The period of late adolescence and early adulthood is a time in which individual identity development is actively shaped by a wide range of biological, cognitive, and psychosocial variables (Evans, Forney, Guido, Patton & Renn, 2010; Hamrick, Evans, & Schuh, 2002). During this critical time period, individuals are working to integrate a sense of self, refine the values that will direct their life trajectories, and practice the development of intimate relationships. The literature explicates the many dimensions of these developmental tasks and the dynamics that can either support or derail their accomplishment. Therefore, it is essential to create environments that nurture learning and contribute to positive identity development (Strange & Banning, 2001). To enhance the positive maturation of such capacities and the cohesion of stable identity, college-aged men need and can benefit from specific and supportive interventions (Harper & Harris, 2010).

There are many environmental contexts that might be utilized to provide experiences to enhance maturation. Among these, the college men’s fraternity seems like a natural crucible given the historical emphasis on ideals that develop positive character and leadership. Unfortunately, evidence also suggests fraternities have become compromised by a range of negative behaviors and activities which occupy the time and attention of administrators and create a negative impression of fraternity-based experiences (Bickel & Lake, 1999; Ellsworth, 2006). The college fraternity has potential to return to its initial idealistic aspirations and serve as a forum that positively influences young men cognitively, socially, and affectively (Asel, Seifert, & Pascarella, 2009; Harms, Wood, Roberts, Bureau & Green, 2006; Hayek, Carini, O’Day, & Kuh, 2002; Kelley, 2008; Pike, 2003; Roberts & Johnson, 2006). Such a reprioritization of mission and purpose would replace an emphasis on purely social activities with an investment in a range of educational and interpersonal experiences designed to facilitate maturational success. This reconceptualization of the college fraternity establishes it as a co-curricular organization aligned with the missions and goals of the broader higher education community.

Context

Lambda Chi Alpha, an international men’s fraternity founded at Boston University in 1909, currently has approximately 200 chapters on college campuses across North America and serves approximately 11,000 undergraduate members. The fraternity recently moved to embrace a mission focused on goals designed to facilitate the developmental maturation of its members along
a wide array of developmental continua, which include inter-psychic and interpersonal benchmarks of identity maturation. Consistent with this sense of mission, Lambda Chi Alpha has created an experiential, educational model focused on fostering student development during college, making student experiences increasingly meaningful, evocative, and enriching (Hunter & Lutzky, 2009). This model expands the traditional fraternity emphases on education as a prelude to initiation and creates a set of experiences designed to foster ongoing individual development throughout the college years. Termed the Lambda Chi Alpha Learning Model (LCALM), this grounded approach has become the core component of all aspects of programming. Research has been conducted to determine the effect of its utilization on a range of developmental competencies. This article provides data from three years of implementation and investigation that suggests students in the fraternity chapters using the learning model are evidencing significant increases in self-awareness.

**Review of Literature**

This section is an overview of literature focusing on student learning, identity formation, creating educational environments, and the means through which the LCALM has been established to facilitate related outcomes. The literature reviewed demonstrates the aspects of relevant research used to ground the LCALM model, serving as its conceptual framework.

**Student Learning**

Several areas of the literature are particularly relevant to the explication of the LCALM processes. These include the transformative learning model (Mezirow, 1991; 1997; 2000), social learning theory (Bandura, 1977), and experiential learning (Kolb, 1984). The learning emphasized in this approach is not merely related to the acquisition of knowledge but more cogently focuses on the evolving sense of identity (Evans et al., 2010) and how the environment should facilitate such growth (Strange & Banning, 2001).

**Transformative Learning**

Merriam and Caffarella (1991) emphasized that learning occurs primarily through interaction in a continuing environment of interpersonal relationships (e.g. a college fraternity); recurring experiences influence the development of worldviews. Cognitively, students move from dualistic perspectives to multiplicity and relativism as they form epistemological foundations for meaning-making and for the prioritization of values and personal goals (Baxter Magolda, 2001; Perry, 1970). Interactions with others help individuals to examine what they have experienced and potentially to reform existing perceptions and organizing schemata. These interactions can therefore change the interior perceptual map and foster transformative learning (Baxter Magolda, 2001; Mezirow, 1991; 2000).

Mezirow (1991; 2000) described transformative learning as “potentially significantly” changing ideas that are no longer dependable or relevant. The individual reconsiders existing views of self and others based on the accumulation of new, generative experiences. Such processes occur during late adolescence and continue to be influential throughout young adulthood. As a result, perspective transformation occurs (Mezirow, 2000) and maturation follows (Cranton, 2006; Merriam & Caffarella, 1991; Mezirow, 2000). Perspective transformation is greatly determined by the influence of peers as role-models (Bandura, 1977; Cranton, 2006; Mezirow, 2000).

**Social Learning Theory**

Bandura (1977; 1986) believed people learned from observing others in the same environment. Individuals compare others’ actions to their own and their previously held perceptions of appropriate behavior. These models, attributions, and related feedback create a sense of how to act in a select environment (e.g., as a member of a col-
lege fraternity). Such experiences are integrated into a sense of what is real, what is expected, and what one "knows" about the worlds of others and the place of self in that world. Individuals create meaning as a function of how they interpret this evocative intersection of the past in relation to experience in the present. In this way, epistemological beliefs may be reshaped. Affective components may also change. Moral development, tolerance for ambiguity, and commitment to social norms can be enhanced. The potential for positive norm development is thereby enhanced by experiential learning activities in this interpersonal environment (Bandura 1977; 1986).

**Experiential Learning**

Most students enter college conditioned to be passive recipients of knowledge. This perspective stems from prior educational experiences (Kolb & Kolb, 2005; Richlin, 2006). College educators can be more effective when they help students to assume control of and responsibility for learning (Kolb, 1984; Kolb & Kolb, 2005). Experiential learning is a primary strategy to pursue this desired outcome and can be practiced in the context of advising and supporting the operations of a college fraternity.

Experiential learning is the “process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of [one’s] experience” (Kolb, 1984, p. 41). Learning involves the integration of thinking, feeling, perceiving, and behaving (Kolb & Kolb, 2005) and occurs as a result of the individual interacting with others in the environment. It is this core component of interaction which makes the experience central to this form of learning. Individual learners go through a cycle of concrete experiences, reflect on experiences, conceptualize experiences in the abstract, and then apply new constructions to develop understanding (Cranton, 2006; Kolb, 1984). Such experiences form a basis for observation and reflection. These observational and reflective processes then generate and/or transform perceptions and world views, providing the cognitive basis for “new implications for action [that] can be discerned” (Kolb, 1984, p. 209).

As the individual learns, he/she alternates experientially between opposing modes of reflection and action and between feeling and thinking (Kolb & Kolb, 2005). This process creates new or reaffirms existing approaches to decision-making and problem solving. Simultaneously, beliefs and values are created, integrated, and enterprised. This process is most effective when the individual engages it in an open-minded way, which allows for the simultaneous development of multiple perspectives and creativity (Cranton, 2006; Kolb, 1984; Mezirow, 2000). As Mezirow concluded, the ability of experiential learning to foster transformative, cognitive, and interpersonal construction is due to the central roles of introspection and self-reflection.

Komives et al. (2005) explained experiential learning as particularly powerful in helping college students to develop leadership skills. Such experiences can be salient when considering the environment of a college fraternity (Martin, Hevel, & Pascarella, 2012). Students learn to interact with others and to foster common strategies with which to accomplish shared goals. When successful, such processes positively influence self-esteem and a sense of social competence (Johnson & Johnson, 1999).

**Identity Formation**

The years of 18-24 appear to constitute a critical period for the development of a sense of self (Baxter Magolda, 2001; Erickson, 1968; Kegan, 1982; 1994) and for the differentiation of those values that will create both goals and the underpinnings of moral character (Evans et al., 2010; Kohlberg, 1975). Theories of the process of identity development have guided the field of student affairs for almost 40 years (Evans et al., 2010; Hamrick et al., 2002). Numerous developmental theories exist including psycho-social (focusing on affective and interpersonal aspects of one’s development), cognitive (constructs which create a sense of understanding
and knowing), self-reflection (a sense of how I see myself and how others view me), and integrative theories (those which connect each of the aforementioned types and typically incorporate environmental considerations) (Evans et al.). Experiences are internalized in a fashion that influences the individuals’ existing sense of self and reciprocally determine the nature of future experiences. Most theories are explained through stages: progression through each stage is a function of the successful integration of experiences from the previous stage, often conceptualized around core developmental tasks.

**Environment**

Environments have a clear role as the context in which learning and development occurs and as the source of numerous contingencies influencing these developmental processes (Evans et al., 2010; Strange & Banning, 2001). Individuals identify commonly held values in the environment as one source of their own perspectives and beliefs (Strange & Banning, 2001). The values prioritized by some environments may be subjective, but widely held values do exist in all environments, including the college campus context. Typically, these values are aligned with broad societal values (Dalton, 1985; Nash & Murray, 2010).

Among the environmental variables that influence college students is the immediate peer group. This variable may be particularly powerful for the college men’s fraternity (Astin, 1993; Strange & Banning, 2001). Astin identified the immediate peer group as those with whom the individual most strongly identifies. As a result of interactions, one’s beliefs are influenced and possibly modified. Students move in and out of peer groups in the context of their college experience resulting in groups having differing levels of influence on learning and development. The peer group exerts a powerful influence over the individual especially during adolescence and young adult years. Astin observed that, “every aspect of the student’s development…is affected in some way by peer group characteristics, and usually by several peer characteristics. Generally, students tend to change their values, behavior, and academic plans in the direction of the group’s dominant orientation” (p. 363). Due to the unique environment of fraternities, the time spent with fellow members renders the population an especially powerful immediate peer group (Astin).

Student involvement was originally viewed as regulated by the student (Astin, 1993); however, researchers more recently have emphasized the role of institutions in connecting students to enriching educational experiences. Involvement has shifted to engagement, emphasizing the shared responsibility of all to support student success (Wolf-Wendle, Ward, & Kinzie, 2009). Strayhorn (2008) examined the relationship between engagement in educationally meaningful activities and perceived personal/social learning outcomes (e.g., values, character) among college students perceived or objectively measured. He found students involved in experiential learning tended to feel as if they had grown more than their counterparts who experienced passive learning; peer interactions were the greatest influence on learning. These findings are consistent with previous research that the peer group is likely the most powerful influence on college students (Astin; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005) and the environment selected by the student has significant impact (Strange & Banning, 2001).

The existing research describes the fraternity environment as a complex phenomenon (Asel et al., 2009; Jelke & Kuh, 2003) with both potentially positive and negative influences. Factors that negatively impact learning include alcohol misuse (Wechsler, Kuh & Davenport, 1996), homogeneity and a lack of appreciation for diversity (Asel et al.), and detrimental activities such as hazing (Ellsworth, 2006). Such activities interfere with learning and positive development (Asel et al.; Whipple & Sullivan, 1998). Positive influences within the fraternity environment include an emphasis on engagement (Asel et al.; Astin, 1993; Bureau, Ryan, Ahren, Shoup,
& Torres, 2011; Hayek et al., 2002; Martin et al., 2012; Pike, 2003), allegiance to alma mater (Kelley, 2008), and participation in community service and leadership activities (Harms et al., 2006; Hayek et al; Kelley; Roberts & Johnson, 2006). The college fraternity can be a forum in which learning occurs, although the results may be mixed (Asel et al.; Bureau et al.; Hayek et al.; Martin et al.; Pascarella, Flowers & Whitt, 2001; Pike; Whipple & Sullivan). Research on educational gains that may be attributed to fraternity membership suggested that the influence is multi-dimensional, complicated, and cannot be interpreted monolithically (Asel et al.; Hayek et al.; Pike).

The Lambda Chi Alpha Learning Model (LCALM)

The LCALM was informed by the developmental theories of Erickson (1968; 1980), Kegan, (1982; 1994), and Baxter Magolda (2001) and emphasizes Bandura’s social learning theory (Bandura, 1977) and Kolb’s model of experiential learning (Kolb, 1984; Kolb & Kolb, 2005). The LCALM uses experiences in the fraternity environment to help members examine possible courses of action that will help them develop skills needed to be a good member and person. The LCALM emphasizes reflection through journaling. Through the journal, the member works to make meaning of his experiences. Sharing these experiences with others in the organization can help to influence the overall fraternity environment.

Reflecting

The role of reflection is considered to be central in facilitating the influence of LCALM and has been linked in the literature to a range of developmental contingencies that enhance the maturation of character and the development of leadership skills (Bandura, 1978; Komives, Owen, Longerbeam, Mainella, & Osteen, 2005). The act of reflecting varies from simply thinking about experiences to increasing awareness of thoughts, feelings, values, or actions to considering possible alternatives to existing worldviews (Bandura, 1977). Through reflection, individuals can reconcile personal and group approaches to regulating behavior and make judgments about those behaviors. Gradually, the person develops a sense of competence required for adaptation to the environment (Bandura, 1977). Through what Mezirow (2000) called “premise reflection” one examines long-held, socially constructed assumptions (e.g. gender roles of men), values, and beliefs about a phenomenon.

Critical thinking and reflecting on experience is essential to transformative learning (Cranton, 2006; Keeling, 2004; Mezirow, 1997). Ways of thinking are transformed through critical reflection on our assumptions, interpretations, beliefs, and habits of mind or points of view (Mezirow). From this review, the individual is able to reaffirm or revise his/her ways of acting with others (Cranton). New knowledge is then applied in future contexts (Merriam & Caffarella, 1991). Throughout the process, self-initiative is pivotal.

Researchers have found that students engaging in reflective activities report increased self-awareness, self-confidence, and feelings of empowerment to recreate their own self-concept and to clarify values (Roberts, 2008). Komives et al. (2005) and Roberts explained the importance of reflection as a key component in the development of future leaders and suggested strategies for incorporating reflection into leadership education as well as mechanisms for its assessment. These results indicate reflection is important, and those who work within educational organizations, in this case a men’s fraternity, have a responsibility to create environments that support critical reflection.

Meaning Making

Reflection is followed by a period of meaning making in which individuals journal around a series of structured exercises to understand the significance of the experience for themselves and their relationship to others. The LCALM
emphasizes meaning making as a process in the learning continuum where reflections are placed within the context of self. This occurs through guided journaling. Putting thoughts and feelings into words allows for a bridging function to connect the cognitive and affective, the private and shared, and internal and external functions. Meaning making allows for individuals to see how the past continues to influence the present.

Students construct meaning through observations and interactions with the world around them. Meaning making occurs as a result of efforts to comprehend the essence and significance of events, relationships, and learning, to gain understanding of themselves in a larger context, and to experience a sense of wholeness (Nash & Murray, 2010). Students make sense of and interpret experiences in relation to previous experiences. Further, students’ values influence their behavior and provide the basis for making ethical judgments (Nash & Murray). Through reflection and meaning making, students develop a clearer sense of who they are in relation to their own values and who they are in relation to the values of others in the larger world. This not only consolidates an important sense of personal identity but also develops an understanding of the position of self in relation to others who may have differing values and world views (Keeling, 2004).

There is no one way to make meaning; however, interventions by educators are important to help students make sense of themselves and their relationships with others (Keeling, 2004; Mezirow, 2000; Nash & Murray).

Self-reflective journals are one of the most common reflection strategies due to the ease of implementation and potential depth of response (Jarvis, 2001; Lukinsky, 1990; Merriam & Caffarella, 1991; Roberts, 2008). Journaling helps students become reflective learners as they record personal stories about experiences and observations and as they consider their increased ability to identify and articulate the issues about which they are learning (Cranton, 2006; Jarvis, 2001; Lukinsky, 1990). Through this process, they increase self-awareness (Cranton, 2006; Hatcher & Bringle, 1997). The format and structure may vary from free stream-of-consciousness writing to a guided examination of specific events. For example, DiPaolo (2008) examined the experiences of six fraternity members during a leadership institute. Through individual journaling and group reflection, participants reflected on how their experiences shaped their thoughts on leadership.

Sharing

While individuals can make meaning on their own, structuring opportunities for sharing new ideas with peers allows students to place their sense of self in relation to external others. Common perceptions and beliefs become normalized when shared with others, contributing to a sense of community. Sharing then becomes a process to help individuals use their understanding to successfully navigate their environment. As the final component of the LCALM, sharing becomes a pivotal process for consolidating personal knowledge and understanding and for integrating new understanding based on perspectives and feedback from others.

