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Jason B. Goldfarb and Charles G. Eberly

The article is based on the Center for the Study of the College Fraternity's 2009 Adele Williamson Outstanding Masters Research Award winning thesis entitled, "Student Spiritual Development Associated with Fraternity Affiliation." Using data (n = 1,211) from the Higher Education Research Institute (HERI) at the University of California at Los Angeles (UCLA) 2003 pilot survey instrument, College Students' Beliefs and Values, funded by the John Templeton Foundation, this study examined the relationship between fraternity affiliation, hegemonic masculinity, spirituality, religion, and other associated spiritual/religious factors. Significant differences were found regarding measures of spirituality and associated beliefs and values between fraternity-affiliated and non-affiliated participants, as well as respondents' relative levels of hegemonic masculinity. Discussion and implications for practice offer consideration for practitioners and fraternity advisors with enhancing local chapter programming, creating new programs, or finding ways of reinforcing college fraternal organizations' core values, particularly as they address issues of spirituality and personal religious growth, and a healthy conception of manhood.

58 **CHANGING TRENDS IN THE UNDERGRADUATE FRATERNITY/SORORITY EXPERIENCE: AN EVALUATIVE AND ANALYTICAL LITERATURE REVIEW**

Amy B. Perkins, J. Daniel Zimmerman, and Steven M. Janosik

Fraternal organizations in American institutions of higher education have a significant influence on student life and campus culture. Historically, research has shown that fraternities and sororities provide environments that support negative and often illegal activities that can be detrimental to individuals and communities at large. However, recent research has identified new trends that suggest this may be changing. This article identifies these trends and implications.

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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.

Visit <http://www.fraternityadvisors.org/Oracle.aspx> for more detailed submission guidelines.

TEN ISSUES LATER: RETROSPECTIVE AND PROSPECTS

J. Patrick Biddix
Oracle Editor

In 2005, the Association of Fraternity/Sorority Advisors published Volume 1, Issue 1 of *Oracle*. The first editor, Grahame Hesp, wrote of the occasion, “It is the hope that *Oracle: The Research Journal of the Association of Fraternity Advisors* will promote scholarly discourse among partners invested in the college fraternal movement and provide the primary repository for the factual data.” *Oracle*’s debut was sparked by the 2000-2005 Strategic Plan, which sought to professionalize the Association.

This issue marks the tenth publication of *Oracle*. During that time, we have made considerable strides toward meeting the initial mission of the journal. The foundation laid by the leadership of Hesp, Dan Bureau, Monica Miranda Smalls, Eric Norman, and Jeremiah Shinn has allowed us to progress toward becoming a primary venue for research on the field and profession. We increasingly see *Oracle* cited in other publications and article submissions come from both new and established researchers, as well broad academic fields. We have remained committed to developing practitioner-scholars as well as cultivating, expanding, and preserving research in the field.

The Association emphasized the place of research more boldly in the most recently adopted 2011-2013 Strategic Plan. In that document, AFA recognized Research and Development Strategic Goal 2, stating “AFA will engage in and advocate for both academic and applied research related to the fraternity/sorority experience and advising profession.” The Outcome statement offered some direction to expand and validate research, and Objectives include research incentive programs, partnerships with research-based associations, and raising the awareness and expanding the readership of *Oracle*. With the latter in mind, we have begun to make intentional efforts at getting *Oracle* into the hands of educators who may not be connected with AFA – including practitioners, graduate students, and program preparation faculty. These include an open access format for all issues, print editions of *Oracle*, and continued progress toward indexing. Through these research connections, we look to expand our community of support for the college fraternal movement.

Three of the four articles in this issue draw data from nationally representative datasets, while the fourth offers a review of contemporary literature on the field published outside of *Oracle*. First, Bureau, Ryan, Ahren, Shoup, and Torres drew on nationally representative data from the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) to explore student learning and developmental differences between fraternity/sorority members and unaffiliated students. Their findings offer an important contribution to the data on educational outcomes of membership. Second, Long used nationally representative data from the AFA/EBI Fraternity/Sorority Assessment to examine differences in educational gains among gay, bisexual, and questioning (GBQ) fraternity members, as compared to heterosexual members. He found heterosexual members experienced greater personal gains measures, but there was no difference between GBQ identifying members and heterosexual members on alcohol use, leadership experience, and satisfaction.

Next, Goldfarb and Eberly used nationally representative data from the College Students' Beliefs and Values Survey, sponsored by the Higher Education Research Institute (HERI) to consider the relationship between fraternal affiliation, masculinity, and various spirituality/religious factors. Their findings offer intriguing implications for enhancing advising practice and chapter programming. Finally, Perkins, Zimmerman, and Janosik conducted a review of recent research from higher education journals. Their findings offer a resource for trends and outcomes from empirical research on the fraternity/sorority membership, which can serve as both a starting point for new research or a source for quick information on contemporary membership outcomes.

As befitting this "tenth anniversary" issue, the four articles not only exemplify Hesp's initial vision for Oracle, but meet Strategic Goal 2's outcome of expanding and validating research. The breadth of perspectives, methodological depth, and generalizable aspects of each study should attract citations to subsequent work as well as inform evidence-based fieldwork.

STUDENT LEARNING IN FRATERNITIES AND SORORITIES: USING NSSE DATA TO DESCRIBE MEMBERS' PARTICIPATION IN EDUCATIONALLY MEANINGFUL ACTIVITIES IN COLLEGE

Dan Bureau, Helen Grace Ryan, Chad Ahren, Rick Shoup, and Vasti Torres

The benefits and challenges for college students involved in social fraternities and sororities have long been sources of heated discussion among higher education constituents. A liberal education is meant to incorporate elements of critical thinking, diverse experiences, and challenging and enriching interactions with peers and educators. Past research indicates that involvement in a fraternity or sorority has had some positive effect in these areas, especially as students persist at their chosen institutions. This study uses data from the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) to explore indicators of student learning among senior members of social fraternities and sororities. Regression analyses controlling for conditional variables indicated that students in these groups report higher involvement in critical developmental practices and larger gains in important educational areas than their unaffiliated counterparts. Limitations and implications of the study are discussed.

Higher education constituents are concerned with how learning occurs within complex campus environments (Association of American Colleges and Universities [AAC&U], 2007; Keeling, 2004; Kuh, 2001a; Strange & Banning, 2001). Therefore, increased attention has been given to measuring aspects of college that influence student learning (Carini, Kuh, & Klein, 2006; Kuh, 2001a, 2003; Palomba & Banta, 1999; Strange & Banning, 2001). The National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) is one assessment tool that examines how institutions promote engagement in educational practices that contribute to student learning and the extent of participation in these activities (Kuh, 2001b; NSSE, 2010b).