Chickering and Gamson (1987) defined good practice in undergraduate education in terms of a process that “develops reciprocity and cooperation among students” (p. 3). A way to increase the propensity for cooperation is creating environments in which sharing knowledge is expected. Conducting reflection activities and then sharing thoughts with the group helps students to co-create knowledge and revise previous worldviews (Bandura, 1977; Cranton, 2006; Nash & Murray, 2010; Chickering & Gamson). From these interactions, participants sense how their identity is similar to and different from others around them (Baxter Magolda, 2001; Baxter Magolda & King, 2004). Such self-awareness serves as a launching point for ongoing learning and identity development (Chickering & Gamson) and for the maturation of respect and mutuality in the environment of the fraternity.
Methods

Longitudinal Study Process
During the 2006-2007 academic year, Lambda Chi Alpha initiated a psychometric research study and pilot implementation effort to evaluate the efficacy of its (then) newly developed LCALM and redeveloped educational curriculum. The organization committed to a ten-year investment of resources to evaluate the self-awareness of its members at various points during their participation in the fraternity. The organization is now in year four of that commitment. Since implementing LCALM and redeveloping educational curriculum for distribution to all undergraduate members during the 2007-2008 academic year, undergraduate chapters have incorporated the model to varying degrees. This has allowed Lambda Chi Alpha to evaluate the influence of the LCALM by comparing member scores on a self-awareness inventory between those implementing the model and those not using it.

The researchers hypothesized that individuals who utilized the LCALM would show significantly greater growth in the development of self-awareness than those who did not make use of the model. In addition, the researchers hypothesized organizational changes consistent with the degree to which the LCALM was implemented, e.g., mean scores would continually increase commensurate with the degree of implementation.

Operationalization of the Lambda Chi Alpha Learning Model
Lambda Chi Alpha staff designed the LCALM with the intention of facilitating the maturational development of its late adolescent members. Operationalizing the LCALM in such a way that was both appealing to students and simple to implement required that Lambda Chi Alpha reconsider its approach to new member development and approach the process as more of an orientation than a simple education program, requiring additional resources and materials for both participants and educators. This process produced an eight-week new member development process that utilizes the LCALM to acclimate members to Lambda Chi Alpha’s Seven Core Values, making up the acronym LDRSHIP (loyalty, duty, service & stewardship, honor, integrity, and personal courage). One core value is explored per week, with the eighth week providing participants the opportunity to make meaning of the entire new member development process. A detailed overview of the eight week program curriculum is available from the first author by request.

Survey Participants (Subjects)
Participants in this study consisted of 4,024 undergraduate males enrolled at approximately 200 colleges and universities throughout the United States and Canada. All of the participants were undergraduate members of Lambda Chi Alpha at the time of their participation in this study and received no compensation. Survey participants either completed this study as new associate members (newly affiliated, non-initiated members) or newly initiated members. Subjects were between the ages of 18 and 26 (M=18.94, SD=1.23) for the associate survey and 18 and 28 (M=19.34, SD = 1.28) for the initiate survey.

Instrumentation
Member-Level Data
To measure self-awareness of members, Lambda Chi Alpha administered the Self-Consciousness Scale developed by Fenigstein, Scheir, and Buss (1975). This measure has demonstrated excellent psychometrics elsewhere in emergent adulthood samples (Fenigstein et al, 1975; Turner, Carver, Scheir & Ickes, 1978). The Self-Consciousness Scale is a 16 item self-report inventory, scored on a four-point Likert scale with one (1) being extremely uncharacteristic and four (4) being extremely characteristic. It is widely used in the literature and provides a relevant comparison sample group for college freshmen and college-aged men. The researchers were able
to use the Self-Consciousness Scale to measure the efficacy of the organization’s curriculum and LCALM in terms of this aspect of the maturational development of its members.

Chapter-Level Data
To investigate a potential correlation between the LCALM and the development of self-awareness among individual participants, the researchers collected data on the degrees to which the LCALM was utilized by the local chapter in which the participant is a member. The LCALM implementation data were collected by members of Lambda Chi Alpha’s professional staff, Educational Leadership Consultants (ELCs), who rated each chapter during bi-annual visits. This process allowed the researchers to understand the levels to which chapters were implementing the organization’s educational curriculum, and, specifically, the LCALM. Examples from the 27 question evaluation system included:

- Does the chapter utilize the Seven Core Values in bid discussions?
- Is the chapter’s associate member development curriculum organized around the Seven Core Values?
- Does the chapter utilize experiential learning (associates actively participate in an experience related to a core value) as part of associate member development?
- Is the process of reflection and meaning-making explained to the associate members?
- Do the associate members reflect on their experiences and make meaning of them?
- Do associate members share their reflections and the meaning they made weekly during weekly debrief (share and discuss) sessions?

Once the ELCs collected this data, it was input into a report, which was shared with the chapter and stored electronically at Lambda Chi Alpha’s headquarters. Once chapter visits for an academic year concluded, Lambda Chi Alpha staff inputted these data into a spreadsheet to measure curriculum and LCALM implementation. A binary scoring system was used with responses of “yes” to a question on the system equaling one (1) point and an answer of “no” resulting in a zero (0). Since the rating instrument had a total of 27 questions, the maximum score a chapter could receive was 27, with the minimum score, 0. Data was then entered into an aggregate data file and sorted for analyses and comparison purposes to understand which chapters most fully implemented Lambda Chi Alpha’s curriculum and the LCALM.

Individual Member Data Collection
Administered internally by Lambda Chi Alpha staff during the 2007-2008 and 2008-2009 testing periods, and in 2009-2010 through Scantron Corporation, newly associated members and recently initiated members were sent the Self-Consciousness Scale (Fenigstein, Scheir, and Buss, 1975) through emails. Each potential participant was told the surveys were anonymous and individual identities would not be recorded or reported. The recipients of the survey are initially reported to the fraternity through standard forms that record association and initiation data. The participants are then assigned a unique identification number. Only these numbers are used to ensure that consistent data from the same participant are appropriately recorded and analyzed. No further identification is available at any point during data collection or analysis. Data regarding the chapters to which individual members belonged were collected; however, the only utility for that data lies in the stratified sample comparison.

Candidates were given two weeks to complete the survey. If the survey was completed, the participant responses were then logged in the database. If the survey was not completed, individual candidates received an email reminder to participate in the survey process. After three weeks of non-participation, the survey link was terminated and the individual was no longer eli-
gible to participate in the survey. This same process was replicated for newly initiated members. Capturing data from new associate members and newly initiated members allowed the researchers to measure baseline levels of self-awareness prior to participation in the organization’s curriculum and evaluate at the conclusion of the new member development process.

Group and Individual Member Data Comparison

At the conclusion of the academic year, Lambda Chi Alpha staff identified chapters most completely implementing the curriculum evaluated by the ELCs. Chapters in each cohort for the 2007-2008, 2008-2009, and 2009-2010 academic years were identified as the following groups:

1. Ten highest scoring chapters, in terms of curriculum and LCALM implementation as determined by evaluations conducted by the ELCs (TB\text{Top10})
2. Upper quartile, as determined by evaluations conducted by the ELCs (TB\text{Top50})
3. Lower quartile, as determined by evaluations conducted by the ELCs (TB\text{Bottom50})
4. Aggregate set, all Lambda Chi Alpha chapters (TB\text{Aggregate})

Once the aforementioned chapter groupings were identified, individual data were organized into the appropriate groups. Thus, if an individual survey participant (new associate member, newly initiated member or both) was a member of a chapter identified in the group, his survey scores were combined with other individuals from chapters who were organized into the sample group. Sample group means were then identified and compared to one another, as well as the aggregate mean to determine the maturation of independent group members and its correlation to participating in Lambda Chi Alpha’s educational curriculum and the LCALM.

Limitations

Due to the complexity of the research and to the context and delivery of the surveys utilized, there is the possibility to lose potential subjects due to errors in data collection or the choice by large groups of subjects to not participate in the study. Examples of such errors include the lack of correct email address reported at the point of association or lack of timeliness in reporting of association and initiation, which interfered with appropriate and timely points for data collection.

A second limitation is the large number of subjects who completed only one of the two survey administrations, possibly skewing the results by limiting the opportunities for full pre/post intervention analysis.

A third limitation involves potential cultural differences among individuals in the sample. Researchers have demonstrated that cultural variation can be associated with differing levels of self-awareness, specifically when comparing Eastern cultures to a North American sample (Heine, Takemoto, Moskalenko, Lasaleta, & Henrich, 2008). However, demographic data such as race and ethnicity were not available for analysis in the current study. Consequently, we cannot be sure whether or not culture played a role in influencing levels of self-awareness among our sample. Finally, the results of our preliminary and novel study must be interpreted with caution due to the limited nature of the data analysis. Statistical analyses to test the significance of mean differences between the non-aggregate groups were not conducted. Future research should investigate the significance of such mean differences. For example, t-test analyses could be supplemented by a more robust statistical technique (e.g., ANOVA) to measure the significance of mean differences between aggregate groups.

Analysis and Results

Independent data sets from the three sample populations TB\text{Top10}, TB\text{Top50}, TB\text{Bottom50} and the aggregate population TB\text{Aggregate} were compared at the points of association and initiation to determine levels of change in self-awareness of Lambda Chi Alpha.
Alpha’s members over time. Additionally, the influence of the LCALM was assessed by comparisons of means across the stratified samples. The data were also compared across the three years of the study to evaluate for similarities or differences in the sample populations in order to ensure the consistency of our data for the analyses conducted.

Scores were reported for each participant as a total score based on the participant responses to 16 questions, which could be rated from zero to four on a Likert-Type scale. Due to the adjustment of the scores to prevent response bias, some items were scored in the opposite direction of others (four represents a lower degree of agreement with the item than one). In other words, some items utilized reverse scoring. The maximum score for the survey would therefore be 64, with a range of 16 to 64 as possible scores.

**Analysis of Sample and Aggregate Population Mean Scores from Association to Initiation**

In each subject group, data demonstrated positive changes for independent samples from the point of affiliating with Lambda Chi Alpha (associate) and the beginning of the LCALM intervention to the points where subjects concluded their association and the LCALM intervention (initiate). This allowed for a pre-post-intervention analysis design.

**2007-2008**

The 2007-2008 data showed subjects from the TB<sub>1</sub> chapters achieved a self-awareness mean score of M = 40.58 (SD = 4.49, n = 26) at association and a mean score of 41.63 (SD = 3.76, n = 19) at initiation, producing a positive change of 1.05. A slightly larger positive change of 1.13 was shown by the subjects from the TB<sub>Bottom50</sub> (associate n = 52, M = 40.92, SD = 4.58; initiate n = 58, M = 42.05, SD = 4.93), while lesser positive changes where shown by subjects from the TB<sub>Aggregate</sub> (associate n = 209, M = 40.56, SD = 5.13; initiate n = 334, M = 41.55, SD = 5.07) and TB<sub>Top50</sub> (associate n = 85, M = 41.40, SD = 4.49; initiate n = 88, M = 41.94, SD = 4.34). Analyses comparing means of the TB<sub>1</sub>, TB<sub>Top50</sub>, and TB<sub>Bottom50</sub> association and initiation groups were not conducted due to often small and/or largely discrepant sample sizes. However, analysis of the TB<sub>Aggregate</sub> data demonstrated significant increases from association to initiation, t(541) = 2.199, p < .05. Assumptive reasons for this finding will be discussed in the limitations of this paper.

**2008-2009**

The 2008-2009 data showed slight positive changes on self-awareness mean scores from association to initiation for each of the four subject groups. The associate TB<sub>1</sub> group had a mean score of M = 44.06 (SD = 5.15, n = 87) while the initiate TB<sub>1</sub> group had a mean of M = 44.41 (SD = 5.17, n = 32), yielding a net mean difference of 0.35. The TB<sub>Top50</sub> associate group had a mean of M = 43.53 (SD = 4.87, n = 327) while the initiate group had a mean of M = 43.98 (SD = 4.91, n = 127), yielding a larger mean difference of 0.45. The TB<sub>Bottom50</sub> associate group was observed with a self-awareness mean score of M = 43.77 (SD = 5.38, n = 158) while the initiate group had a mean of M = 44.61 (SD = 5.14, n = 64), yielding larger yet, mean difference of 0.84. Again, none of these means were analyzed for within-group differences. However, within-group analyses comparing the means of the TB<sub>Aggregate</sub> group across the two data points indicated significant increases from association (M = 43.21, SD = 6.43, n = 779) to initiation (M = 44.09, SD = 5.08, n = 370), t(1147) = 2.309, p<.05.

**2009-2010**

In 2009-2010, larger changes from association to initiation on self-awareness mean scores were noted for each of the four subject groups. Most notably, the subjects from TB<sub>1</sub> chapters demonstrated a positive change from association with
a mean of $M = 43.61$ (SD = 5.36, n = 175) to initiation with a mean of $M = 46.41$ (SD = 4.12, n = 41) yielding a mean difference of 2.8, which represents the largest positive change obtained in the current investigation. Subjects from the TB$_{Bottom50}$ chapters showed a positive change of 2.18 from association ($M = 42.72$, SD = 5.13, n = 397) to initiation ($M = 44.90$, SD = 5.95, n = 79). Almost equal levels of change shown by subjects from chapters identified as TB$_{Top50}$ (associate: $M = 43.79$, SD = 5.36, n = 574; initiate: $M = 45.43$, SD = 4.59, n = 159) and TB$_{Aggregate}$ (associate: $M = 43.28$, SD = 5.38, n = 1764; initiate: $M = 44.89$, SD = 5.16, n = 574), yielding mean differences of 1.64, and 1.61 respectively. In summary, these data offer strong support for the hypothesis that participation in Lambda Chi Alpha fraternity programming and the LCALM intervention during the period from association to initiation increases members’ self-awareness. Further, subjects from chapters most completely implementing in the LCALM intervention show the greatest positive change, followed by the TB$_{Top50}$, TB$_{Bottom50}$, and TB$_{Aggregate}$ subject groups. A within-group analysis comparing the means of the TB$_{Aggregate}$ groups showed significant increases from association to initiation, $t(2336) = 6.293$, $p<.001$.

**Analysis of Sample and Aggregate Population Mean Scores over Time**

Another observation of analysis from the data not only reflects the positive change for each individual from association to initiation but also demonstrates significant increases in overall mean scores at the point of initiation across the three years of the study (2007-2008 to 2008-2009 and 2009-2010). The largest increases in the point of initiation scores across the three years of the study are again found in the TB$_{Top50}$ subject group, which can be observed in Figure 1 below.

Mean scores increased from 41.63 in 2007-2008 to 44.41 in 2008-2009 to 46.41 in 2009-2010, a 6.68% increase from year one to year two of the study, a 4.50% increase from year two to year three of the study and a total increase of 10.3% across the three years of the study. The other large and consistent increases in point of initiation scores across the three years of the study are found within the TB$_{Top50}$ subject group.

This group evidenced means scores of 41.94 in 2007-2008, 43.98 in 2008-2009 to 45.43 in 2009-2010, a 4.86% increase from year one to year two of the study, a 3.30% increase from year two to year three of the study and a total
increase of 7.68% across the three years of the study. Both the $T_B_{Bottom50}$ and $T_B_{Aggregate}$ evidenced similar increases in mean initiate scores from year one to year two of the study, with only slight changes from year two to year three of the study. The $T_B_{Bottom50}$ scores increased from 40.92 in 2007-2008 to 43.77 in 2008-2009, an increase of 6.96%. However, the scores decreased in 2009-2010 to 42.72, resulting in a net increase of only 4.40%. The $T_B_{Aggregate}$ scores increased from 40.56 in 2007-2008 to 43.21 in 2008-2009 to 43.28 in 2009-2010, an increase of 6.53% from year one to year two of the study, and a net increase of 6.71% across all three years of data. These data again support the impact of the LCALM on levels of self-awareness among all subjects. The two subject groups most fully participating in LCALM ($T_B$ and $T_B_{Top50}$) showed not only the largest increases in scores from year one to year three of the study but also replicated progressive percentage increases in mean initiate scores from year one to year two.

The results of this study demonstrate the positive impact of Lambda Chi Alpha’s educational programming and, specifically, of the LCALM intervention on the development of self-awareness. The mean degree of improvement coupled with the degree to which the LCALM was implemented suggests that these changes can be most directly attributed to the intervention itself.

**Discussion and Implications**

The current investigation evaluated the capacity for the LCALM to foster growth of self-awareness in a sample of college-aged men within the context of an international men’s fraternity. The LCALM is a specific learning model grounded in research from a number of fields including social learning (e.g., Bandura 1977; 1986), experiential learning (e.g., Kolb 1984), and identity development (Baxter Magolda, 2001; Erikson, 1968). Consistent with predictions, the researchers observed a systematic increase among individuals most utilizing the LCALM relative to their counterparts utilizing the LCALM less so.

These findings support the value of a specific learning model in the development of self-awareness among late adolescent males in the undergraduate, collegiate fraternity environment. Additionally, this study suggests the value of a developmentally focused educational curriculum, as developed by Lambda Chi Alpha, in supporting the maturation of this critical developmental capacity. No other literature uncovered has utilized this methodology to evaluate the efficacy of a specific learning model intervention, nor was any literature identified that empirically demonstrated the impact of participation in an educational curriculum or learning model intervention within the context of an undergraduate college fraternity on the growth and maturation of its members.

In addition to the empirical support noted in the data analysis, numerous anecdotal reports also support the efficacy of the LCALM. Members from Lambda Chi Alpha chapters that most completely implemented the LCALM not only evidenced the largest increases in the development of self-awareness from association to initiation, but also evidenced the largest increases in mean point of initiation scores across each year of the study. In other words, each new cohort evidenced higher scores than the previous cohort. Considering the context of the undergraduate fraternity in which this study was conducted, this finding is consistent with research literature on transformative learning and the influence of peer groups. Research on transformative learning indicates that learning primarily occurs through continued interactions of interpersonal relationships (Merriam & Caffarella, 1991), while Astin (1993) describes how the immediate peer group (i.e., the fraternity) can shape one’s beliefs, values, and behaviors.

Results from this study emphasize the positive impact of the LCALM and its process com-
ponents in facilitating the development of self-awareness among late adolescent males. This model operationalizes recommendations from authorities (Harris & Harper, 2010) regarding the specific needs of men in this age group for support, mentoring, and developmentally focused educational interventions. The significant role of guided reflection and the opportunity to share thoughts, feelings, and emotions in a “safe” environment of peer and adult mentors is perhaps the greatest reason the LCALM had a positive impact on subject groups.

In a broader sense, the results of this study support the existing data about the continued malleability of factors related to the formation of the self during this critical developmental period. The targeted approach demonstrated in this research addresses how a range of positive influences can change an individual’s capacity to introspect and become more self-conscious. The implications of this finding are exciting in demonstrating that this core capacity can be altered in a relatively brief period, in a fashion which increases the individual’s ability to thoughtfully engage all the developmental processes which rely on the examination of one’s inner experience and its relationship to others in the external world. By extension, this study extends numerous findings regarding individual development which indicate the centrality of self-awareness in the development of a broader sense of one’s identity in the world. It supports the importance of this construct in many theories of student development and personal maturation.

Further, consistent with research literature on maturational development (e.g., Bandura, 1978; Erickson, 1968; Kegan, 1982; 1994) this study supports the importance of reflection as a core component in the development of self-awareness, which relates more generally to a consolidated sense of self. As Socrates observed centuries ago, the examined life offers opportunities for meaning not available when self-examination is neglected. The results of this study would further suggest that the development of an integrated and consistent sense of identity is an additional positive outcome that derives from reflective self-awareness.

In addition, these data support the role of symbolization through writing and speaking as a vehicle by which identity is integrated. Both interpersonal (e.g. Baxter Magolda, 2001) and cognitive models (e.g. Kohlberg, 1975) of identity formation emphasize the central role of intellectual processes internally developed and interpersonally shared as the consensual schemata on which the architecture of identity evolves. The LCALM combines internal meaning making with interpersonal communication to provide the consolidating force for meaningful self-awareness and therefore for the meaningful evolution of the sense of self. These theoretical notions are broadly documented as important variables in the existing literature but seldom investigated in a fraternal setting or specifically addressed to the developmental tasks of late adolescents so central to the lives of college men.

After years of published literature challenging the social value of the college fraternity (e.g., Wechsler, Dowdall, Davenport, & Castillo, 1995; Wechsler et al., 1996; Wechsler, Kuo, Lee, & Dowdall, 2000), it is significant to note and to substantiate with empirical data that this environment can serve as a positive developmental influence. These data make clear that the college fraternity can foster positive factors to support the maturation of its members in a fashion which has broad implications for personal maturity and capacity to assume a positive role in broader society. It is reassuring to find research support for more than a century of anecdotal evidence. Fraternity membership, when directed along the lines described in this study, can help young men to grow into fuller, healthier, and more mature adults and can provide the environment which facilitates positive personal development.

This research also underscores the positive potential of peer influence in fostering growth.
Many models have called for the availability of peer role models to enhance personal adjustment and development. In particular, the sharing/mentoring aspects of the LCALM substantiate how these peer influences can reinforce and consolidate maturational accomplishments correlated with the development of positive identity in college-aged men. Further, it presents a model for meaningful and authentic communication which the stated values of the college fraternity should evoke but which stereotypic environments often thwart. When men can talk openly with other men about their inner-experience, their values and vulnerabilities, and their unique perceptions of the world they co-inhabit, extremely valuable processes which enhance individual maturation are potentiated. This social domain is the unique crucible of fraternal experience but one which has been seldom engaged for the purpose of promoting self-awareness.

These findings suggest developmentally focused educational programming and learning interventions and, specifically, the LCALM and curriculum developed by Lambda Chi Alpha staff, can be a positive force in supporting maturation among college-aged men, particularly as related to the capacity for introspection and self-awareness. This approach to the collegiate fraternity and male student development also provides a vehicle through which developmental journeys can be positively impacted and allows for the role of the fraternity to evolve beyond that of social in nature.

To help realize the full capacity of the LCALM to positively influence emergent adulthood men, these findings call for additional research to determine the impact of this model on other developmental competencies and to clarify the elements and mechanisms that are responsible for the changes documented. Findings may also hold promise for applications in endless settings where adolescents and young adults meet in an interpersonally interactive environment with positive mentoring relationships. Future research is therefore advised to investigate the feasibility of one such education model in other contexts.

**Conclusion**

At a time when the undergraduate, collegiate fraternity is garnering increasing attention for negative attributes, harmful effects, and perpetuation of the hegemonic masculinity amongst the socio-ethnically privileged, there is an increasing need for interventions like the LCALM and for research to demonstrate the efficacy of such educational programming and learning models. An intervention such as this not only reconceptualizes the role and mission of the undergraduate collegiate fraternity but also potentiates its ability to positively influence its members, the greater college campus, and all of society. The model demonstrates that the interpersonal environment of the college fraternity can be effectively used as a developmental crucible to foster growth and maturation among its members. The impact of such a finding can well be amplified with collaboration among faculty and administrators as well as fraternal movement stakeholders who share a common interest in the development of character, leadership, and personal maturation among all the students who we serve.
References


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AN EXPLORATORY STUDY OF THE EXPERIENCES OF GAY, LESBIAN AND BISEXUAL FRATERNITY AND SORORITY MEMBERS REVISITED

DOUGLAS N. CASE, GRAHAEME A. HESP, AND CHARLES G. EBERLY

The lead author questioned over 500 self-identified gay, lesbian, and bisexual (GLB) fraternity and sorority members to assess their reasons for joining; how their membership affected their sexual identity development and intimate relationships; the degree of homophobia and heterosexism encountered; how sexual orientation affected the quality of their fraternal experiences; and the level of acceptance or rejection they faced. Many respondents were in the early phases of sexual identity development at the time they joined, and most chose to conceal their sexual orientation from their fellow members. This study details the reactions from fellow members, assesses satisfaction with the fraternity or sorority experience, and reports the level of involvement of GLB students in their fraternities or sororities.

Virtually no formal research exists regarding gay, lesbian, and bisexual (GLB) students who are or were members of college social fraternities and sororities. By choice or perceived necessity, most GLB fraternity and sorority members keep their sexual orientation hidden from their fellow members. The invisibility of the GLB population helps explain the dearth of research. This exploratory study was initiated because the primary researcher, a university student affairs professional who advises fraternities and sororities and an alumnus of a social fraternity, had questions regarding how the experiences of other gay fraternity members were similar to or different from his own.

Regardless of how an individual behaves in other contexts of his/her life, every time he/she encounters a new person (outside specifically GLB settings), that other person will assume that the individual is heterosexual (heteronormality). The GLB person will thus have to decide once again whether to correct that assumption and deal with whatever reaction the other person might have or to let the assumption persist and thereby present himself or herself as a heterosexual in that encounter. D’Augelli (1994) pointed out that given the heteronormality that exists in U.S. society there are few visible appropriate socializing forces for young GLB people; therefore, much of their individual development is because of their own choices and actions.

The terms available for the description of sexual identity have changed over time and hold different meanings for different people (Rust, 1996). Some gay and lesbian persons reject the label homosexual as too clinical a description. They prefer to describe themselves as gay because they see that term as an accurate description of their feelings and behaviors. Many people view the term queer as a decidedly political term that symbolizes a challenge to traditional category boundaries. For other people, however, the term is political and they reject the label because they do not share these politics.

Shilts (1993) maintained, “Homosexuals . . . have very little control over many of the most crucial circumstances of their lives. Control resides with the heterosexual majority, which defines the limits of freedom for the homosexual minority” (pp. 6-7). Ironically, at a time when most college students need support from their peers, many students are afraid to ask for it for fear of receiving rejection instead of support. Although social attitudes toward GLB people are becoming more positive, and GLB men and women are becoming more visible, homophobia

1 This article is a revision of Case, D. (April/May 1996), A glimpse of the invisible membership: A national survey of lesbigay Greek members. Perspectives, XXIII (3).
and heterosexism still pervade both our culture and social systems (Rust, 1996). No place is this assumption of heteronormality more true than within the college fraternity/sorority culture (DeQuine, 2003). Many college campuses have a student organization for GLB students and historically, these groups alone have addressed the needs of these students because counseling centers and campus housing professionals paid little attention to the problems of GLB students until very recently (D’Augelli, 1996). However, few if any such support organizations exist for GLB fraternity/sorority members (Case, 2005) and those that do exist are still in their infancy (see Hesp, 2005). Much informal counseling and crisis intervention occurs in these support organizations and D’Augelli sees it as imperative that campus administrators support them.

GLB fraternal groups have gained acceptance on many college campuses (Gregory & Associates, 2003), but acceptance of GLB fraternity/sorority members who become part of the mainstream fraternity/sorority community has been a slower process (DeQuine, 2003). Because more young GLB people come out of the closet while still in high school, they may arrive on college campuses expecting little or no discrimination in social opportunities due to their sexual orientation (Howe & Strauss, 2000; Savin-Williams, 1995). Although there were not formal exclusionary clauses within the membership guidelines of fraternities or sororities based on sexual orientation, some organizations are making specific statements that indicate that a differing sexual orientation from that of the majority of organization members is not a reason for denying an invitation to join, or removal of a brother or sister who comes out after his/her initiation (Binder, 2003). The familial environment of the college fraternity/sorority, however, may be concurrently a supportive and a hostile environment, particularly for those students in the process of developing a GLB identity. Kuh and Lyons (1990) claimed that “a close community can become closed, oppress as well as support” (p. 21). According to Chan (1996), psychological research indicates that it is far easier and more common to hold negative attitudes towards members of minority groups if an individual does not know or feel connected to someone in the stigmatized group and if he/she cannot see the humanity and similarity to himself/herself. As noted by Chickering and Reisser (1993), “homophobia discourages closeness between males. Men are more likely than women to equate warmth and closeness with sex and look for an erotic component when a strong emotional component exists” (p. 170). When a chapter culture “inhibits personal or cross cultural connections, or assigns second-class citizenship to certain types of students or relationships, then avenues for dialogue and exploration may be closed” (p. 396). Thus, GLB or questioning students may feel alienated from fraternities/sororities and fraternity/sorority members.

Windmeyer and Freeman gave voice to the experiences of select fraternity members (1998) and sorority members (2001) and their involvement in fraternity/sorority life as GLB people. These anecdotal reports affirmed that some people who are openly GLB or who later come out achieve and maintain membership in fraternity chapters. Some researchers have identified and labeled distinctive coping strategies used by GLB people (see Trump 2003; Woods, 1992). Johnson (1996) suggested that some gay adolescents follow one option of being the “best little boy on the face of the earth” (p. 38).

During the 1990s, when diversity became a buzzword on college campuses, many new fraternal organizations organized with a focus on cultural diversity (Johnson & Larabee, 2003). Many of these groups do not currently have an inter/national governing body or umbrella organization (such as the North-American Interfraternity Conference) to which they belong. Members join these culturally diverse groups for numerous reasons, oftentimes the same reasons that members join the older and more traditional chapters. According to Johnson and Larabee,
foremost is the desire for a sense of truly belonging and satisfaction of a need that the older and more traditional groups do not fully understand. Additionally, these organizations contribute significantly to their respective communities and endeavor to improve the quality of life for the culture. Delta Lambda Phi (DLP) was founded in 1986 in Washington, D.C., and modeled on the traditional programs, policies, and activities of the older and more traditional fraternity groups. The organization membership cites the mission as “enhancing the quality of life among gay, bisexual and progressive men by providing dignified and purposeful social, service and recreational activities” (Delta Lambda Phi website, 2005). Johnson and Larabee posit that the meaning and purpose for members of organizations such as DLP is to “have some social group that understands, appreciates and respects members as individuals, and which will help them develop into caring, balanced citizens” (p. 103).

The literature pertaining to homosexual identity development is also dichotomous with some suggesting that a majority of GLB people move through a series of stages from awareness through to the attainment of an integrated homosexual identity, whereas others articulate a nonlinear model. Cass’ (1979) model of homosexual identity development appears to be the most widely recognized model within the literature reviewed and suggests environment greatly affects the coming out process.

Mead (1934) argued that self-identity is formed out of the interaction between the “I” and the “me,” where the “I” is one’s internalized sense of self and the “me” is one’s sense of self as we imagine others see us. Through social interaction such as in fraternity/sorority chapter membership, the self emerges as individuals move back and forth between the “I” and the “me.” Culture frames social interaction and is reshaped by that interaction. It also establishes the roles that individuals adopt as they engage in social interaction. Erikson (1968) discussed identity development as a sense of self that emerges from the interaction between the individual and social relationships. He recognized the role that society and culture play in shaping how we think of and define ourselves. Both Erikson and Mead highlighted the fundamental role culture and social life play in the process of identity development. Thus, we posit that fraternity/sorority membership has a major impact on the identity development of GLB undergraduates who choose to join fraternal organizations.

Method

Sampling Method

Given the expected difficulty to contact participants, the sampling approach used purposeful “elite sampling” and “snowball sampling” (Zuometa, 2003, p. 49). In this procedure, the key researcher contacted initial elite (key) participants, many of whom were student affairs professionals, fraternity and sorority professionals, and fraternity/sorority volunteers. At the end of a survey, he asked the participant if he/she knew of others who would be able to add to the study. If yes, participants either passed on the contact details of the key researcher and had the new person contact the researcher, requested additional blank surveys for distribution, or provided the key researcher with the suggested participants’ names and addresses. While some of the referrals might have been unwilling to contact the researcher, the option of utilizing this system maintained the privacy of participants. The desire was that these participants would help to develop, network, and grow – like a snowball – referrals to fraternity/sorority chapter members who are openly GLB as well as some who may remain in the closet or not be open about their sexual orientation. The desire was that this process would lead to an ever-growing list of referrals that would facilitate the expansion of the developing theory (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003).

Because of interest from the initial research participants, the original survey was refined for mass distribution and expanded to include both
gay and bisexual fraternity members and lesbian and bisexual sorority members. The key researcher compiled nearly 100 surveys from men before he sought responses from women.

The availability of the survey to men and women was announced by classified advertisements and press releases sent to various local and national GLB publications, posting announcements to various Internet newsgroups and electronic mail discussion lists (particularly those related to GLB, higher education, and fraternity/sorority issues), and referrals from other respondents. Respondents could respond via electronic mail or by mailing back the survey to a post office box. The key researcher distributed surveys over a 30-month period between 1992 and 1995.