Student affairs professionals must consider strongly their responsibility to advance student learning (Dungy, 2009; Keeling, 2004; Sandeen, 2006; Sandeen & Barr, 2006). One way professionals can consider their responsibility is by emphasizing assessment of student learning in order to create and support positive student learning conditions (Green, Jones, & Aloi, 2008; Schuh & Upcraft, 2001; Upcraft, 2003). The variety of interpretations made about the influences of being in a fraternity or sorority requires that professionals share in this responsibility; specifically documenting how learning occurs in the organizations for which they provide oversight (Perlow, 2007; Schuh & Upcraft, 2001; Strayhorn & Colvin, 2006; Vestal, 2007; Whipple & Sullivan, 1998).

The literature on fraternities and sororities varies on its interpretation of the educational benefits of membership in these organizations (Asel, Seifert, & Pascarella, 2009; Hayek, Carini, O'Day, & Kuh, 2002; Nelson, Halperin, Wasserman, Smith, & Graham, 2006; Pascarella, Flowers, & Whitt, 2001; Pike, 2000, 2003). Student affairs professionals are often asked to defend how fraternity/sorority membership supports the mission of higher education, particularly helping students learn (Strayhorn & Colvin, 2007; Whipple & Sullivan, 1998; Winston & Saunders,

1987). To respond to and educate participants about such discussions, fraternity/sorority professionals should be familiar with data that demonstrate fraternity/sorority member engagement in the learning process. NSSE is one instrument that provides a snapshot of the engagement necessary to promote learning (Bureau & Ryan, 2008; Hayek et al., 2002; Pike, 2003).

During 2006, 2007, and 2008, NSSE was administered on almost 1,000 different campuses (NSSE, 2010a), many hosting fraternity/sorority communities. Previous articles used NSSE data to describe characteristics of fraternity/sorority members and explained how the tool can provide helpful insight into this population of students (Bureau & Ryan, 2008; Hayek et al., 2002; Pike, 2003). This article adds to this research base by further explaining how fraternity/sorority members compare to non-members in reports of engagement during the senior year.

Review of Literature

This section is an overview of relevant literature in two areas: the assessment of student affairs' contributions to learning and fraternities and sororities as learning environments. Examples of assessment of the fraternity/sorority experience are also provided. The literature reflects varying views as to how fraternity/sorority membership supports student learning.

Assessing Student Learning through Student Affairs

Student learning has been explained as the primary outcome of participation in higher education (AAC&U, 2007; Kuh, 2001a, 2003). One means to support student learning is to increase the extent to which students are engaged. Engagement as a construct examines student participation in learning-oriented activities (Carini et al., 2006; Kuh, 2001a, 2003; Wolf-Wendel, Ward, & Kinzie, 2009). According to Wolf-Wendel et al.:

The concept of student engagement represents two key components. The first is the amount of time and effort students put into their studies and other activities that lead to the experiences and outcomes that constitute student success. The second is how institutions of higher education allocate their human and other resources and organize learning opportunities and services to encourage students to participate in and benefit from such activities (2009, pp. 412-413).

Basically, the more students engage in meaningful learning experiences, the more likely they are to be successful in college and eventually graduate (AAC&U, 2007; Astin, 1993; Carini et al., 2006; Zhao & Kuh, 2004). Engagement builds on involvement theory (Astin, 1993) and places a larger emphasis on *how* desired educational processes and outcomes occur. Institutions are viewed as pivotal in influencing the type of experiences students have versus simply leaving students' experiences to chance (Wolf-Wendel et al., 2009).

Learning experiences occur both in and out of the classroom. Engaging students in out-of-classroom activities that complement in-class learning has been the role of student affairs practitioners for over 100 years (American Council on Education, 1994a, 1994b; Evans & Reason, 2001; Nuss, 2003). As a result, student affairs professionals have demonstrated support for holistic student development (Nuss, 2003). Recently, there has been increased attention on how student development encompasses learning (Bloland, Stamatakos, & Rogers, 1996; Dungy,

2009; Keeling, 2004; Malaney, 2002). Student affairs functions can become more aligned with objectives of higher education with an emphasis on learning in the co-curriculum (Dungy, 2009; Keeling, 2004).

Not only should student affairs practitioners focus on supporting student learning, they should be concerned with its assessment (Dungy, 2009; Green et al., 2008; Keeling, 2004; Sandeen & Barr, 2006; Schuh & Upcraft, 2001; Upcraft, 2003). Assessment practices should be holistic and based on specific attributes of student affairs that support student learning (Green et al., 2008; Upcraft, 2003). A proposed model includes developing student-learning outcomes, developing assessment measures, identifying participants, conducting assessment, analyzing results, sharing results, and then using them to enhance future learning (Green et al., 2008). One instrument used in student affairs to assess learning is NSSE (Kinzie, 2006; Schuh, Kuh, Kinzie, & Manning, 2006; Wolf-Wendel et al., 2009; Whitt, 2005).

As NSSE has become a valuable tool to assess important conditions for student success (Kuh, 2003; LaNasa, Cabrera, & Transgrud, 2009; Wolf-Wendel et al., 2009), data should be widely disseminated to student affairs professionals in order to better guide their practice. As part of a holistic assessment process, NSSE results can explain how out-of-classroom activities administered by student affairs professionals contribute to student learning (Kinzie, 2006; Schuh, et al., 2006; Whitt, 2005). Such evidence could enhance the perception of student affairs professionals as valued contributors to the educational enterprise (Sandeen & Barr, 2006; Whitt, 2005). Fraternity/sorority membership is one out-of-classroom experience that can influence student learning. Professionals who serve these organizations have an important role in enacting learning environments (Whipple & Sullivan, 1998).

Fraternity/Sorority Life and Assessing Student Learning

The literature certainly portrays fraternity/sorority members as a complex subpopulation of higher education (Asel et al., 2009; Jelke & Kuh, 2006; Mauk, 2006). Factors that negatively influence student learning such as alcohol misuse and abuse (Wechsler, Kuh, & Davenport, 1996), homogeneity and a lack of consideration for diversity (Asel et al., 2009), and issues of self-esteem and mental illness stemming from inappropriate activities such as hazing (Allan & Madden, 2008; Ellsworth, 2006; Owen, Burke, & Vichesky, 2008) appear to be more prevalent in fraternity/sorority communities than in other aspects of campus life. Hayek et al. (2002) identified that while relationships during the first year of college may be more homogeneous for members, by the senior year, fraternity/sorority members were as likely as non-members to have experiences with diverse others. This finding makes the senior or final year an important point to consider in the development of fraternity/sorority members.