**Sample Characteristics**

A total of 524 responses were received, 472 from men and 52 from women. Demographically, these self-selected respondents appeared to represent a broad cross-section of individuals who have joined college fraternities and sororities (Table 1).

**Table 1**

*Demographic characteristics of voluntary research participants by sex*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Demographic Characteristic</th>
<th>Male n = 472</th>
<th>Female n = 52</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Institutions of higher education institutions represented</td>
<td>131</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inter/national organizations represented</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local organizations represented</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Range in age of respondents</td>
<td>19-58</td>
<td>19-59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average age of respondents</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of current undergraduates</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

With the exception of six responses from members of three historically Black (NPHC) fraternities, one response from a member of a historically Black (NPHC) sorority and one from a local Latino fraternity, respondents were from predominately White groups. Only 4% of the males and 6% of the females omitted their affiliation. The lead researcher defined regions as states within the regional student conferences (Northeast Greek Leadership Association, Southeastern Panhellenic/Interfraternity Conferences; Mid-American Greek Council Association, Western Greek Leadership Association). Respondents were more likely to be from the author’s Western Region (Table 2). Estimation of GLB Fraternity and Sorority Members
Instrumentation

The research instrument consisted of a 32-item survey administered to self-identified GLB fraternity and sorority members. Most of the questions were multiple-choice, but the key researcher provided spaces for written comments after several items. Content in the survey included GLB respondents' reasons for joining a fraternity/sorority, how their membership may have affected their sexual identity development and intimate relationships; if their sexual orientation affected the quality of their fraternal experience; the level of homophobia or heterosexism they faced; and the level of acceptance or rejection they experienced. Finally, respondents were encouraged to contribute any additional comments, stories, observations, or information they thought would be useful for the purposes of the project. Most respondents included at least a few additional remarks; a few included several pages of narrative. We inserted the “voices” of these respondents in this paper where their comments authentically reflected the trend of the quantitative data presented. (A copy of the original instrument may be obtained from the principal researcher.)

Results

Generalizability of the Self-Selected Volunteer Sample

The self-selected respondents in this study learned of the survey by word of mouth from professional or personal associates, or in a male-oriented GLB publication and took the initiative to respond; thus, the respondents did not constitute a random sample of GLB fraternity members and their responses cannot be generalized to represent the experiences of all GLB fraternity/sorority members. The self-selection was necessary, however, due to the limited accessibility of the target group for research purposes (Zuokemeña, 2003). GLB fraternity and sorority members who are still “in the closet” are less likely to read GLB publications or be on GLB electronic mailing lists, so their responses may be underrepresented. Nonetheless, the size and diversity of the respondent pool was useful for initial descriptive research purposes, particularly for

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sexual identity upon joining</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exclusively or Predominately heterosexual</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exclusively or Predominately gay/lesbian</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exclusively or Predominately bisexual</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (unsure, asexual, etc.)</td>
<td>05</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sexual identity upon graduation</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exclusively or Predominately heterosexual</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exclusively or Predominately gay/lesbian</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exclusively or Predominately bisexual</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (unsure, asexual, etc.)</td>
<td>02</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Current sexual identity (at the time of survey completion)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exclusively or Predominately gay/lesbian</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exclusively or Predominately bisexual</td>
<td>07</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3

Self-reported sexual identity among respondents (in percentage of total) upon joining a fraternity or sorority, upon graduation from college, and at the time of the survey.
the results regarding fraternity men. The lower number of female respondents was partially due to not recruiting women volunteers until after the key researcher obtained more than 100 responses from men. Sexual Identity Development

All of the respondents identified themselves as GLB at the time they completed the survey. However, over a third of the men and almost 80% of the women still identified themselves as heterosexual at the time they joined their fraternity or sorority (Table 3). By the time the participants graduated however, only about half of those who initially identified as heterosexual still considered themselves heterosexual. Many identified themselves as bisexual for a period before accepting a gay or lesbian identity. These data also clearly demonstrated a substantial difference between men and women with regard to the age of GLB identification. Most men had begun to adopt a gay or bisexual identity before college, whereas most women adopted a lesbian or bisexual identity during or after college.

Sexual Activity

A total of 36% of the men and 38% of the women indicated that they engaged in homosexual activity with one or more members of their own chapter, and 38% of the men and 12% of the women reported that they had engaged in homosexual activity with one or more members of other chapters on their campus. Slightly less than half the men had experienced their first post-pubescent homosexual experience prior to college, while only 12% of the women had done so (Table 4).

For a majority of the male respondents sexual partners in college were of the same gender, whereas one-third of the women reported exclusive relationships with members of their own gender (Table 5).

Table 4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time Period</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Before College</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>During College</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>After College</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Still a virgin</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Primarily same gender</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primarily opposite gender</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Both genders</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did not have sex partners in college</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Estimation of GLB Fraternity and Sorority Members

One of the research objectives was to attempt to determine the prevalence of GLB members of fraternities and sororities. This task was made complicated by the fact that students are still developing their sexual identify while in college and that most fraternity and sorority members do not reveal their sexual orientation to their fellow undergraduate members. Furthermore, a comparison statistic of the percentage of GLB members in the general college and university
population was also difficult to ascertain with accuracy, particularly with the fluidity of sexual identity among college-aged students and differing criteria for classifying an individual as homosexual or bisexual. The term “closet” symbolizes the oppression of gay people who feel required to remain silent about their sexual identity. Sedgwick (1990) maintained, “The closet is the defining structure for gay oppression” (p. 68) and symbolized the effect of the normalization of other-gender relationships. The power of the norms associated with heterosexuality imprisons those who feel differently and who have attractions that do not fit the normalized version of how society expects individuals to be (Rhoads, 1994). For some, confinement is so severe that thoughts of suicide prevail while for others, fear of being found out leads them to filter carefully feelings and thoughts. According to Rhoads, these factors make it unlikely that someone could establish deep relationships when he/she keeps a significant aspect of his/her identity secret. Resisting society’s norms can lead to social retribution while to comply is to deny one’s identity. The choice to come out is a very personal one and affected by an individual’s stage of sexual identity development. Herdt (1992) recognized the ongoing nature of coming out in discussing it as a rite of passage to gay identity: “Although the ‘coming out’ concept conveys a single event pinpointed in time and space, many writers today recognize a multiplicity of events stretching over years” (p. 30). A criticism of linear models is that they fail to acknowledge that coming out is a continuous, lifelong process.

One method of deriving an approximation of the percentage of chapter members who are GLB was to ask the respondents how many fellow members they knew, with certainty based on reliable knowledge acquired during or after college, to be GLB. Respondents were to exclude those who they merely suspected were GLB since such data would not be reliable. Of the male members, the average number of fellow members they knew to be gay or bisexual was 3.5 per chapter (4.5 if the respondent himself was included). With a mean reported chapter size of 52 among respondents to the survey, it is probable that the average male respondent matriculated with 70 - 90 different fraternity brothers over the course of his undergraduate experience (extrapolation based on an assumption that the average fraternity member is an active undergraduate member for 2.5 years). Accordingly, respondents knew a total of approximately 5-6 % of the fraternity chapter membership to be gay.

The women respondents reporting knowing with certainty that an average of 2.9 fellow members were lesbian or bisexual, with an average chapter size of 81, meaning that a total of approximately 3-4 % of the chapter membership was known to be lesbian or bisexual. Actual percentages of GLB membership in respondents’ chapters were likely to be higher, since these approximations do not include those chapter members not known with certainty to be GLB.

**Reasons for Joining and Benefits of Membership**

Each respondent selected up to three reasons from a list of 16 possible reasons why he/she determined to join a fraternity or sorority (Table 6). The top reasons for joining among both males and females were “friendship, camaraderie”, “social life, parties, having fun,”, and “support group, sense of belonging.” Among males, “leadership” was the fourth most frequently marked reason for joining, while for females, “friends encouraged me to join” was the fourth most frequent reason checked. Only 3% of men and 4 % of women indicated that they joined “to meet members of the same sex.”

Respondents also selected up to three benefits, from a list of ten, which represented the “most important lasting benefits” they actually received from their fraternity/sorority membership experience (Table 7). The top three outcomes listed by these respondents among both males and females were “social and interpersonal skills,” “long-term friendships,” and “leadership skills.”
Leadership Positions

These respondents reported they gravitated toward leadership positions within their chapters or fraternity/sorority community. Of the male respondents, 84% marked that they held at least one executive level position in their chapter (defined for these purposes as president, vice president, secretary, treasurer, rush/recruitment chair, pledge/new member educator, social chair and standards/judicial chair). Of the female respondents, 65% indicated they held an executive level position (Table 8). Respondents could mark as many response categories as offices they held during their undergraduate years.

“Coming Out” Experiences

A majority of the respondents remained in the closet while they were in college, not revealing their GLB sexual orientation to any of their fellow members. A total of 75% of the men and 81% of the women indicated that to their knowledge no one in their chapter was aware of their sexual orientation. There was a marked generational difference; only 12% of the respondents who graduated before 1980 reported they had revealed their GLB sexual orientation to one or more of their chapter members while in college. Among members who joined after 1980, 39% of respondents reported they had revealed their GLB sexual orientation to one or more of their chapter members while they were in college.

The majority of those who “came out” received accepting responses from their fellow members. For the male respondents, however,

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Table 6
Reasons for joining a fraternity or sorority marked by nine percent or more of respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reasons for joining</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Friendship, camaraderie</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social life, parties, having fun</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support group, sense of belonging</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friends encouraged me to join</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opportunity to get involved in campus activities</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small group living, home away from home</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents encouraged me to join</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 7
Lasting benefits of fraternity/sorority memberships (in percentage of total group)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lasting benefits</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social and interpersonal skills</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Long-term friendships</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership skills</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support group</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meet people from diverse backgrounds</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social status</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meet partner for long-term intimate relationship</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career contacts, networking</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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the degree of acceptance depended on whether the member choose to “come out” voluntarily to fellow members or whether the he was “outed” (i.e., his sexual orientation was revealed invol-
untarily). When the revelation was involuntary, the responses of fellow fraternity members were more likely to be negative (Tables 9 & 10).

Table 8
Undergraduate offices held by respondents (percentage of total group responding)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Undergraduate office held</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>President</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vice President</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secretary</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Treasurer</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pledge/New Member Educator</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rush/Recruitment Chair</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Chair</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standards/Judicial Chair</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fraternity/Sorority Council Delegate</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fraternity/Sorority Council Officer</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alumni Relations Chair</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intramurals Chair</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>House Manager</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scholarship Chair</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Offices</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 9
Sexual orientation revealed to one or more members of chapter while in college by percentage of total group responding

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Voluntarily</th>
<th>Involuntarily</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Voluntarily</th>
<th>Involuntarily</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Group</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very supportive response</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat supportive response</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>08</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat negative response</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very negative response</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chapter Climate and Satisfaction with Fraternity/Sorority Experience

Over 70% of the respondents reported that they had encountered a climate of homophobic or heterosexist behaviors or attitudes within their chapter, with derogatory remarks or jokes about GLB people being the most prevalent example. A little less than half (48%) of the men and only 10% of the women reported that they had experienced homoerotic behavior within their chapter. Of the men who reported such behavior over three-fourths (76%) gave nudity or members dressed only in underwear during fraternity activities as examples. Other examples frequently mentioned included wrestling, hugging (especially when intoxicated), and comments about sexual activity or anatomy (Table 11).

Nevertheless, the vast majority of respondents (89% of the men and 81% of the women) stated they were “very satisfied” or “somewhat satisfied” with their overall fraternity/sorority experience (Table 12). Most respondents indicated, however, that their sexual orientation in some way detracted from the quality of their undergraduate fraternity/sorority experience (Table 13). Nearly half the men and a third of the women reported that their perceived need to hide their orientation kept them from developing closer bonds of brotherhood/sisterhood. Many also felt uncomfortable with the pressure to arrange for opposite-sex dates for chapter social events.

Discussion

This exploratory study carried out in a 30-month period from 1993-1995 did not include fraternity and sorority members who identified themselves as heterosexual at the time.

---

Table 10
Sexual orientation revealed to one or more members of chapter after college by percentage of total group responding (without regard to voluntary or involuntary status)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total Respondent Group</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Members with very supportive response</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Members with somewhat supportive response</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Members with somewhat negative response</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Members with very negative response</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 11
Observed homophobic/heterosexist events within the chapter (by percent of total respondents reporting)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event/activity observed by respondents</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Encountered homophobic behaviors in chapter (across all categories)</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Derogatory remarks or jokes</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heterosexism expressed in membership selection</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative behavior (ostracism, gossip, etc.) directed toward members perceived or known to be GLB</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other non-specified behaviors</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did not elaborate the nature of the behavior</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Even though there is no parallel responses to the GLB respondents, the authors assume that heterosexual members would answer very similarly as did the GLB respondents as to why they decided to join a fraternity and sorority and what benefits they received from their membership. The results of these self-identified GLB fraternity/sorority members clearly showed that finding sexual partners was not a significant motivation for joining the organization. In fact, the narrative responses of several respondents indicated an opposite motivation. A few commented that joining a heterosexually focused organization would help them hide their sexual orientation, and a couple speculated that an unconscious reason for joining was to facilitate self-denial regarding their sexual orientation.

It is difficult to find precise approximations of GLB students in the general college and university population. Nonetheless, a reasonable conclusion is that the percentage of GLB fraternity and sorority members mirrors that of the campus population as a whole on which they are found. Many male respondents commented that based on their experience and observations they were confident that the percentage of gay or bisexual fraternity members actually exceeded that of the overall campus population; however, the information from this study was insufficient to confirm or deny that supposition. The percentage of the respondents who held executive offices was significantly higher than what one would have expected of a random sample of fraternity and sorority members. The method of survey distribution may partially account for the high percentage of leaders. University student affairs administrators, fraternity and sorority staff members, volunteer fraternity/sorority alumni, as well others referred by those individuals completed some of the surveys. One

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of satisfaction</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very satisfied</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat satisfied</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat dissatisfied</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very dissatisfied</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 12
Reported overall satisfaction with fraternity/sorority experience (by percentage of total respondents)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factors limiting quality of experience</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social events geared for heterosexual couples</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intimidated by homophobic attitudes/remarks</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Felt need to hide part of self; difficult to get close to others</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Members stopped associating with respondent once GLB sexual orientation became known or suspected</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other unspecified factors</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual orientation did NOT impact quality of experience</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 13
Self-reported factors detracting from quality of fraternity/sorority experience (by percentage of respondents reporting)
could expect that such alumni were leaders in their undergraduate chapters. Even considering those participants, the results reflected that GLB members tended to be “overachievers.” This tendency toward “overachievement” may reflect a desire for validation and acceptance by the group, which was borne out by comments to that effect made by several respondents. Another possible explanation is that “closeted” GLB members channeled their energies into organizational leadership duties that others applied toward developing heterosexual relationships.

The high number of respondents who stated that they had encountered homophobic or heterosexist attitudes within their chapter, usually in the form of derogatory jokes or comments, was predictable for a single-gender youth organization based on the author’s professional experience. Participants also frequently evidenced heterosexism in membership selection. If a potential member was rumored or perceived to be gay or lesbian, the chapter members were likely to summarily vote against offering the student a bid to join. Likewise, if a chapter’s members discovered or believed a pre-initiate was gay or lesbian, the chapter was inclined to dismiss the person. More often than not, the initiated GLB member(s) would voice no opposition to the discrimination, fearing that to do so might cause other members to question their motivation. One man even wrote, “A rushee was blackballed because of suspected homosexuality. I was one of the three who blackballed him. Five years later I met this individual again at a bar, and we have been lovers for eight years now (and going strong)!”

While chapters seemed generally unwilling to pledge or initiate a student thought to be lesbian or gay, chapter members demonstrated greater tolerance if the homosexual orientation of a brother/sister became known after initiation. The responses of fellow members to the revelation that a member was GLB varied widely, from immediate expulsion and physical threats at the one extreme to complete acceptance at the other. In most cases, however, the majority of the chapter had at least a somewhat supportive response, with only a few members responding with rejection. In those instances in which the GLB member had control over the circumstances, by voluntarily determining the time, manner and recipients of the disclosure, the response was much more likely to be supportive than in those instances in which the member’s sexual orientation was discovered by others.