Fraternity/sorority membership appears to contribute positively when it comes to involvement in campus life (Astin, 1993; Hayek et al., 2002), allegiance to alma mater (Kelley, 2008), and participation in activities related to community service and leadership development (Harms, Woods, Roberts, Bureau, & Green, 2006; Hayek et al., 2002; Kelley, 2008; Kimbrough & Hutchinson, 1998). Studies indicate fraternity/sorority members may be collectively as engaged if not more so than non-members (Asel et al., 2009; Blackburn & Janosik, 2009; Hayek et al., 2002; Pike, 2003). Predictors of fraternity/sorority engagement included high school experiences (Asel et al., 2009), reinforcing that entering characteristics likely influence the overall college

experience (Astin, 1993; Strange & Banning, 2001). While Hayek et al. (2002) indicated members reported higher levels of gains than non-members, Asel et al. (2009) found when controlling for high school experiences the impact was less profound. Research on educational gains as a result of engagement during college suggests the fraternity/sorority experience cannot be explained monolithically, and previous findings that denote members as anti-intellectual may be unfounded and heavily dependent on contextual influences (Asel et al., 2009; Hayek et al., 2002; Pascarella et al., 2001; Pike, 2000, 2003).

Examining how members of fraternities and sororities are engaged in learning experiences brings forth additional complexities. The academic pursuits of members have mainly been explained as inferior to non-members. Research indicates student cognitive development may be impeded by membership in fraternities and sororities; however, impact often diminished over the course of the college experience, and members and non-members report similar development by the senior year (Hayek et al., 2002; Pascarella et al., 2001; Pike, 2003). Pike and Askew (1990) found members to demonstrate higher levels of academic effort considering cognitive tests scores; however, members underperformed against non-affiliated peers. McCabe and Bowers (1996) concluded fraternity/sorority members were more likely than non-members to be academically dishonest and engage in cheating. Other studies indicate membership may positively impact retention (Astin, 1993; Nelson et al., 2006).

Environmental factors and institutional culture may influence student learning in the fraternity/sorority context (Blackburn & Janosik, 2009; Hayek et al., 2002; Jelke & Kuh, 2003; Pike, 2003). In a study conducted at one institution, Blackburn and Janosik (2009) surveyed members about perceptions of fraternity/sorority housing as a “learning community.” Using the *Learning Communities Assessment* (Turrentine, 2001), which considers four scales assessing Active Engagement, Learning, Sense of Community, and Identity Development, Blackburn and Janosik (2009) found that while students identified learning as an outcome of participation, the fraternity/sorority facility in which they lived was not perceived as sharing characteristics commonly found in a learning community. Men more often than women identified the facility as possessing learning community traits, which include outcomes such as conversations about learning and the development of critical thinking skills. Of course, the cultural significance of the facility can have a confounding effect on broad examination of learning in a fraternity/sorority, due to wide variation in facility arrangements and usage. In addition to the facility, messages of academic success must be fostered throughout the fraternity/sorority community. Jelke and Kuh (2003) explained that high-performing fraternity/sorority communities express high academic standards as a criterion for chapters: High expectations for academic success start with the university administration and are shared by student leaders in the fraternity/sorority community.

Other studies have brought forth considerations about the extent to which fraternities and sororities promote learning as a result of membership. Pascarella et al. (2001) used data from the National Study of Student Learning (NSSL), following the same fraternity/sorority members over three years, and analyzed the resulting data in three stages. The first stage compared these data against control variables that emphasized characteristics of students prior to college, including academic motivation. The second stage sought to estimate the direct cognitive effects of the experience of being in a fraternity/sorority, considering control variables that emphasized aspects of the college experience such as residence and credit hours taken. In the third stage, the

researchers considered factors that emerged as different across students who happened to be members of fraternities and sororities. This was done to examine if the “magnitude of the impact of Greek affiliation was different for students with different characteristics, or in different institutional contexts” (Pascarella et al., 2001, p. 290). Additional analyses were conducted to examine the scores of students who joined during the first-year of college versus those who joined later.

Examining the results against year in school, Pascarella et al. (2001) found negative effects of fraternity/sorority membership lessened during the second and third year of college. While standard measures of cognitive development continued to be somewhat negative, they were significantly smaller after the first-year and could not be determined to be a result of membership. Pascarella et al. (2001) assert joining during the first-year may be most likely to negatively influence cognitive development and may decrease the likelihood of graduation; however, their findings point to membership as not likely hindering cognitive development at any other point in a student’s college career.

Pike (2000) also used NSSL data from one institution to identify whether differences in reported cognitive development was a direct result of fraternity/sorority membership, an indirect result of involvement, or a result of differences in the students’ background. Fraternity/sorority members scored lower, while not significantly, on cognitive development-related variables such as use of the library but higher on areas in integrating new knowledge or gaining specific skills such as critical thinking. Pike (2000) found members’ higher levels of social involvement directly related to membership in a fraternity or sorority, and higher levels of gains in general cognitive abilities were indirectly related. The influence of membership on cognitive variables could be explained either as a direct, indirect, or random result of membership in the fraternity or sorority depending on diverse control variables. Pike (2000) wrote:

When college experiences were viewed as a consequence of Greek affiliation, membership in a fraternity or sorority had a significant indirect impact on the dimension of cognitive development associated with general learned abilities.... [However] findings of this research indicated fraternity or sorority membership need not have a negative effect on students’ cognitive development during college. Consistent with theory and previous research, membership in a Greek organization was associated with higher levels of involvement, particularly social involvement. Greater involvement, in turn, was associated with greater gains in general cognitive abilities. Although the effects of being in a Greek organization were greater for social involvement, the negative effects of fraternity or sorority membership... were not found in this study. (pp. 135-136)

Pike (2000) explained that results were more strongly oriented to sororities due to an overrepresentation of women in the sample. He also addressed how the study was conducted at one large research institution with over 3,000 students participating in the fraternity/sorority community.

NSSE results may be used to explain student characteristics (Bureau & Ryan, 2008; Hayek et al., 2002; Pike, 2003). The use of NSSE data for examining fraternity/sorority members has been considered in previous research (Hayek et al, 2002; Pike, 2003). Hayek et al. (2002) compared members to non-members to consider views on the college environment, reported gains, and experiences based on academic year, facility, and across different institutional characteristics.

The sample consisted of over 42,000 first-year and senior students, evenly distributed. Women were overrepresented in the sample (68%). Holistically, members were found to be more engaged than non-members on most measures including gains in diversity, practical competence, general education, involvement in classroom-related activities, and overall engagement in the college environment. Non-members reported more time spent preparing for class than members. This was consistent across gender and class standing. Residence in the fraternity/sorority facility was not found to negatively impact member engagement in learning experiences and to some extent encouraged engagement in learning-oriented activities. Such findings counter previous research that indicates members may be less engaged in academically oriented activities (Pascarella et al., 2001) and supports Pike (2000, 2003) who concluded fraternity/sorority membership appears to have at least a minimal positive benefit on engagement in curricular and co-curricular activities.