There was a noteworthy dichotomy between chapter members’ responses to prospective members or pre-initiates perceived to be GLB and their response to the revelation that an initiated member was GLB. With few exceptions, the respondents reported that their chapters were very reluctant to offer an invitation of membership to a potential member perceived to be GLB. On the other hand, while some initiated GLB members faced expulsion or ostracism after their sexual orientation became known, more frequently GLB members who “came out” did not face the rejection they had feared. This is comparable to the experiences of GLB people who have “come out” to their families. Far more often than not in this authors’ personal experiences, siblings strive to be understanding and supportive when they learn that a brother or sister is lesbian or gay, even when the sibling harbors homophobic attitudes and beliefs. It is not unusual for siblings to take time to process this initial cognitive dissonance, but in the end brotherhood and sisterhood tend to prevail over fear and prejudice.

Despite the pervasiveness of homophobia and heterosexism and the personal strains associated with concealing their true sexual identity, the overwhelming majority of the respondents rated their fraternity or sorority experience as positive. For many, the brotherhood and sisterhood was the acceptance they were seeking. At the time of this original study, comparable satisfaction statistics for heterosexual members were not available. However, the latest AFA/EBI Fraternity/Sorority Assessment Survey (Ves-
tal & Butler, 2005) indicated a composite 88% satisfaction rate for all fraternity members and a composite 86% satisfaction for all sorority members. Thus, satisfaction with the fraternity/sorority experience would seem to be no different for members specifically self-identified as GLB than for students in general as surveyed by the AFA/EBI Fraternity/Sorority Assessment Survey.

The data collected in this survey were a composite of GLB fraternity/sorority members spanning four decades. The narratives that accompanied the surveys showed slow but significant change and promise for the future. For example, one chapter president who had recently graduated from a large Midwestern university organized a "coming out" party for himself during his final term, to which the entire chapter was invited and most attended. Another chapter president who also had recently graduated from a large Midwestern university reported that the chapter membership reelected him as president for a second year shortly after "coming out" to the chapter.

Reflecting gay life on the college campus as confirmed in Dilley (2002), a 1963 Brown University graduate and president of his fraternity chapter, wrote the following:

In considering the questions asked, it occurs to me how very dramatically the world has changed in the 30+ years which separate me from my undergraduate experience.

In my opinion, the fraternity system of the late ’50s and early ’60s merely reflected the predominant social values of the times, it did not create them. Homophobia was just another of the postwar social norms…My sexual repression was firmly in place way before I hit the ivy covered walls, and in a sense fraternity membership, not to mention achieving fraternity leadership, was elemental to the expression of this repression. It represented simply another layer of the cloak which was designed to hide my true identity.

It took tremendous courage to be openly gay in this era. There was little public tolerance for deviant behavior, and certainly in university courses such as Sociology 201 (Nuts and Sluts), my recollection is the homosexuality ran a distant third behind alcoholism and nymphomania in emphasis and treatment.

The environment didn’t do a whole lot for the self-esteem of your average emerging homosexual, and generations of psychologists have grown rich treating the multiple personality disorders which resulted. But fraternity membership was, on balance, a constructive force in my development. Being a member gave me a social identity. It provided a “community” in which to develop leadership and interpersonal skills….

No, I haven’t found it appropriate to publish a newsletter announcing my true sexual orientation to these friends from the past, and as a divorced father of two (pretty neat) kids, I guess the supposition is that I’m straight—to the degree that anyone thinks about such things.

I’m out to my kids, I’m out to my (current) friends, and even out to a few of the people I went to high school with… It has been an interesting journey of self-discovery and self-acceptance, and an incredibly enriching one as well. My fraternity experience was simply a stop along the way.

A second respondent from the University of Wyoming, who graduated thirty years later in 1993, provided an insightful contrast to the personal reflection above that mirrored the changing times in which he was an active fraternity member. He “came out” to the chapter during rush and thus never had to hide his sexual orientation from his brothers.

I have really enjoyed my experiences in my fraternity. I have managed to change quite a few of my brother’s ideas about gays. David [name changed], who was our vice
president when I was initiated and is now our president, is a redneck from Nebraska. We have spent a lot of time together this semester. David and I drove to our regional convention this past spring and really got to know each other better. David recently admitted that he had quite a few reservations about my joining the fraternity. He said he used to think of gays as being “sub-human.” In high school, David and his friends actually went to Omaha one weekend to “beat up fags.” They didn’t find any gays to beat up, but he acknowledges that he was excited about the prospect. Now when I see David on campus, he comes up and gives me a hug (a fairly butch hug, but a hug nonetheless). We’ve discussed our romantic and sexual problems. We occasionally work out together and we take a shower at the gym afterwards.

This semester, Robert [name changed], the homophobe [mentioned previously in his survey response] rushed a friend who he knows from the College Republicans group. This friend also writes a column for the campus paper. In this column he has attacked gays three times in the past year. As the rush chairman, I have the ultimate say in whether or not we extend a bid to prospective members. I could have kept this guy from joining our fraternity. I expressed my concerns about him to a couple of men in the fraternity. As a result, the president, treasurer, and sergeant-at-arms visited the individual to explain that his homophobic beliefs could not enter into the fraternity. They explained to him that his ideas were his own, but that they had no business in the fraternity. This individual was initiated over a month ago, and I haven’t had a single problem with him. He actually goes out of his way to come over and say hello when we see each other on campus.

More changes have occurred during the past decade. Today on many campuses, openly GLB students are successfully participating in membership recruitment. Once accepted as a member, these openly GLB members take same-sex dates to fraternity and sorority functions – something that was virtually unimaginable in the prior generations.

Members of the Lambda 10 Project (www.lambda10.org), a national clearinghouse for information about sexual orientation issues in fraternities and sororities, are planning a more formal follow-up to this study. The planned survey will measure any progress made since the time of this original survey, and add additional dimensions to the study for analysis such as cultural and ethnic differences. The information in this study and the follow-up study can provide fresh guidance to student affairs administrators in developing programming to create greater awareness and understanding of GLB issues within fraternities and sororities, so future students can enjoy the full benefits of brotherhood/sisterhood regardless of sexual orientation.
References


**Author Updates**

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DIFFERENCES IN SELF-AWARENESS RELATED MEASURES AMONG CULTURALLY BASED FRATERNITY, SOCIAL FRATERNITY, AND NON-AFFILIATED COLLEGE MEN

TRICIA R. SHALKA AND SUSAN R. JONES

This study examined differences among men affiliated with culturally based fraternities, men affiliated with social fraternities, and non-affiliated men on measures of consciousness of self and congruence. Data were collected in the spring of 2006 from 1,698 undergraduates, representing 46 different higher education institutions, as part of the Multi-Institutional Study of Leadership (MSL). Analysis of data was conducted using MANCOVA to compare independent variable group differences across the two dependent variables, while taking quasi pre-test measures for both items into account as covariates. Significant differences among culturally based fraternity men, social fraternity men, and non-affiliated men were found on the combination of dependent variables. Further analyses revealed culturally based fraternity men scored lower than social fraternity men and non-affiliated men on both consciousness of self and congruence.

In the absence of conclusive research about the value-added aspects of fraternal organizations, negative stereotypes associated with fraternity men abound. The unfavorable outcomes associated with fraternity membership, from heavy and binge drinking patterns (Danielson, Taylor, & Hartford, 2001; Eberhardt, Rice, & Smith, 2003; Hennessy & Huson, 1998; Riordan & Dana, 1998) to negative impacts on academic outcomes (DeBard, Lake, & Binder, 2006; Pas- carella, Flowers, & Whitt, 2001) to the dangers of hazing, which continue to be prevalent within these fraternal organizations (Allen & Madden, 2008; Hennessy & Huson, 1998; Nuwer, 1999; Sweet, 1999) are well documented in numerous studies.

Sparse research-based evidence supports claims of positive outcomes membership by professionals who support fraternities (Strayhorn & Colvin, 2006). A faculty member in Strayhorn and Colvin’s qualitative study remarked,

While I intuitively ‘know’ that Greek affairs [sic] makes a difference in student outcomes, I am not aware of specific research that details that difference by focusing on just the contribution of Greek [sic] involvement separately from other influences on student outcomes. (p. 101)

This study examined differences between culturally based fraternity men, social fraternity men, and non-affiliated college men on measures of consciousness of self and congruence – desirable student development outcomes indicative of a positive and supportive learning environment.

Conceptual Framework

Researchers have noted the historical canon of research in human development was already about men (Davis, 2002; Edwards & Jones, 2009). As a result, research to examine men through a gendered lens has been slow to start (Davis). As Davis explained, “Although researchers have begun to investigate how gender affects women’s identity development, there has been relatively little written about such impact on the psychosocial development of college men”

1The terms “culturally based” and “social fraternity” are used by the authors in this article as a way of distinguishing between fraternities for the purposes of the study. These terms have not been officially adopted or sanctioned by AFA, NIC, NPHC or any other organization. In this case, they reflect the wording used for a demographic question on the survey instrument. For a discussion on the use of distinguishing terms in research, please see the editorial on this issue of Oracle.
Male gender development represents an area of identity development that must be further explored (Edwards & Jones). The need for increased understanding of male student involvement experience is evident, and this is of particular importance for men in fraternities. Fraternity culture harbors many aspects that have the potential to negatively impact fraternity men, including fear of rejection by peers, secrecy, a deep sense of loyalty that can impede proper judgment, and a history of perpetuation of traditions that can take away from a man’s ability to think independently (Davis, 2006). The root of addressing such problems, in Davis’ estimation, rests in understanding and challenging masculinity, as opposed to “simplistic anti-hazing, alcohol abuse, sexual assault prevention programs” (p. 1).

To operationalize these concepts, the current study explored aspects of male self-awareness. Primarily, data were collected to evaluate consciousness of self (i.e., an understanding of one’s motivations, beliefs, values), congruence (i.e., the ability to act consistently with one’s beliefs and values), and the role fraternity membership may play in the development of one or both.

**Method**

This study explored differences among men affiliated with a culturally based fraternity (fraternal organizations with a historically racial minority foundation), men affiliated with a social fraternity (historically White fraternal organizations), and men not affiliated with a fraternity. Data were drawn from the Multi-Institutional Study of Leadership (MSL) in an ex post facto design to investigate two primary research questions.

1. Do differences exist between male culturally based fraternity members, male social fraternity members, and non-affiliated males on consciousness of self?
2. Do differences exist between male culturally based fraternity members, male social fraternity members, and non-affiliated males on congruence?

**Instrument**

The theoretical grounding of the MSL was the social change model of leadership development (SCM), developed through the Higher Education Research Institute (Wagner, 2006). The social change model of leadership development is a values-based model, including consciousness of self and congruence among the values, the two dependent variables in the current study.

The primary scales that were used to study the research questions were the Consciousness of Self and Congruence Scales that appeared in the MSL survey instrument. These scales are part of a revised version of the Socially Responsible Leadership Scale, originally developed by Tyree (1998). Both dimensions were measured in the MSL using a 5-point Likert-type scale. In the current study, reliability of the Consciousness of Self Scale was calculated as .79, while the Cronbach alpha result for the Congruence Scale was .82.

**Sample and Procedure**

Of the 52 campuses participating in the MSL, 46 had male students and maintained an institutionally recognized fraternity community. Data drawn from these institutions resulted in an overall student sample size of 45,175, which criterion sampling reduced to 1,698 cases (n = 566 in each of the three independent variable groups). This number resulted from the small number of men in the culturally based fraternity affiliation group (n = 566). A random number generation technique was employed to randomly select cases for each of the other two groups, men who were affiliated with a social fraternity and men who were unaffiliated.

For the purpose of this study, the culturally based fraternity men could be identified in two different ways. First, they may have selected that they were part of a culturally based fraternity,
but not a social fraternity, on the MSL instrument. Second, they may have selected that they were part of a culturally based fraternity and also selected being affiliated with a social fraternity on the MSL instrument. Meanwhile, social fraternity men were identified in only one way. They were only considered social fraternity men for the purpose of this study if they had selected membership in a social fraternity on the MSL instrument and not selected membership in a culturally based fraternity on the MSL instrument.

Analysis
Due to the correlation potential of the Consciousness of Self and Congruence Scales, a multivariate analysis of covariance (MANCOVA) was used for data analysis. Covariates were used to account for differences that may inherently exist between the three independent variable groups due to their self-selecting nature. The MANCOVA was used to explore possible differences across the combination of dependent variables between the three independent variable groups. Significance of the MANCOVA test was further investigated using univariate level ANCOVA tests to ascertain specific between group differences on each dependent variable. Post-hoc analyses using a Bonferroni test were used to understand significance of pairwise comparisons.

Results
MANCOVA revealed statistically significant differences among the three independent variable groups (men affiliated with a culturally based fraternity, men affiliated with a social fraternity, and men not affiliated with a fraternity) across the combination of two dependent variables (consciousness of self and congruence), $F(4, 3,384) = 5.654, p = .000; \text{Wilks' Lambda } = .987; \eta^2 = .007$ (Table 1). Covariates used in this design included quasi pre-test items for the two dependent variables.

Further investigation of the results of the MANCOVA showed a statistically significant difference between independent variable groups on both dependent variables when considered as univariates. Consciousness of self showed significance $F(2, 1,695) = 11.100, p = .000; \eta^2 = .013$, as did congruence $F(2, 1,695) = 7.030, p = .001; \eta^2 = .008$ (Table 2).

A comparison of adjusted and unadjusted means for both dependent variables by independent variable group revealed the nature of these differences (Table 3). Investigation of adjusted and unadjusted means revealed a similar pattern on both dependent variables after adjusting for both covariates. Means for all independent variable groups were higher than the mean scores for those groups on the quasi pre-tests. The Consciousness of Self quasi pre-test mean scores for the culturally based fraternity group, social fraternity group, and non-affiliated group were 3.71, 3.74, and 3.66. The Congruence quasi pre-test mean scores for the culturally based
fraternity group, social fraternity group, and non-affiliated group were 3.79, 3.89, and 4.01.

Pairwise comparisons using a Bonferroni test were used to further establish specific, significant differences between groups. On the consciousness of self dependent variable, the culturally based fraternity group showed a significant difference in the negative direction from both the social fraternity group (mean difference = -.132, SE = .028) and from the non-affiliated group (mean difference = -.079, SE = .028) (Table 4). On the congruence dependent variable, the culturally based fraternity group also showed a significant difference in the negative direction from both the social fraternity group (mean difference = -.103, SE = .028) and from the non-affiliated group (mean difference = -.071, SE = .028).

Table 2
Univariate ANOVA Summary Table

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>DV</th>
<th>E</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>p</th>
<th>Partial Eta Squared</th>
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<tr>
<td>Intercept</td>
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<td>1,798.68</td>
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<td>.515</td>
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<td>.000</td>
<td>.577</td>
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<td>.080</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Congruence</td>
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<td>.001</td>
<td>.007</td>
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<td>PRE-Test Congruence</td>
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<td>.133</td>
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<td>.190</td>
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<td>Self</td>
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<td>.000</td>
<td>.013</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Congruence</td>
<td>7.03</td>
<td>.001</td>
<td>.008</td>
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</table>

Table 3
Adjusted and Unadjusted Means for Consciousness of Self and Congruence by Affiliation Group

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Affiliation Group</th>
<th>Consciousness of Self</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>Congruence</th>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Adjusted M</td>
<td>Unadjusted M</td>
<td>Adjusted M</td>
<td>Unadjusted M</td>
<td>Adjusted M</td>
<td>Unadjusted M</td>
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<td>Unadjusted M</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
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<td>3.96</td>
<td>4.10</td>
<td>4.10</td>
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<tr>
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<td>3.92</td>
<td>4.07</td>
<td>4.10</td>
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Table 4
Pairwise Comparisons for Consciousness of Self

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<th>Affiliation Group</th>
<th>Mean Difference</th>
<th>Standard Error</th>
<th>Significance</th>
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<td>Social</td>
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<td>.028</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Non-affiliated</td>
<td>-.079*</td>
<td>.028</td>
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<td>Culturally Based</td>
<td>.132*</td>
<td>.028</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Non- affiliated</td>
<td>.053</td>
<td>.028</td>
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<td>Non-affiliated</td>
<td>Culturally Based</td>
<td>.079*</td>
<td>.028</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Social</td>
<td>-.053</td>
<td>.028</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Mean difference is significant at the .05 level

Adjustment for multiple comparisons: Bonferroni
Discussion

The results of this study are partially consistent with previous research noting differences between fraternity men and their non-affiliated peers on a number of outcome variables (DeBard, Lake, & Binder, 2006; Eberhardt, Rice, & Smith, 2003; Hayek et al., 2002; Kimbrough & Hutcheson, 1998; Pascarella et al., 2001; Sutton & Kimbrough, 2001; Terenzini, Pascarella, & Blimling, 1996), though in the current study only culturally based fraternity men were significantly different from the non-affiliated population. Of particular note was the disparity on consciousness of self and congruence existing not only between men who were affiliated with a culturally-based fraternity and those who were not, but also between men affiliated with a social fraternity and men affiliated with a culturally based fraternity. Previous research has often failed to view the social fraternity and culturally based fraternity experiences as discrete (McClure, 2006).