Using NSSE data, Pike (2003) described fraternity/sorority member engagement in the context of public research universities to explain the connection between membership in a fraternity or sorority, student engagement, and educational outcomes. He found fraternity/sorority membership had a weak positive relationship with engagement and gains in learning, but demonstrated higher means across the survey's five educational benchmarks and gains scales during the senior year (NSSE Benchmarks and Scales are explained in the methodology section below). The effects were stronger for seniors than first-year students. Contrary to previous research (Pascarella et al., 2001), the differences between men and women were less distinctive; however first-year sorority members reported lower levels of active and collaborative learning than fraternity members, and senior-year sorority members had greater mean scores than senior-year fraternity men in the areas of Level of Academic Challenge and Gains in Personal Development benchmarks (Pike, 2003).

These few studies stand out because it has been difficult to truly assess student learning in fraternities and sororities. Reasons include students' entering perceptions of the environment and predispositions about what it means to experience college (Astin, 1993; Schuh & Upcraft, 2001). Additionally, the nature of these organizations is such that students have varied levels of involvement and investment in their functions and experience the fraternity or sorority as one part of their overall college experience. While not a direct measure, student characteristics can inform how higher education constituents view environments, such as those found in fraternities and sororities, as influencing student learning (Astin, 1993; Kuh, 2003; Kuh & Whitt, 1988; Strange & Banning, 2001). Bearing this in mind, NSSE results provide insight into fraternity/sorority member engagement in learning-oriented activities.

Methods

Overview of the Instrument

This study used the National Survey of Student Engagement to describe engagement in learning-oriented activities by fraternity/sorority members. NSSE is a tool for college/university administrators to examine conditions that contribute to learning and student success. The survey measures students' participation in educational activities that prior research determined is positively related to desired educational outcomes (Astin, 1993; Chickering & Gamson, 1987; Kuh, 2001a; 2001b, 2003; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). NSSE is specifically designed to assess

the level of engagement in and perceived gains from students' experiences in college (Kuh, 2001b). While an indirect measure, engagement data has often been used as a "proxy" for learning (Carini et al., 2006).

The NSSE questionnaire, *The College Student Report*, focuses on student participation in effective educational practices. For example, students are asked to identify how often they make class presentations, participate in a community-based project as a part of a course, and work with faculty members on activities other than coursework. In addition, students identify the degree to which their courses emphasize such different mental processes as memorizing, evaluating, and synthesizing; how many hours per week they spend studying, working, or participating in co-curricular activities; as well as how they characterize the nature and quality of their relationships with other students, faculty, and administrators. The survey is available at the NSSE website, www.nsse.iub.edu.

The survey is administered annually each spring using Web-based and paper modes to random samples of first-year and senior-year students enrolled at institutions during the fall and spring semesters. Therefore, all survey participants have had enough experience with the institution to provide an informed judgment. In general, equal numbers of first-year and senior students are sampled for each institution during the spring semester. The survey is not anonymous, and individualized links are distributed to students via the Center for Survey Research at Indiana University (NSSE, 2010b).

NSSE has been administered at almost 1,500 different institutions since 2000 (NSSE, 2010a). Results are supplied to institutions in a raw data form as well as through several reports. For many of these institutions, NSSE has informed institutional practice and improvement relative to students' curricular and co-curricular pursuits and the accomplishment of widely held learning outcomes (AAC&U, 2007; Kuh, Cruce, Shoup, Kinzie, & Gonyea, 2007; NSSE, 2010a).

NSSE examines engagement in activities that have been deemed educationally enriching in previous research (Chickering & Gamson, 1987; Pascarella & Terenzinni, 2005). However, it does not assess specific learning outcomes. Kuh (2003) writes, "Although NSSE does not directly assess learning outcomes, the results from the survey point to areas where colleges are performing well in enhancing learning, as well as to aspects of the undergraduate experience that could be improved" (p. 26). While not a direct measure of student learning, student self-perceptions provide insight into the college experience and can be viewed as valid when meeting five conditions: (a) respondents have the information to answer questions, (b) questions are phrased clearly, (c) questions refer to activities in which the respondent recently participated, (d) respondents believe questions merit a serious and thoughtful response, and (e) answering the questions does not jeopardize the privacy and safety of the respondent or encourage them to respond in what they believe to be socially desirable answers (Hayek et al., 2002; Pike, 2003). NSSE was created to meet these conditions (Carini, Hayek, Kuh, Kennedy, & Ouimet, 2003; Hayek et al., 2002) and has been examined for reliability and validity (Carini et al., 2006; LaNasa et al., 2009; Pascarella, Seifert, & Blaich, 2010). The data for this study came from the 2006, 2007, and 2008 NSSE administrations.

Selection of Data and Variables

This study used one survey item to identify groups: Are you a member of a social fraternity or sorority? (Yes/No). Data was based on self-reports, and no effort was made to confirm membership. It is important to note that NSSE asks strictly about membership in a “social” fraternity or sorority. As the typology of fraternal organizations is much more complex (e.g., service, cultural, professional), there may have been students who did not identify as members, yet there is confidence that students involved with traditional fraternity and sororities would have interpreted this in the affirmative. Because most campuses have different schedules for intake and recruitment of new members, the authors wanted to explain engagement levels of members at a time during which they were likely to have been members for at least a year, therefore only seniors were selected. Because the authors wanted to compare members to non-members within the same general contexts, non-members at institutions at which there was not a population of at least 10 self-reported fraternity/sorority members were excluded from the sample. 26,103 senior respondents self-identified as members, while 153,068 students did not. There are 543 different institutions in the sample representing a range of Carnegie Classifications. Because this article sought to explain senior year members broadly, we did not analyze at the institutional variable.

Two categories of outcome measures were used: scores on student engagement scales and self-reported gains in different desired areas. Because some of these measures combine items that have different response sets and value ranges, the authors converted each item into a scale of 0 to 100. Afterward, scale scores were computed by taking the mean of the component items as long as the student had answered at least three-fifths of the items.

The student engagement scales included all five of NSSE’s benchmarks of effective educational practice and three deep learning subscales. As reported by Shoup, Gonyea, and Kuh (2009), benchmarks include:

1. Academic Challenge: An eleven-item measure ($\alpha = 0.72$) of the challenge of the institution’s intellectual and creative work;
2. Active and Collaborative Learning: A seven-item measure ($\alpha = 0.66$) of the degree to which students are actively involved in their learning, individually and working with others;
3. Student-Faculty Interaction: A six-item measure ($\alpha = 0.73$) of the degree to which students work with faculty members inside and outside the classroom;
4. Enriching Educational Experiences: A twelve-item measure ($\alpha = 0.63$) of the degree to which students participate in complementary learning opportunities;
5. Supportive Campus Environment: A six-item measure ($\alpha = 0.77$) of students’ feeling that their college is committed to their success.