Factors Influencing Culturally Based Group Scores

It is concerning that men affiliated with a culturally based fraternity scored significantly lower than non-affiliated men and social fraternity men on both dependent variables. In part, this phenomenon may be connected to the nature of the fraternal experience in culturally based organizations. In the case of historically Black fraternities (one example of a culturally based fraternity), in particular, membership functions in a way that helps to lower members’ feelings of isolation on predominantly White campuses by linking members to the college community and the larger Black community (McClure, 2006). This linkage to a wider community is something that may be less necessary for White students in historically White fraternities. The latter group may have less need for an organization to diminish feelings of isolation, as they are already the majority group on the campuses of which they are a part (McClure). In essence, those students who feel racially isolated may need identification with a group as opposed to focusing on the self in order to feel grounded on the campus.

On predominantly White campuses, in particular, it may be the case that men of color gravitate toward culturally based fraternity affiliation as an anchor to same-race connections. According to McClure (2006), male members of historically Black fraternities expressed feelings of disorientation and alienation on predominantly White campuses that resulted in what one respondent characterized as causing a general sense of “weariness” (p. 1,047). These feelings, however, were transformed through the historically Black fraternity experience, which often left members feeling more connected to the campus and less isolated (McClure).

This is, perhaps, where a parallel can be drawn to the current study and the lower scores of culturally based fraternity men on consciousness of self and congruence measures. Though numerically the current study suggests social fraternity men are more developed on these measures than their culturally based fraternity peers, this may be more due to the complexities of privilege (Tatum, 2003) given the variation of backgrounds in men of color composition in these three independent variable groups. In other words, the culturally based fraternity group represents a much more racially diverse sample than does the social fraternity group. Given the greater proportion of men of color in the culturally based fraternity group in the current study, it is reasonable to expect that many of these men than in the other two groups would experience the challenges of adapting to campus environments organized around the White mainstream, as described by respondents in the McClure (2006) study. Thus, there would be an increased need for these men for the anchoring offered by a culturally based group experience.
Students frequently do not experience their campus cultural climate in the same way. Ancis, Sedlacek, and Mohr (2000) confirmed findings of previous research by demonstrating that students of color were much more likely than their White peers to feel pressure to conform to racial stereotypes of their academic performance and behavior, and attempted to minimize racial group characteristics in order to be accepted. This underscores students of color feeling pressures of conformity, which could certainly influence aspects of the ability to act congruently with their internal sense of self in the face of these external demands.

For college men of color, these external demands are ever-present. As hooks (2004) explained of Black men, “To build the self-esteem that is the foundation of self-love black males necessarily engage in a process of resistance, during which they challenge existing negative stereotypes and reclaim their right to self-definition” (p. 142). A constant struggle exists for Black men in the tension of an internal definition of self that is not consistent with what the macro society has imposed (Marable, 2001). This could also contribute to an explanation of the results of the current study.

A construct related to self-awareness, particularly to congruence, is that of self-authorship. In Baxter Magolda’s (2002) study of college students, self-authorship was often not something that students were able to achieve during their college years, the process of which requires the ability to develop an internal sense of self. Baxter Magolda connected this to the fact that college students do not frequently receive messages in their collegiate experience emphasizing the need to develop an internal definition of self. This may be even more the case for men of color, as they face the constant challenge of externally defined conceptions of their role in society (hooks, 2004; Marable, 2001). The results of the current study may be tied to the fact that men of color have this increased hurdle to overcome in confronting the external before they can come to terms with their internal definitions of self.

Considerations Related to Survey Items

Considering adjusted mean scores for both Consciousness of Self and Congruence by affiliation showed that all groups maintained aggregate scores that were in the high 3-point to low 4-point range on a 5-point Likert-type scale rating. A neutral response was indicated as 3. Thus, the average response for all three independent variable groups suggests all of these men thought of themselves as possessing a reasonably good sense of self and ability to act congruently with their values and beliefs.

Nonetheless, caution should be exercised with the interpretation of these results as being not so much caused by shortcomings on the part of the culturally based fraternity group, but at least also in part due to the nature of the frame through which Consciousness of Self and Congruence were conceptualized. It is important to keep in mind that the scale used in this study was derived from the MSL, which was a leadership study. This, in particular, could have influenced the frame through which respondents were considering either of these dimensions.

The results of this study may be less reflective of discrete differences among groups and more a product of proxy measures used to evaluate differences. For example, one of the questions on the Consciousness of Self Scale asked participants to respond with their agreement to the statement “I can describe how I am similar to other people.” Another question on this same scale asked respondents to indicate their agreement with the statement “I am comfortable expressing myself.” The argument can be made that these questions are biased towards those in a majority identity group. For those men who are in an underrepresented racial group, the possibility exists that their experience of difference from others is more salient than that of how they draw similarity. In a related way, men
of color who experience their campus environment as one requiring conformity (Ancis, Sedlacek, & Mohr, 2000) may not feel as comfortable expressing themselves, not because of a lack of Consciousness of Self, but rather because of a climate that sends messages to restrict such authenticity for these men.

Similar concerns can be drawn for the Congruence Scale items. One of the questions on this scale asked respondents to indicate their agreement with the statement "It is easy for me to be truthful." This question for men of color may not be as easy as whether or not their values are congruent with their actions. With the increased pressures resulting from external definitions of identity expression for men of color (hooks, 2004; Marable, 2001) and campus environments inherently demanding conformity to dominant paradigms (Ancis, Sedlacek, & Mohr, 2000), men of color may act congruently, but may not be as at ease as the above question would suggest.

Implications

Anson and Marchesani (1991) noted that, "fraternities and sororities offer today’s students opportunities for personal development unmatched in most campus organizations" (p. ix). The results of this study suggest fraternity affiliation, uniformly, does not account for positive outcomes on personal development. This was evidenced by the discrepancy in which culturally based fraternity men fell below their social fraternity and non-affiliated peers on Consciousness of Self and Congruence. Campus-based professionals need to understand that previous research on fraternity experiences has not considered culturally based groups as a separate entity, although in practice, culturally based and traditional social fraternities are often treated the same (Kimbrough, 1995; McClure, 2006).

Participants in Davis’ (2002) qualitative study responded to the question of what it was like for them to be a man on campus with some difficulty in conceptualizing their experience. A common theme was that while many services existed to support and affirm women’s identities, there was a lack of corresponding services for men (Davis). If this crisis in affirming men’s identities exists, it seems from the findings of the current study that there exists a corresponding concern within subgroups of college men. Davis’ findings suggested an inequity in terms of services for men on college campuses, and the current study gives reason to consider further whether the services presently provided to men, as in the case of fraternity advising, are reaching all men in the ways that would be most beneficial to their development. Student affairs practitioners must continue to help men probe their sense of self and ask questions that encourage men to become more self-aware. In particular, practitioners must be sensitive to the societal pressures at play that may make an internal definition of self even more difficult for men of color to explore (hooks, 2004; Marable, 2001).

Conclusion

The discrepancy between two types of fraternity experiences, culturally based and social, suggests a need for crafting the fraternity experience for all groups into one that can be connected to personal growth. Several questions remained unanswered. Are those who work with fraternities missing an opportunity for enhancing personal development and growth within the fraternal experience in ways most beneficial to particular kinds of fraternal experiences? Or are practitioners already interfacing differently with these two distinct fraternal groups in ways that contribute to the differences noted in this study?

Critical research examining the nature of culturally based fraternal experiences has been sparsely accomplished in the past. The different experiences of fraternity members needs
to be captured in greater depth and accuracy in research, and campus professionals need to be more culturally aware as they work within and among the members of such groups.

References


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Towards a Typology of Fraternity/Sorority Programs: A Content Analysis

Pietro A. Sasso

Fraternity/sorority standards have been represented as the answer to the Call for Values Congruence authored by the Franklin Squared Group (2003). The outcome of this document was a proliferation of various styles and models of standards programs utilized to establish community practices with the overarching goal of facilitating values-based fraternity and sorority campus communities. However, fraternity/sorority standards programs answering this call have established higher standards through different methods. This study solicited standards programs from institutions from across the United States. Data from 31 standards programs were collected, cataloged, and analyzed through qualitative inquiry with the use of a rubric developed to establish a typology. Five categories resulted from analysis: evaluation, minimum standards, accreditation, awards, and comprehensive. Implications of the study are included along with future directions for research.

Within the last 20 years, fraternities and sororities have continued to be featured in a number of high-profile incidents leading to negative perceptions of the organizations. News reports of incidents of alcohol-related deaths and other issues resulting from fraternity and sorority alcohol abuse lend credibility to these perceptions (Wall, 2005). For fraternities, these include racially charged party themes, hazing incidents, and most recently offensive comments about women (Kaplan & Lee, 2006; Marcus, 2011). For sororities, hazing, public displays of intoxication, as well as destruction of public property during formal chapter events are commonplace themes (Cornwell, 2010). Previous research indicated these problems exist within the cultures of fraternities and sororities on American college campuses because of their strong association with alcohol (Pascarella, Edison, & Whitt, 1996). Issues associated with sorority and fraternity membership such as sexual assault, binge drinking, and hazing within fraternities and sororities persist regardless of their value to individual members and society (Kuh, Pascarella, & Wechsler, 1996; Wall, 2005).

One of the more pragmatic attempts to address misbehavior among fraternity and sorority members at the campus level has been to require individual chapters to align with a set of community standards structured by a procedural program or through a relationship statement. The relationship statement was originally intended to serve as a method to create space between fraternity/sorority chapters and their host institution, given their existence as a source of institutional liability. It was also the first documented attempt to address their relevance and viability as positively contributing to the campus community (Shonrock, 1998). Historically, the relationship statement was developed out of the premise that previous attempts to curb the negative aspects of the social culture of fraternities and sororities largely were not effective (Milani & Nettles, 1987). Colleges and universities chose this more drastic and proscribed approach in an attempt to bring fraternities and sororities back in alignment with university standards and expectations (Hauser, 1997).

Purpose of the Study

Without any basis for universal characteristics or guidelines, fraternity/sorority standards programs have been campus-based. This study employed the use of qualitative research methods, utilizing content analysis, to identify universal characteristics of fraternity/sorority
standards programs to provide a framework for categorization. In creating a categorical framework through qualitative inquiry, this study sought to add to the research and produce a pragmatic resource for student affairs practitioners advising fraternities and sororities.

Background

Many institutions previously found that the development of community standards was a singular best-fit policy for addressing behaviors (Harvey, 1990). The relevancy question of fraternities and sororities, therefore, was answered and further made distinct through a relationship statement. Relationship statements defined the scope of the association between the host institution and the fraternity or sorority chapter. Such statements may have included a description of the limited purpose of recognition; acknowledgment that the fraternity/sorority letter organization was independently chartered; confirmation that the college assumed no responsibility for supervision, control, safety, security, or other services with respect to the fraternity/sorority organization; and a requirement that the fraternity or sorority provide evidence that it carried sufficient insurance to cover its risks (Gulland & Powell, 1989).

A relationship statement can be restrictive and can be overbroad in its scope. This has led to several issues on college campuses questioning the actual relationship between the fraternity/sorority community and the institution (Harvey, 1990). Although the existence of such a recognition statement might defeat a claim that the institution has assumed a duty to supervise fraternity and sorority chapters, it might also limit the institution’s authority to regulate the organization’s activities (Kaplin & Lee, 1995). However, the poor design and implementation of relationship statements led to several institutions facing liability issues because they failed to narrow or define the scope of their relationship with fraternities and sororities (Kaplin & Lee, 2006; Pavela, 1995). Thus, the relationship statement has been deemed an ineffective singular policy approach (Pavela). The response to the failure of relationship statements, persistence of high-profile incidents, and research findings indicating the negative outcomes associated with membership facilitated a new multifaceted approach, the values-based movement.

Fraternity and sorority leaders and campus-based professionals launched the values-based movement in an attempt to refocus organizations on their founding values. These values are unique to each organization, however; there are elements that are common and shared across all organizations such as friendship, service, scholarship, and leadership. These values hold the underlying notion that acquaintance and loyalty to one another helps to advance the furthering of lifelong camaraderie also commonly associated as brotherhood and sisterhood. Additionally, it is also common that rites of passage further mark the transition and progression of membership. Service and leadership within the institution as well as scholarship are the essential and valued characteristics of a traditional fraternity and sorority experience. The values-based movement was spearheaded by the Franklin Square Group, an assembly of 20 college and university presidents and inter/national fraternal organization leaders representing several organizations, campus representatives, and academic consortia, which met in Washington, D.C. to consider and address the state of fraternities and sororities (Franklin Square Group, 2003).

In 2003, the Franklin Square Group issued A Call for Values Congruence to express concerns over the focus of the “liquid culture” of the fraternity/sorority system and to establish recommendations regarding the sustainability of fraternity and sorority chapters across the nation. The authors supported the notion that fraternities and sororities were a bastion for alcohol misuse that caused a dichotomy between their stated missions and their actual behaviors. The report also supported the notion that fraternities and sorori-
ties impact student culture in ways that no other student organization can through experiential learning opportunities outside the classroom. This juxtaposition led the authors to call for “the development of programs and policies addressing alcohol abuse based upon research findings and established best practices and oversee their implementation” (p. 6). It is through this recommendation for the use of best practices that A Call for Values Congruence advocated for the use of a periodic “certification process” to involve multiple external stakeholders ranging from local alumni to faculty. This certification process is reflected within the Collegiate Greek Community Standard (CGCS).

The CGCS is a framework for creating minimum policy and programming standards processes that fraternity and sorority chapters must meet to be recognized annually. It is a certification process for which each fraternity and sorority chapter must show how it has respectively met the listed standards. An external committee of alumni, faculty, and staff volunteers reviews this evidence. The Franklin Square Group (2003) devised a certification process model for fraternity/sorority standards programs within A Call for Values Congruence. It was the goal of this program to provide an active approach for programming and community standards for a campus system to address and ultimately reduce binge drinking and other related negative effects of fraternity/sorority involvement.

A Brief History of Fraternity/Sorority Standards Programs

Dartmouth College established the first documented set of fraternity/sorority standards in 1983 (Norman, 2003). These policies, entitled “Constitution and Minimum Standards for Co-Ed, Fraternity & Sorority Organizations” (Hokanson, 1992, p. 20), included categories for leadership, membership, budgets, program development, alumni, student conduct, and housing appearance. There were no clearly set criteria on what determined standards or benchmarks. The categories were open to judgment by evaluators as to whether organizations had effectively “passed” the review. While this program was simply a categorical review, other institutions began to set standards through engagement in self-study utilizing survey data, academic status measures, and recruitment statistics to gauge the condition of its fraternity/sorority community during the 1980s and into the early 1990s (Boyle, 1992).

Colby College and Franklin and Marshall College conducted summative self-studies on early standards programs in the 1980s (Boyle, 1992). Rutgers University engaged in a series of three self-studies beginning in 1980 and ending in 1992. Self-studies through formative evaluation were conducted by Middlebury College and Bucknell University in 1988 and 1990 respectively. The University of Minnesota also engaged in self-study to better increase retention of fraternity members and increase membership in 1987. In 1991, Duquesne University also engaged in an academic year self-study to gauge the health of its community. These self-studies were based on specific need and only established additional community standards or policies. None outlined any measures, methods, or strategies for improvements in individual chapters (Boyle, 1992). More comprehensive programs were developed in the early 1990s that addressed the needs of individual chapters through measuring their performance against specific standards.