Scales, categorized as “Deep Approaches to Learning” (NSSE, 2010f) include:

1. Higher-Order Learning: A four-item measure ($\alpha = 0.83$) of the extent to which a student feels their courses emphasize advanced thinking skills;
2. Integrative Learning: A five-item measure ($\alpha = 0.71$) that centers around the amount students participate in activities that require integrating ideas from various sources;
3. Reflective Learning: A three-item measure ($\alpha = 0.81$) of students’ investigating their own thinking process.

As reported by Shoup, Gonyea, & Kuh (2009), self-reported gains areas include:

1. Practical Competence: A five-item measure ($\alpha = 0.81$) of students' ability to be economically independent in today's post-college job market;
2. Personal and Social Development: Seven items ($\alpha = 0.87$) representing outcomes that characterize interpersonally effective, ethically grounded, socially responsible, and civic-minded individuals;
3. General Education: Four items ($\alpha = 0.84$) that are earmarks of a well-educated person;
4. Grades: A single, self-reported item that ranges from C- or lower to A.
5. Satisfaction: A two-item measure of students' satisfaction with their collegiate experience ($\alpha = 0.79$) represented by students' rating of their entire educational experience at their institution and the likelihood that they would attend the same institution if they were to start over again.

NSSE Benchmarks and Scales convey overall performance in identified categories of engagement. Scales are widely understood to be psychometrically sound (NSSE, 2010d; Pike, 2006) and are useful for NSSE clients (Kuh et al., 2007; NSSE, 2010d, 2010e). There are varying perceptions regarding the utility and statistical properties of the benchmarks; however, most agree the benchmarks are good constructs on which to examine institutional effectiveness in determining learning-oriented activities (Kuh et al., 2007; Pascarella et al., 2010; NSSE, 2010c; Pike, 2006). An overview of items included in the NSSE Benchmarks and Scales can be found at http://nsse.iub.edu/_/?cid=368.

Analysis and Results

Means were calculated for each group on the self-reported gains and engagement scales. To test the significance of differences between fraternity/sorority members and non-members and gauge how meaningful those differences were, effect sizes were calculated for the mean difference both with and without the addition of control variables. Numerous student characteristics were controlled in the analyses including gender, race, and first-generation college student status. The fraternity/sorority group was selected as the comparison group. Regression analyses were performed first without and then with controls on each item to estimate if effects of the covariates influenced the basic relationships between group type and the dependent measures. In the regression models, all non-dichotomous variables were standardized prior to entry. As a result, in each model, the unstandardized coefficient was an estimate of the effect size. Results are provided in Tables 1 (NSSE Benchmarks), 2 (Deep Learning Scales), and 3 (Self-Reported Gains).

Table 1
Scores on NSSE Benchmarks Comparing Non-Members to Fraternity/Sorority Members

Scale	Group	Descriptive Statistics				No Controls		Controls	
		N	Mean	S.D.	Std. Error	p	Effect Size	p	Effect Size
Academic Challenge	Non-Member	153,067	56.1	13.91	0.04				
	Member	26,102	58.3	13.75	0.09	***	.153	***	.122
Active and Collaborative Learning	Non-Member	152,205	50.5	16.77	0.04				
	Member	25,949	54.2	16.73	0.10	***	.217	***	.174
Student-Faculty Interaction	Non-Member	153,068	42.3	20.84	0.05				
	Member	26,103	48.0	21.47	0.13	***	.272	***	.191
Enriching Educational Experiences	Non-Member	152,932	40.6	17.59	0.04				
	Member	26,082	50.1	16.70	0.10	***	.531	***	.350
Supportive Campus Environment	Non-Member	153,068	57.1	18.85	0.05				
	Member	26,103	61.3	18.45	0.11	***	.224	***	.160

In all five benchmarks, mean scores were significantly higher ($p < .05$) for members than non-members. This was consistent with and without controls, though when controls were applied the effect size, which is the strength of the relationship between two variables, in this case members and non-members, went down. Even when effect size lessened, there was still a finding of significant differences favoring members over non-member.

Effect size was “small” for each benchmark with and without controls, except for Enriching Educational Experiences, which has a “medium” effect size with and without controls. While the “size” of effect must be contextualized in studies, Cohen’s D is often used. Cohen’s D explains small as .2, medium as .5, and large as .8. Administrators of the NSSE have examined the utility of Cohen’s D given the large sample size of the survey and has determined effect size might be referenced as .1 for small, .3 for medium, .5 for large, and .7 for very large. NSSE’s recommendations for effect size yield some difference given the results of this research. For reference view www.nsse.iub.edu/pdf/effect_size_guide.pdf.

Table 2
Scores on NSSE Deep Learning Scales Comparing Non-Members to Fraternity/Sorority Members

Scale	Group	Descriptive Statistics				No Controls		Controls	
		N	Mean	S.D.	Std. Error	<i>p</i>	Effect Size	<i>p</i>	Effect Size
Deep Learning – Higher-Order Thinking	Non-Member	153,068	70.4	22.04	0.06				
	Member	26,103	73.1	21.31	0.13	***	.123	***	.095
Deep Learning - Integrative Learning	Non-Member	153,068	59.8	19.14	0.05				
	Member	26,103	61.7	19.11	0.12	***	.099	***	.085
Deep Learning - Reflective Learning	Non-Member	153,068	59.6	24.03	0.06				
	Member	26,103	60.8	23.51	0.15	***	.051	***	.043

Table 2 reflects the scores of members and non-members across three Deep-Learning scales: Higher Order Thinking, Integrative Learning, and Reflective Learning. For Higher Order Thinking, members had an aggregate mean of 73.1 and non-members scored a 70.4. In Integrative Learning, members' mean was 61.7 while non-members' aggregate mean was 59.8. Members' aggregate mean for Reflective Learning was 60.8 while non-members had an aggregate mean of 59.6. In each scale, scores were significantly higher ($p < .05$) for members than non-members. Effect size was small for each scale. When applied, controls resulted in effect sizes diminishing somewhat; however, significant differences between the member and non-member variable remained.

Table 3
Scores on Self-Reported Gains Comparing Non-Members to Fraternity/Sorority Members

Scale	Group	Descriptive Statistics				No Controls		Controls	
		N	Mean	S.D.	Std. Error	<i>p</i>	Effect Size	<i>p</i>	Effect Size
Gains in Practical Competence	Non-Member	153068	68.3	22.38	0.06				
	Member	26103	71.2	21.61	0.13	***	.134	***	.101
Gains in Personal and Social Development	Non-Member	153068	49.3	24.97	0.06				
	Member	26103	54.5	24.21	0.15	***	.208	***	.145
Gains in General Education	Non-Member	153068	72.2	22.54	0.06				
	Member	26103	75.4	21.59	0.13	***	.143	***	.092
Estimated Numeric GPA	Non-Member	153068	3.4	0.52	0.00				
	Member	26103	3.3	0.49	0.00	***	-.053	***	-.079
Overall Satisfaction	Non-Member	153068	73.0	24.18	0.06				
	Member	26103	77.6	22.93	0.14	***	.191	***	.123

Table 3 reflects the scores of members and non-members across five self-reported gains categories: Gains in Practical Competence, Gains in Personal and Social Development, Gains in General Education, Estimated Numeric GPA, and Overall Satisfaction. For Gains in Practical Competence, members had an aggregate mean of 71.2 and non-members scored a 68.3 mean. In Gains in Personal and Social Development, members' mean was 54.5 while non-members' aggregate was 49.3. Members' aggregate mean for Gains in General Education was 75.4 while non-members had an aggregate mean of 72.2. Members reported lower GPA than non-members (3.3 vs. 3.4). The overall satisfaction of members appears to be higher than non-members (77.6 vs. 73.0). In each scale, there were significant differences between variables. Effect size was small for each scale. When controls were applied, effect sizes decreased but significant differences between the member and non-member variable remained.

Implications and Future Research

Given that engagement influences student learning (Carini et al., 2006; Kuh, 2001a, 2003; Zhao & Kuh, 2004) and fraternity/sorority members in this study self-report higher levels of engagement than non-members, fraternity/sorority members are potentially highly engaged in learning. Across all self-reported items, except for Estimated Numeric GPA, the aggregated self-reported means of members were higher than those reported by non-members'. These differences were significant, yet the results should be considered with the understanding that the effect sizes were small overall except for the Enriching Educational Experiences Benchmark.

The study at hand reinforced aspects of the literature and brought forth new information to explain members' levels of engagement and potentially their involvement in learning centered activities. Findings are consistent with that of Pike (2003) and Hayek et al. (2002). This research expands Pike's (2003) in that it explains fraternity/sorority member self-reported levels of engagement across diverse institutions; however, unlike Pike (2003), the results of this study describe the members and do not explain relationships between membership, engagement, and outcomes. The research built upon that of Hayek et al. (2002), though the sample size was smaller (~26,000 compared to ~42,000) but with more institutions across more years. Even considering that Hayek et al. (2002) used first-year students as well, the difference is quite large given the authors of this study used three years of data versus one year for Hayek et al (2002). It is unclear from this research why this number is so drastically different. This said, this study adds to the small base of research that uses NSSE data to explain characteristics of fraternities and sororities, something fraternity/sorority professionals have been challenged to do in recent years (Bureau & Ryan, 2008).

A surprising significant difference between members and non-members occurred in Academic Challenge. Pike (2003) used NSSE to describe fraternity/sorority members and did not find Academic Challenge to be of significant difference between members and non-members, though the slight difference did favor fraternity/sorority members. His sample examined only a population of public institutions, while this study considered a cross section of 543 public and private institutions. The finding in the research at hand provides evidence that across multiple institutional contexts, fraternity/sorority members report higher levels of academic challenge than non-members.

A less surprising but important finding that there is a medium effect in the area of Enriching Educational Experiences emerged in the study. Results demonstrate that fraternity/sorority members collectively are highly engaged in activities valuable to their learning. Items in this benchmark include levels of involvement in co-curricular activities and community service work. Given the literature on fraternity/sorority member involvement in campus life (Asel et al., 2009; Astin, 1993; Hayek et al., 2002) this is not a surprising difference. It is important to note that conversations with diverse others is emphasized in this benchmark. Though the literature indicates members have less interaction with diverse populations, which decreases opportunities to learn from those different than them (Asel et al., 2009), many inter/national organizations have been making deliberate efforts to promote more opportunities to engage with others across differences. Future research on this population may further explore the Enriching Educational Experiences benchmark to indicate if there are differences between members and non-members

in all items or if the difference in some is so significant that the overall mean of the benchmark could be inflated by some aspects.

Future research using NSSE to explain the experiences of fraternity/sorority members presents additional opportunities. Effect sizes dropped once controls were introduced; this means that demographic variables figure prominently into self-reported measures of engagement in this study. The emphasis in the study was to explain members broadly. Future research on the influence of demographic variables can help inform approaches for attending to the needs of fraternity/ sorority members in diverse contexts. Also, the exclusion of first-year students from this study reflects another difference between this and prior research. Again, the decision to exclude this population was due to the inability to determine when the members joined. This study sought to understand these students' experiences after an extensive period of membership; we chose to select only seniors to participate because we felt this population better reflected the potential influences of fraternity/sororities on learning. Future research may explain first-year levels of engagement, compare both first-year and seniors, and/or examine members longitudinally from the first-year to senior year.

It is vital to examine the predisposition to certain indicators of learning among some students versus others. Therefore, overlaying these and similar data with information on which students might be more likely to join fraternities or sororities could further bear out whether it is the type of student or the fraternity/sorority experience that is chiefly responsible for these greater engagement levels. Using data derived from the Beginning College Student Survey of Engagement (BCSSE, 2011) might support this area of future study.

There are practical implications to consider as a result of these findings. The issues of delayed or deferred recruitment continue to be a hot topic within student affairs. This is often discussed due to perceptions, somewhat based on research, that fraternity/sorority membership may have negative influences on academic performance (DeBard, Lake, & Binder, 2006; Pascarella et al., 2001). Results from this study do not necessarily provide evidence that informs discussion about the timing of recruitment and intake activities (DeBard et al.; 2006; Nelson et al., 2006); however, evidence from this study might be viewed as complementary to earlier findings that as students progress in college, the negative impact of membership diminishes (Asel, et al., 2009; Nelson et al., 2006; Pascarella et al., 2001) and that students in fraternities and sororities tend to be highly engaged throughout the college experience (Hayek et al., 2002; Pike, 2003). For those who are committed to fostering a positive fraternal experience, given students' high engagement and the diminishing negative impact of membership post students' first-year, there is clearly a significant unanswered question that begs a rigorous response. Using data such as these from the NSSE and others found in similar studies cited here as foundation, there should be a suitable methodology for getting at the question of optimal recruitment timing and practice. This question should of course be approached not in terms of benefits accruing to colleges/universities or national fraternities or sororities but to the students involved in these processes.

Another practical implication is the extent of learning that is fostered as a result of the fraternity/sorority experience. It is clear that fraternity/sorority membership is an activity in which students spend significant amounts of time (Astin, 1993; Pascarella et al., 2001; Asel et al., 2009). Time spent on task is likely to have an impact on the student experience (Strange &

Banning, 2001). This is consistent with the literature on campus culture (Kuh & Whitt, 1988), involvement (Astin, 1993), and engagement (Wolf-Wendel et al., 2009). Because time spent on task influences students' experiences, we perceive that being in a fraternity or sorority is going to influence students' overall college experience and levels of engagement, which in turn influences the extent to which students learn. However, an important practical implication is that engagement data is only one part of the learning question. Fraternity/sorority professionals might examine their NSSE data as part of a broader data collection effort to provide evidence that learning does or does not occur in the context of these organizations. When professionals picture their support of members as educational versus only advising, they may prioritize learning as a primary part of their fraternity/sorority advising program and position the function as aligned with broad educational priorities of higher education (Council for the Advancement of Standards, 2009). Of course, it follows that student affairs professionals in all advisory capacities should endeavor to identify where learning is taking place and augment that learning whenever possible.