Fraternity/sorority standards programs, more comparable to the model proposed by the Franklin Square Group (2003) originated from an earlier effort, Utah State University’s Five Star Program. This program evaluated each chapter yearly in several categories: academics, financial management, college relations, community relations/service, and campus involvement (Norman, 2003). The categories were weighted with 100 points for academic activities and 50 points for all others. Specific point totals were assigned to certain achievement levels ranging from one
to five stars. This was used as a barometer for chapter well-being. While the objective for the program was to simply assess the overall health of the chapter based upon criteria, there were no minimum standards. Therefore, there were no consequences for failing to meet any minimum standards. There also were no established criteria for improvement. A similar, but more complex program was developed by the University of Delaware (Norman).

The University of Delaware established the Five Star Chapter Evaluation Program for its entire community that had significantly more depth and breadth than the Utah State University program. Delaware’s program objectives established criteria for improvement and ramifications regarding recognition from the university. Consequences included removal of recognition for noncompliance and removal of recruitment privileges for failure to comply with minimum standards (Norman, 2003). The program evaluated each chapter based upon specific criteria: academics, financial management, university/community relations and service, campus involvement, and membership intake/pledge program. Points were based upon each performance indicator or standard that when totaled, equaled 350 points. The program was weighted toward the academic and membership intake/pledge program categories, each worth 100 points; the remaining categories were worth 50 points each. Chapters received a number of stars ranging from one to five based on their total number of points. Those chapters with the highest point totals (four or five stars) received cash awards, and those with one or two stars lost social or recruitment privileges (Norman).

By 2000, many other colleges had adopted Delaware’s Five Star Chapter Evaluation Program including Clemson University, the University of Toledo, Central Michigan University, the University of Texas San Antonio, the University of Central Arkansas, Shippensburg University, the University of South Dakota, and even Utah State University. Other colleges and universities developed similar programs as well (Farrell, 2006). For example, Oklahoma State University developed the Chapter Quality Achievement Program in 2000. This was a point-based, voluntary program that sought to encourage participation through improvement over time. The program was designed to have two award levels, exemplary performance and commended performance, to reward those individual chapters that exceeded minimum standards. In 2001, Bucknell University began a compliance-based accreditation program similar to that proposed by the Franklin Square Group.

In the Bucknell program, each chapter must achieve 90 percent of points to be in good standing (Bucknell University, 2002). Chapters that fail to achieve 90% are placed on “Conditional Recognition” and face sanctions that include a $500 accreditation review fee and must receive special permission to have events with alcohol, recruit, participate in intramurals, and participate in fraternity/sorority week. If the chapter continues to fail to meet compliance standards, the chapter is placed into “Stayed-Suspension Status” in which the chapter is charged $1,000 and loses most recognition privileges. If non-compliance continues, the chapter is closed for up to three years. The Bucknell program also offers awards to those chapters that go beyond the standards. These chapters are eligible for silver and gold levels that featured the ability to receive $2,500 to $5,000 grants for non-alcohol related events and a recognition plaque. The incentive portion of the program is optional if chapters choose to exceed the 90% compliance minimum (Bucknell University).

In 2006, the University of Rochester established the Expectations for Excellence program. This accreditation-style program encourages chapters to become college-centered through co-sponsorship of programming between other campus organizations and facilitating increased use of campus services. Each fraternity and sorority chapter creates an individual plan with proposed events and strategies for the academ-
ic year. This plan is presented and approved by an advisory board and later outcomes from this approved plan are presented again to another board. A chapter receives accreditation if the outcomes are congruent with the original individual chapter plan. The University of Rochester plan is significantly different than others because it is not based on a sliding scale or levels like those aforementioned, but instead functions through a certification process.

These programs, overall, were developed with no true guiding typology. Their individual institutional nature and best-fit development has created the absence of a true model because they are so diverse in delivery and in user experience. Therefore, a typology is needed to help practitioners navigate the diverse differences of style among fraternity and sorority standards programs.

Methodology

Overview of the Dataset

This study employed a homogeneous purposeful sampling procedure to obtain a representative sample reflective of the different styles of fraternity/sorority standards programs. One hundred nine fraternity/sorority-advising professionals were solicited via e-mail to submit their standards program for use. Forty-one responses were received over a three-week period, for a 37.6% response rate. Thirty-one respondents, consisting of college and university representatives from seven states in the Pacific Northwest, Mid-Atlantic, Midwestern, Southern, and Northeastern regions of the United States, sent programs. Additionally, the sample was found representative when checked against 31 colleges and universities selected at random from the Association of Fraternity/Sorority Advisors member database.

Overview of the Instrument

The Greek Standards Project Rubric (GSPR) was developed to measure the characteristics of each program (see Appendix A). The rubric examined fraternity/sorority standards programs on five sectional levels. These levels were: theoretical orientation, policy, process, procedure, and outcomes. A description of each level follows.

Theoretical orientation considered evidence of administrative frameworks, use of student involvement theory, leadership development initiatives, chapter management initiatives, housing management initiatives, and clear program goal articulation. Policy categorized incentive or reward, residential/housing policy, minimum standards for continued recognition, generation of competition for resources, a ranking or sliding scale, accreditation-style processes, use of a metric or standard rating scale, community standards or values, consequences for noncompliance, formation of judicial council specific only to the campus fraternity/sorority system, compliance or mention of federal or state law, and evidence of language regarding mandatory or voluntary participation.

Process considered the end user’s experience of the program on two levels: administrative and chapter. On the administrative process level, the GSPR sought evidence of specificity among chapters or governing councils, involvement of alumni councils or chapter alumni boards, extension of program to fraternity/sorority housing, use of resources, use of staff, number of staff necessary to implement the program standards, number of stakeholders involved with the program, expenditure of resources, and administration. On the chapter process level, the GSPR sought evidence of duplication of forms to international and/or national headquarters, number of chapter members involved, and expenditure of resources. Procedure considered to what extent the program was implemented and rewards were distributed. Finally, outcomes observed the deliverables of the program, existence of proposed learning outcomes, archival of results for future use, and sharing of the results.

Procedure

Each participant was e-mailed individually
confirming receipt of submission and was debriefed utilizing a standard message. The 31 programs received were downloaded and analyzed for content and language. The GSPR was used in the analysis of each program within the sample to develop salient themes. Content analysis was selected as the appropriate qualitative inquiry method. Patton (2002) defined content analysis as, “any qualitative data reduction and sense-making effort that takes a volume of qualitative material and attempts to identify core consistencies and meanings” (p. 453). An inductive procedure was used to condense raw data into categories or themes based on valid inference and interpretation (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). This inductive procedure was the directed content analysis method. When utilizing directed content analysis, initial coding starts with a theory or relevant research findings. Then, during data analysis, the researcher becomes immersed in the data and allows themes to emerge from the data (Hsieh & Shannon). The purpose of this approach traditionally is to validate or extend a conceptual framework or theory (Berg, 2001).

In this study, the researcher utilized the GSPR as a rubric to generate a guiding theoretical framework. Low, moderate, and high levels were assigned in response to each criterion. Submitted programs were then coded and recoded until saturation utilizing the individual criteria from the GSPR. Themes were then created utilizing a constant comparison method.

**Analysis and Results**

Analysis of 31 programs resulted in five program categories. These included: evaluation \((n = 4)\), minimum standards \((n = 6)\), awards \((n = 4)\), accreditation \((n = 10)\), and comprehensive \((n = 7)\). Within each category, the programs displayed significant commonalities and characteristics (see Table 1). Descriptions of each follow.

**Evaluation**

Evaluation programs were mandatory, singular-level programs that offered a grade for chapter performance. Evaluation programs displayed significantly strong administrative frameworks with every evaluation plan within the sample utilizing chapter management initiatives. There was a low level of student development theory use, and not all the programs had clear goals. There was virtually no mention of federal law or evidence of compliance with hazing and alcohol state law. Evaluation programs were completely mandatory and points-based. There was evidence of a standard grading rubric for each. There were outlined consequences for noncompliance in two phases: probation and then removal of recognition. Evaluation programs were also not resource-intensive.

The evaluation program took only one staff member to implement and usually involved between two and four other constituencies. The most common constituencies of evaluation were the chapter, the student conduct office, and the alumni advisor. The cost of the program was limited to the cost of paper and time. The fraternity/sorority campus-based practitioner typically administered the evaluation. Chapters typically involved their membership and invested resources on an as-needed basis.

Chapters typically submitted a three-ring binder at the end of the year demonstrating completion of the program criteria and its associated forms. There was also a rolling submission of forms throughout the academic year for membership rosters and event registration forms as these programs had a very high administrative framework. The outcomes of evaluation programs did not include learning outcomes, however; typically these outcomes were chapter-level programming that resulted from compliance with the standards, submission of forms, and the end of year evaluation. The results were archived for future use and shared with each chapter via conference or an e-mail notification.

**Minimum Standards**

Minimum standards programs were man-
datory, singular-level programs that offered a high level of requirements with no option for advancement. Chapters were required to complete the program to retain recognition annually. Minimum standards programs featured a strong administrative framework with specific deadlines for submission of forms. There was limited use of student development theory and leadership initiatives but a high level of chapter management initiatives. There was also a moderate amount of housing initiatives involving student conduct and facility management. There was strong program goal articulation with an administrative basis for the existence of the programs.

Minimum standards programs were typically, like evaluation programs, not incentive-based. Minimum standards programs were used for residential and nonresidential fraternity/sorority communities. Minimum standards programs did not rank or grade chapters, however; they did include standard checklists for requirements. There was a moderate level of compliance with federal law regarding housing and a strong compliance with state law involving alcohol, housing codes, and hazing. Minimum standards programs displayed moderate use of fraternity/sorority judicial board with removal of recognition as the only penalty for noncompliance. There were no options for probation or lesser penalties. Like evaluation programs, there was little involvement from external constitutes beyond the alumni advisor.

Minimum standards programs required one staff member and included the costs of paper and time to implement. The fraternity/sorority campus-based practitioner typically administered the evaluation. Chapters typically involved their membership and invested resources on an as-needed basis. Chapters submitted required documents and forms on a rolling basis. The outcome of the program included submission of forms and recognition for the following academic year. There were no proposed learning outcomes for any minimum standards program. Results were archived for future use and shared with chapters via conference or not at all.

Awards

Awards programs were voluntary, singular-level incentive programs that encouraged participation and distributed rewards to the highest achieving chapters. Awards programs had a low administrative framework, as each chapter must simply submit documentation for each award for which they choose to apply. There was no evidence of student development theory and low existence of chapter management, housing, and leadership initiatives. The goals of these programs were clearly evident. The basis of existence of these programs was to recognize “model” chapters.

These programs featured a high level of competition for resources and chapters received rewards based on a ranking/sliding scale or via a standard metric utilized to determine eligibility. Awards programs did not comply or even mention state or local laws, involve alumni, nor offer minimum standards. However, awards programs did cater to a significantly broader range of constituencies that included alumni advisors, individual members, chapters, governing councils, or faculty advisors. Awards programs required at least two staff members to administer, usually from the fraternity/sorority involvement office, and required resources such as the cost of paper, awards, and time invested. Many of the awards included monetary compensation. Chapters utilized their membership on an as-needed basis to facilitate submission of awards applications.

Chapter members typically experienced awards programs through submission of supporting documents via a three-ring binder. Awards were distributed at the end of the year, often at a large event. Awards established equity as all chapters were eligible and encouraged to apply. The outcome of the awards programs was the presentation of rewards. Award winners were documented and archived for future use, and results were shared utilizing a variety of methods such as via a banquet or ceremony.
Accreditation

Accreditation programs were mandatory, multilevel programs that offered recognition on a yearly basis. Chapters were expected to submit a plan at the beginning of the year and submit an end-of-year report that documented how they implemented their proposed plan. These plans were typically based on minimum standards or expectations set by the institution. If their plan met the basic expectations or minimum standards and resulted in at least a satisfactory rating, chapters retained full recognition privileges. Accreditation programs featured a heavy administrative framework and strong use of leadership, housing, and chapter management initiatives. Goals of the accreditation programs were well articulated and there was a moderate use of student development theory.

Accreditation programs did not offer awards as a part of the certification process. Instead, they offered minimum standards for continued recognition. If there was noncompliance, a chapter was put on probation and if noncompliance continued recognition was revoked. Several programs incorporated referrals to a fraternity/sorority judicial board. Chapters were usually certified by a ranking/sliding scale or simple status designation utilizing a standard rubric. No formal evaluations were assigned, unlike evaluation programs. Accreditation programs showed strong support for local and state level alcohol and hazing regulations and for federal laws regarding housing.

Accreditation programs were resource-intensive. The cost of paper and time was heavier than those of the aforementioned programs. Additional staff and human capital was usually required. Accreditation programs were submitted via a three-ring binder to a committee of faculty, staff, and alumni for review. These individuals were usually volunteers. Accreditation programs were implemented by one to four staff members and varied depending on the resources of the individual program. These programs typically included four to seven reviewers such as residential life staff members, student conduct officers, senior administrators, housing boards, alumni councils, or student activities staff. The fraternity/sorority campus-based practitioner typically administered the evaluation. Chapters typically involved their membership and invested resources on an as-needed basis of the program. Chapters submitted forms and documentation on a rolling basis, however; all information was presented in aggregate at the end of the year.

The outcomes of accreditation programs were chapter-level programming and yearly assessment. There were few, if any, proposed learning outcomes. All results of the programs were archived for future use and shared to a committee via a presentation, letter/e-mail notification, conference, and Web site.

Comprehensive

Comprehensive programs were mandatory, multilevel programs that featured the characteristics of evaluation, minimum standards programs, or accreditation coupled with awards. Comprehensive programs had strong administrative frameworks with moderate integration of student development theory. They had high levels of leadership and chapter management initiatives. Housing initiatives were apparent in a few of the programs. The goals of the program were clearly stated. The existence of the program was to provide incentive for chapters to exceed minimum expectations and standards.

As previously mentioned, every comprehensive program was incentive- or rewards-based. Comprehensive programs were also two-tiered. At the first level, much like accreditation programs, there were minimum standards that all chapters should meet. If a chapter chose, it could exceed these standards to be eligible for rewards. These higher standards were the second level of the program. This level was either accreditation-style or an evaluation through a ranking/sliding scale. Each style of assessment was characterized by the use of a standard rubric or metric for evaluation. If a chapter failed to meet the minimum
expectations, they were either given probationary status, removal of recognition, or referred to a fraternity/sorority judicial board. Referral to a fraternity/sorority judicial board was specific to those programs that integrated the use of judicial sanctions and hearing panels. Comprehensive programs also featured strong levels of compliance with state and local hazing and alcohol laws. However, there was poor compliance with federal law.

Like accreditation programs, comprehensive programs were resource-intensive. The costs to implement comprehensive programs included rewards, time, and paper. However, unlike accreditation programs, an ample supply of staff was not apparent. One to three was the range of staff members involved with the process. Typically responsibility of program administration was given to the fraternity/sorority office staff. There were high levels of duplication of forms and standards to the inter/national headquarters as well. Chapters participated through providing the necessary leadership as required by the programs through positions such as president, recruitment chair, membership educator, risk management officer, and other leaders. Chapters also involved members as needed to submit forms and end-of-year reports.

Comprehensive programs were implemented via rolling submission of forms and through submission of a three-ring binder. Rewards were given to those chapters who surpassed the minimum standards based on program-specific eligibility requirements. The rewards did not establish equity among chapters, as there was limited availability of awards. This instituted a high level of competition for resources. There was no evidence of proposed learning outcomes. Results were archived for future use and are shared with chapters and as well other constituencies via Web site, conference, and e-mail.

Discussion

This study examined the spectrum of standards programs across the United States using qualitative methods. Through the employment of qualitative inquiry, five salient themes developed. These themes were used to develop a typology of standards programs, which was the intent of this study. The typology of standards programs as identified by this study is: accreditation, evaluation, minimum standards, awards, and comprehensive.

No additional research currently exists regarding fraternity/sorority standards programs. Therefore, this study serves as a foundational benchmark. While this study is merely a baseline for possible future research regarding fraternity/sorority standards programs, it does reveal the diversification of standards programs that involve complex systems of policies and procedures.