Limitations

Because we included senior members who were likely to have been engaged for some extended period, we can infer that aspects of the experience in a fraternity or sorority influenced levels of engagement in learning-oriented activities. That is in part why we chose to examine only seniors. That said, these data describe self-reported characteristics about engagement in learning-oriented activities by students who are members of fraternities and sororities. They do not speak to the conditions within a fraternity or sorority that might be beneficial or detrimental to the student learning experience. Persons concerned with the fraternity/sorority experience may use this research to infer environmental conditions, but likely the utility of this research is to serve as a foundation for future research about how the experiences within a fraternity or sorority may directly influence student learning.

Based on other literature, characteristics of seniors are likely to be different than other students (Hayek et al., 2002; Pascarella et al., 2001; Pike, 2000, 2003). It is important to note that due to differing schedules of when students join and the duration for which they have been members when they take the NSSE, we believe NSSE data is likely to be more descriptive of how fraternities and sororities influence engagement levels of seniors than first-year students; however, for institutions who permit first-year students to join during the fall semester, it may be helpful to examine NSSE respondents who are first-year students.

Additionally, the fraternity/sorority experience is not one dimensional. There are various types of fraternities and sororities (Kimbrough, 2003), and the campus culture differs between campuses. NSSE asks one question and specifically inquires about social fraternities and sororities. While there is a population of these organizations that identifies as socially based (e.g., members of the North-American Interfraternity Conference and National Panhellenic Conference), students' perceptions of "social" vary. While we believe most students who responded affirmatively to this question are members of what professionals by and large may identify as the "fraternity/sorority community," some students may have identified themselves as members who are actually members of an academic honor society or a professional organization that is not historically tied to what many perceive as fraternity/sorority life on a college campus (e.g., Phi Beta Kappa).

The data in this study was not examined by institutional type, which may bring forth differences in how institutions create standards which students are expected to achieve (Jelke & Kuh, 2003; Pike, 2000, 2003). Hayek et al. (2002) indicate that NSSE data should be examined with attention to the institutional context in which the fraternity/sorority community exists. Bureau and Ryan (2008) explain how persons with oversight for fraternity/sorority communities may work with institutional partners to examine NSSE data and apply findings in their work. NSSE data is generalizable, but it also must be considered with respect to institutional diversity and a host of environmental factors (Schuh et al., 2006).

Finally, from the literature, we understand fraternity/sorority members to be some of the most engaged students on campus (Astin, 1993; Hayek et al., 2002); however since involvement is likely considered beyond the fraternity/sorority context (e.g., student government, honorary societies, cultural organizations) it is impossible to compartmentalize the fraternity/sorority experience in such a way that explains its positive or negative contributions to student engagement in learning experiences. From this research, we can infer that members, who likely due to the nature of involvement in these organizations have spent a significant amount of time acting in the context of the fraternity or sorority (Pascarella et al., 1996), are more engaged than non-members, but the forums used to promulgate such engagement are still in question. Findings cannot be taken as a declarative statement that the fraternity/sorority experience caused increased engagement; however, this and other research has brought forth evidence to that end (Hayek et al., 2002; Pike, 2000, 2003).

Conclusion

This study sought to describe senior fraternity/sorority members' engagement levels as self-reported. The research at hand built on prior studies that used NSSE data to describe fraternity/sorority members' engagement. Results indicate members are more engaged than non-members. This was consistent across 12 of 13 NSSE scales at significant levels.

It is the hope of the authors that this research begets further research. Additionally, the use of this research by practitioners is particularly important. Fraternity/sorority professionals need to do more than distribute this research and continue to advocate for fraternity/sorority effectiveness in fulfilling the charge of higher education. They should work even more closely with student populations and observe what aspects of their experience are boosting these scores on campuses, and help them use these substantive aspects to increase interest in their worthwhile pursuits. Further, professionals may be able to inform colleagues in other areas of student affairs and beyond of transferable practices within these dynamic student organizations. Doing so could transform the student experience in other clubs, teams, and societies such that the entire institution feels the positive force of the fraternity/sorority community.

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AN EXPLORATION OF THE SEXUAL ORIENTATION AND EDUCATIONAL OUTCOMES OF UNDERGRADUATE FRATERNITY MEMBERS

Larry Long

Previous research found an unwelcoming environment may hinder the identity development of college students. Furthermore, studies revealed gay, bisexual, and questioning (GBQ) students may encounter a hostile environment in college fraternities. This influenced the researcher to question if fraternities are as effective in producing educational gains for GBQ members as for heterosexual members. In the present study, the researcher sampled 286 GBQ and 286 heterosexual fraternity members from the aggregate results of the campuses that used the AFA/EBI Fraternity/Sorority Assessment in 2009 or 2010. The researcher conducted rank-based analyses of variance to assess the differences in personal gains, alcohol use, leadership experience, and satisfaction of fraternity members by sexual orientation. Results revealed heterosexual fraternity members reported greater gains as a result of their fraternity experience for the majority of the personal gains measures. There were no differences in alcohol use, leadership experience, and satisfaction of fraternity members by sexual orientation.

Fraternities attempt to recruit new members through the allure of increased opportunities for leadership development, community service, academic support, and friendship (Sermersheim, 1996). Although gay students choose to join fraternities for friendship and to have a support group while in college (Case, Hesp, & Eberly, 2005), many of these students encounter an unwelcoming environment upon joining. Case et al. (2005) found the majority of gay and bisexual fraternity members described their chapters as homophobic and heterosexist. Further research indicated an unwelcoming college environment may hinder the identity development of gay, bisexual, and questioning (GBQ) students (Chickering & Reisser, 1993; Evans & Broido, 1999), foster a compromised self-image (Zubernis & Snyder, 2007), and influence GBQ students to remain closeted (Rankin, 2003). While fraternity membership has been associated with changes in student learning (Hayek, Carini, O'Day, & Kuh, 2002; Pike, 2003) and improved persistence and graduation rates (DeBard, Lake, & Binder, 2006; DeBard & Sacks, 2010; Grubb, 2006; Severtis & Christie-Mizell, 2007), heterosexual students may be the primary recipients of the benefits of fraternity membership. Given the increased stress that GBQ students may endure in fraternity settings, the researcher hypothesized the fraternal environment may not be as effective in producing educational gains for GBQ members as it is for heterosexual fraternity members. The purpose of this study was to explore if GBQ fraternity members report different levels of personal gains, alcohol use, leadership experience, and satisfaction as a result of their fraternity experience compared to heterosexual members.