The complexity is evident in the accreditation and comprehensive models, which were the most common within the sample of the study. These were multilevel programs with multifarious groupings of thematic expectations. Expectations were grouped under specific core values associated with the fraternity/sorority community. This same complexity was also indicated in the measurement of performance.

As higher education professionals have evolved these programs from relationship statements into self-study as previously documented, each of these programs addresses the need to establish a set of minimum standards or set expectations regarding the performance levels of individual chapters. However, the distinct difference between comprehensive or accreditation programs and the other models is how they measure this performance. The other models of minimum standards and awards, with the exception of evaluation, offered little measurement of performance. Comprehensive, accreditation, and evaluation all measured performance through a qualitative or quantitative designs. These programs have a point system for standards and include several levels upon which performance can be based. Additionally, others have introduced standards on a sliding scale with increasing stan-
dards implemented over a specific timeframe. The true distinction between the programs is that evaluation and accreditation measure chapter compliance and performance whereas awards and minimum standards enforce or encourage standards. Comprehensive programs encompass all the elements of incentives for minimum standards and evaluate chapter performance. One can conclude that whether performance of chapter is measured is the true determination of the type of fraternity/sorority program.

Regardless of the individual style or approach, this research study also provides advisors and other campus-based professionals a typology of programs. This typology can act as a compass with which they can navigate the vast landscape and offerings of standards programs with more ease. The typology found within this research also holds several implications for campus professionals.

Implications for Practice

Selecting a Typology

The typology this study generated can be utilized in discussions regarding the development of standards programs for a campus fraternity/sorority community. It can also serve as a guide in the classification of any program that can be applied to better clarify the purpose of an existing program. Additionally, the five typologies that emerged can be utilized and implemented with regard to the specific needs of the fraternity/sorority community.

An evaluation model can be utilized to measure the current performance of chapter during a single academic year. An evaluation model simply provides feedback data on performance. Campus professionals should employ such a program if they wish to provide a quantitative measure that demonstrates improvement or deficiencies within specific domains the program seeks to measure.

A minimum standards model could be developed when there is little institutional support for the fraternity/sorority community. Minimum standards can serve as an administrative framework to ensure compliance with a specific range of policies. This model would serve as a best-fit approach in a campus environment that facilitates little support for the fraternity/sorority community.

An awards model can be best employed to encourage progress toward an ideal chapter. In this study, submission for awards was voluntary to encourage competition for resources among chapters. Such a program should be implemented to encourage the submission of information and to reward chapters for specific accomplishments. These accomplishments should take the form of each award.

An accreditation model can be introduced when an institution can exert control over the recognition of fraternities and sororities. Accreditation models encourage chapters to set their own expectations based on minimum standards or agreed upon community principles. This can be used to offer continued recognition and then facilitate interventions for struggling chapters. An accreditation plan may be an effective method to ensure compliance and development of chapters through offering continued recognition and its associated privileges.

Albeit resource-intensive, a comprehensive model can be implemented when there is strong institutional support for the fraternity/sorority community. Within this study, a comprehensive model encouraged the development of chapters to exceed minimum expectations through the use of incentives. Student affairs practitioners can use such a program type to facilitate increased development within their chapters.

Each of these five types of awards can be utilized specifically to meet a desired purpose: to measure performance, exert control, recognize accomplishment, or encourage development of chapters. Their specific nature simply limits their efficacy as programs and serves to restrain development of chapters as complex organizations. Individuals charged with authoring or revising stan-
standards programs should consider several additions based on the findings from this article. These suggestions will now be addressed.

**Tailoring a Standards Program**

The fraternity/sorority programs that comprised the sample failed to mention whether they were inclusive of all collegiate fraternal organizations. Fraternity/sorority standards programs, within this sample, appeared to develop the expectations based on traditional fraternities and sororities. Campus professionals should be mindful of all fraternities and sororities, including ethnic, service, and professional fraternities and sororities. Therefore, it is suggested that standards programs consider participation from all fraternal organizational types across the host institution.

Standards should express, in more detail, exactly what constitutes an exemplary chapter. The idea of a high-achieving chapter draws its origins from the work of Jelke (2001) and appears as well in the Franklin Square Group (2003). Programs should outline the specific tenets of a "model" chapter. Within the sample of this study, in comprehensive programs, many discussed the notion of a model chapter but failed to outline the programming, qualities, or achievements that define it as such. A model chapter can be communicated as simply as a listing of specific ideal achievements or categories with qualified values such as community service, programming, or academics.

Within many of these programs, especially within the comprehensive model, there were only two achievement levels. This establishes a dichotomy—a chapter was either a model chapter or was not. Therefore, future programs should strongly consider applying a tiered approach and have emerging, foundational, intermediate, and advanced levels for each learning outcome or expectation in a standards program. It appears in many of the programs that an achievement gap is created as several offered privileges to high-performing chapters that others do not receive. In several instances this included the ability to recruit first-semester students if a chapter achieved a specific composite grade point average for both the new members and active membership. A developmental approach would provide better support for struggling chapters and chapters, as well as advisors, who can better conceptualize growth over a range of levels instead of simply examining a more dichotomous result.

Direction of noncompliance should also be made more distinctive and clear. There was little evidence of consequence for standards noncompliance within the sample of this study. In several programs when noncompliance was outlined, consequences were punitive. Student affairs practitioners should, when developing or amending these programs, consider offering rewards to establish better accountability measures rather than extend disciplinary measures related to a violation of a minimum standard (Sasso, 2008). Additionally, practitioners may wish to consider a more educational approach to affirm, within the program, that those chapters that minimally do not meet expectations from the standards program must work with their inter/national headquarters to improve. Such an educational intervention approach may ensure that struggling chapters are supported in their endeavors to align with the standards and meet the program expectations.

It has been aforementioned that the initial intent of fraternity/sorority standards programs was to exert control as an intervention or response against negative behaviors scourging the student experience and causing significant institutional liability. This approach has been the ethos of fraternity/sorority programs as they have evolved; however, student affairs practitioners should consider a broader approach. This ethos is the notion that fraternities and sororities are slow to change and that an intervention must be facilitated to align with the institutional mission of the university (Gregory, 2003). However, these standards programs have simply encouraged the same homeostasis that they were initially designed to
transform. Standards programs have been established simply to reduce negative behaviors but have evolved in an attempt to legitimize interactions with students as the programs have increased in complexity and delivery as demonstrated within the comprehensive model. This has led to greater bureaucracy as a majority of the programs were found to be resource-intensive and did not focus on developmental outcomes for both individual students as fraternity/sorority members and their chapters.

Campus-based practitioners should seek to establish fraternity/sorority standards programs that operate as a smaller component of an integrated curriculum utilizing student development theory. Individual students, within their chapter, should interface with a sequence of programming connected to developing their chapter as a learning organization. Programs, with clear measurable outcomes, should be focused and facilitated to support student learning and not used to establish more administrative protocol, procedure, and policy. Within the sample, only comprehensive, accreditation, and evaluation programs demonstrated even moderate use of student development theory in their application. There were virtually no references, though it was clearly evident it was applied and mentioned within the programs. However; one program did cite the Astin (1993) Input-Environment-Output (IEO) model and several cited Astin’s (1984) Student Involvement Theory.

Standards programs should be constructed with expected learning outcomes based on the values of the fraternity/sorority community. These programs should encourage chapters to set their own goals based on a set of agreed upon standards comprised within a rubric. For example, campus-based practitioners could easily utilize Magolda’s (2004) Self-Authorship Theory and have chapters answer the questions across the continuous developmental areas of epistemological, interpersonal, and intrapersonal. These questions are: (1) how do I know; (2) who am I; and (3) how do I want to construct relationships with others (Magolda, 2004). One could develop an accreditation program where chapters answer these questions through a comprehensive report or presentation, critically reflecting on how they demonstrate their values and provide for the development of their members. While just an example framework, such as approach may demonstrate learning through documenting developmental outcomes in chapters and would help codify chapters as learning organizations.

Limitations

The GSPR is not a scientifically validated measure. It is merely a rubric devised to help guide qualitative inquiry to formulate a typology. It is intended to be utilized to comprehensively examine fraternity/sorority standards programs. Furthermore, though efforts were made to ensure representativeness, the sample size and sampling strategy limits generalizability. The results of this study should only be generalized to the population of college undergraduates who participated within these programs. One of the primary limitations of this study is the demand characteristics of the researcher. The researcher had extensive a priori knowledge and experience with fraternity and sorority administration and involvement. This may have unduly influenced participants to provide socially desirable responses in the submission of programs for the study.

Future Research

The relationship statements set forth in broad terms the mutual responsibility of the institution and its recognized fraternity and sorority chapters. This approach led to even more serious liability concerns for institutions that poorly implemented them. What has worked is the development of fraternity/sorority standards programs effective in aligning the institution’s mission with that of the fraternity/sorority system. This closes the gap that A Call for Values Congruence (2003) claims existed. Kohlberg (1984) echoed
this notion when he stated, “right action tends to be defined in terms of general individual rights and standards that have been critically examined and agreed upon by the whole society” (p. 39). Moreover, the current nature of standards programs for fraternities and sororities remains somewhat provincial. Measuring learning outcomes, the application of a developmental approach, and embedding a theoretical framework should be the next evolution of the traditional standards programs for a fraternity/sorority community.

Fraternity/sorority standards programs should work to frame their programs on student learning outcomes. Without this grounding, administrators may be merely encouraging programming and utilizing standards programs as a locus of control. However, the question remains what students are gaining from these programs. Incorporating theories of fundamental student development theories would help frame desired learning outcomes embedded in a standards program. Documenting learning outcomes from participation would help address relevancy question raised by the Franklin Square Group (2003).

This research also provides advisors and other campus-based professionals a typology of programs with which they can navigate the vast landscape and offerings of standards programs with more ease. While this study is merely a baseline for the research regarding fraternity/sorority standards programs, it will hopefully generate future research. What exists currently with standards programs involves a complex set of policies and procedures. Thus, future research should examine the effectiveness of each of the categories within the typology established in this study.

References


Bucknell University. (2002). The plan for prominence in fraternity and sorority affairs. Bucknell University: Lewisburg, PA.


Author Update

Pietro A. Sasso is an Assistant Professor of Student Affairs and College Counseling at Monmouth University.
### Table 1

**Fraternity/Sorority Standards Summary**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Qualification</th>
<th>Minimum Standards</th>
<th>Accreditation</th>
<th>Evaluation</th>
<th>Awards</th>
<th>Comprehensive</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Theoretical Orientation</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrative framework</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student involvement/engagement theory</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership development initiatives</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter management</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housing management initiatives</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are the goals of the program well articulated</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purpose of the program, if no theory for basis of existence</td>
<td>Administration</td>
<td>Accreditation</td>
<td>Assessment</td>
<td>Awards</td>
<td>Assessment Rewards</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Policy Elements                      |                   |               |            |        |               |
|--------------------------------------|                   |               |            |        |               |
| Incentive program/rewards based      | No                | No            | No         | Yes    | Yes           |
| Residential (for Greek systems with housing) | Moderate       | Moderate      | Low        | None   | Moderate      |
| Minimum standards for continued recognition | High          | High          | Low        | None   | High          |
| Competition for resources            | Low               | Low           | None       | High   | Moderate      |
| Ranking/sliding scale                | None              | Moderate      | Low        | Moderate| Moderate      |
| Accreditation-style                  | Low               | High          | None       | None   | Moderate      |
| Rating scale via standard metric     | Low               | High          | High       | High   | High          |
| Community standards                  | Low               | Moderate      | Low        | None   | Moderate      |
Table 1, Continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Judicial council specifically for Greeks</th>
<th>Moderate</th>
<th>Moderate</th>
<th>Low</th>
<th>None</th>
<th>Moderate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Compliance described with state law</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compliance described with federal law</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mandatory or voluntary participation</td>
<td>Mandatory</td>
<td>Mandatory</td>
<td>Mandatory</td>
<td>Voluntary</td>
<td>Mandatory</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Process and Administration

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participation of chapters or governing councils</th>
<th>Chapters</th>
<th>Chapters</th>
<th>Chapters or Council</th>
<th>Chapters</th>
<th>Chapters</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alumni councils or chapter alumni boards involvement</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extended to Greek system housing</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resource intensive (requires additional staff members to coordinate)</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<p>| Number of staff members to facilitate | One | One to Three | One | One to Three | One |
| Constituencies are involved | Three or Four | Four to Seven | Two to Four | One to Four | Three to Six |
| Cost | Cost of paper | Cost of paper | Cost of paper | Cost of rewards; Cost of paper | Cost of rewards; Cost of paper |
| Administrator | Residence Life or Office of Greek Life | Office of Greek Life or Student Activities | Office of Greek Life or Greek Council | Office of Greek Life | Office of Greek Life |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter Level Experience</th>
<th>High</th>
<th>High</th>
<th>High</th>
<th>Low</th>
<th>High</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Duplication of efforts to both Inter/National</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>headquarters and to administration</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter members involved</td>
<td>As Needed</td>
<td>As Needed</td>
<td>As Needed</td>
<td>As Needed</td>
<td>As Needed + Chapter President</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resources expended (human, monetary, time)</td>
<td>As Needed</td>
<td>As Needed</td>
<td>As Needed</td>
<td>As Needed</td>
<td>As Needed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Procedure</th>
<th>Low</th>
<th>Low</th>
<th>None</th>
<th>Low</th>
<th>Low</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Online process</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Submission of three-ring, paper-based binder</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presentation</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gradual implementation with submission of forms over</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>specific time interval</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rewards for compliance or participation</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>Participation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rewards distribution</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>End of year awards</td>
<td>To highest achieving chapters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do rewards, if any, establish fair equality amongst</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>chapters?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table 1, Continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcomes of the program</th>
<th>Recognition</th>
<th>Programming Certification Recognition</th>
<th>Programming Evaluation Administration</th>
<th>Awards</th>
<th>Administration Rewards</th>
<th>Accreditation or Evaluation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Proposed learning outcomes</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Results archived for future use</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Notification of Results</th>
<th>Online posting</th>
<th>Conference</th>
<th>Letter/E-Mail Notification</th>
<th>Presentation to a committee</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Online posting</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conference</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Letter/E-Mail Notification</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presentation to a committee</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix A

Fraternity/Sorority Standards Project Rubric (GSPR)

Theoretical Orientation
1. Student Development Theory?
2. Administration Framework?
3. Student Involvement/Engagement?
4. Leadership Development?
5. If no theory for basis of existence, then what, if any, is the purpose of the program?
5. What are the goals of the program?

Policy
1. What is the structure of the program?
   - Incentive program/rewards based?
   - Minimum standards for continued recognition?
   - Competition for resources?
   - Ranking/sliding scale?
   - Accreditation-style?
   - Rating scale via standard metric?
   - Community standards?
   - Residential (for fraternity/sorority systems with housing?)
2. What are requirements?
3. Are chapters superseding international or national policies for local college/university policies?
4. What are the consequences for noncompliance? Is there a judicial council specifically for fraternities/sororities?
5. What is the congruence with state and federal laws?
6. Is program mandatory or voluntary?

Process
How is the program is experienced at two levels: administrator and chapter?

1. Administration
   - Economy of scale?
     a. Specific to ALL specific chapters or to just specific governing councils?
     b. Does program involve alumni councils or chapter alumni boards?
     c. Does program extend to Fraternity/sorority system housing (if applicable)?
   - Resource Intensive?
     a. How many staff members does it take to implement?
     b. How many constituencies are involved?
     c. How many other resources (monetary and time) does Program cause to be expended?
   - Who administers the program?
Appendix A, Continued

2. Chapter
   - Redundancy? Is chapter duplicating forms to both international or national headquarters and to administration?
   - How many chapter members must be involved?
   - How many resources (human, monetary, and time) does chapter expend?

Procedure
1. How is the program implemented?
   - Online process?
   - Submission of three-ring, paper-based binder?
   - Presentation?
   - Gradual implementation with submission of forms over specific time interval?
2. Are their rewards for compliance or participation?
3. How are the rewards, if any, distributed?
4. Do rewards establish fair equality amongst chapters?

Outcomes
1. What are the outcomes of the program?
2. Are there any proposed learning outcomes?
3. Are the results archived for future use?
4. How do people find out the results?