Review of Literature

Fraternities have been described as social environments that perpetuate and sometimes exaggerate traditional ideas of masculinity (DeSantis, 2007; Syrett, 2009). In an ethnographic study of the fraternity/sorority community at a large research institution, DeSantis (2007) found members of exclusive fraternal organizations had a propensity to define masculinity in

opposition to femininity. Many of the participants believed masculine men were sexually active, promiscuous, athletic, and muscular. In comparison, they believed non-masculine men were weak, unathletic, and feminine. DeSantis found that some organizations rejected a potential member if chapter members believed the person “talked like a girl, dressed like a fag, associated with feminine men, walked like a queer, avoided fights or conflicts, or was unathletic” (p. 55). The organization members in DeSantis’ study viewed these characteristics as warning signs that a person might be gay. The concern is that the presence of a gay member might hurt the reputation of the chapter by giving the organization the label of being the “gay” fraternity. This is supported by research conducted by Hall and LaFrance (2007), who found the attitude of fraternity members toward homosexuality is related to their heteroidentity concerns. According to these researchers, the more concerned members are about their heterosexuality, the more negative their views toward homosexuality tend to be. The result is that membership in fraternal organizations may be limited to hyper-masculine males (DeSantis, 2007; DeSantis & Coleman, 2008).

Shedding light on the experiences of fraternity/sorority members with minority sexual orientations, Case, Hesp, and Eberly (2005) studied the reasons gay, lesbian, and bisexual (GLB) members chose to join a fraternal organization and the level of homophobia, heterosexism, acceptance, and rejection these members faced upon joining. The lead researcher disseminated a questionnaire using a snowball sampling approach. The researcher collected data between 1992 and 1995 and generated a sample of 524 male respondents and 52 female respondents. Case and his colleagues found the top reasons GLB members joined a fraternal organization were to make friends, have fun, and have a support group. The respondents reported the main lasting benefits of fraternity/sorority membership were gaining social and interpersonal skills, long-term friendships, and leadership skills. Although many of the respondents reported they joined their organization to make friends and to have a support group, the researchers found 74% of male respondents and 71% of female respondents encountered a homophobic or heterosexist climate within their chapter. Nearly half of fraternity respondents and a third of sorority respondents indicated their perceived need to hide part of their identity prevented them from forming closer relationships with their peers. The researchers also found the culture of acceptance members with minority sexual orientations experienced was warmer for respondents who voluntarily disclosed their sexual orientation than for respondents whose orientation was accidentally disclosed. Despite these findings, the vast majority of respondents reported they were satisfied with their fraternity experience. The researchers speculated the level of satisfaction of GLB members was comparable to the level of satisfaction one might expect among heterosexual members.

In a subsequent study, Trump and Wallace (2006) used qualitative methods to assess the coping strategies of five gay fraternity men. The researchers identified three primary coping strategies: avoidance, passing, and assimilation. Avoidance involved repressing one’s sexual identity or ignoring homosexual topics, passing involved fabricating a heterosexual outward image or censoring one’s behaviors, and assimilation involved trying to blend in to conceal one’s sexual orientation. A secondary coping strategy within the assimilation framework was the tendency to become involved in the formal operations of the chapter by serving in numerous leadership roles. The researchers referred to this behavior as fusing. The coming out process of the participants was facilitated by the prevalence of other diverse members, the level of homosexual-identity development of the participants, and the participants’ belief in brotherhood.

Leftin (2009) assessed the factors that facilitated and hindered the coming out process of gay fraternity men. Leftin found respondents disclosed their sexual orientation in order to enhance their relationships within their organization, to be true to themselves, or to maintain an out identity. Reasons respondents chose not to reveal their sexual orientation included fear of retaliation, fear of altering the nature of relationships, low prioritization, and having a sexual identity that was not yet fully developed. Leftin also studied the effect of members disclosing their sexual orientation on chapter culture. The researcher found the disclosure of fraternity members' sexual orientation led to increased diversity programming and a reduction in the use of harmful language such as crude jokes and homophobic remarks. For example, some chapters instituted policies forbidding the use of the word "fag" or "faggot." The disclosure of a member's sexual orientation also paved the way for other members to disclose their orientation and for openly gay college students to be recruited into the organization. The researcher coined this phenomenon the trailblazer effect. The results suggest the presence of an openly gay member may improve the social climate within a fraternity chapter for all members with a minority sexual orientation.

While the existing literature on the experiences of fraternity members with minority sexual orientations is expanding, more research is needed. Aside from the study by Case et al. (2005), few or no studies assessed the benefits of fraternity membership for students with minority sexual orientations. In addition, the researcher of the current study found no published studies that assessed the effectiveness of fraternal organizations in developing the abilities of GBQ members. Research on this topic would assist campus-based professionals, organization staff, and volunteers in ensuring fraternities adequately develop the abilities of all of their members.

Research on the alcohol use of GBQ fraternity members is needed, as well. Research outside of the fraternity context associated having a minority sexual orientation with an increased risk of alcohol abuse (DeBord, Wood, Sher, & Good, 1998; McCabe, Boyd, Hughes, & d'Arcy, 2003; Pope, Ionescu-Pioggia, & Pope, 2001). These studies found GBQ students may use alcohol as a coping mechanism. Given that fraternity membership is also associated with alcohol abuse (Theall et al., 2009), it is unclear if GBQ fraternity members tend to consume alcohol at greater rates than heterosexual members. The researcher did not find any studies that examined the alcohol use of fraternity members by sexual orientation.

Purpose of the Study

Research on the development of college students found an unwelcoming campus environment may hinder the identity development of students (Chickering & Reisser, 1993; Evans & Broido, 1999). Moreover, studies on the social climate in fraternal organizations found GBQ students may encounter a hostile environment in college fraternities (Case et al., 2005; DeSantis, 2007; Syrett, 2009). These findings influenced the researcher of the current study to question if fraternities are as effective in producing educational gains for GBQ members as for heterosexual members. Specifically, the researcher asked: do gay, bisexual, unsure or questioning, and heterosexual fraternity members report comparable levels of personal gains, alcohol use, leadership experience, and satisfaction?

Method

Data

The data for this study were drawn from the aggregate results of the institutions that used the AFA/EBI Fraternity/Sorority Assessment survey in 2009 or 2010. Educational Benchmarking, Inc. developed the instrument in partnership with the Association of Fraternity/Sorority Advisors. The survey measured background characteristics, learning outcomes, and satisfaction with the fraternity/sorority experience (AFA/EBI Assessment Committee, 2010). An item on the instrument prompted respondents to report their sexual orientation. The response categories were “Heterosexual,” “Unsure or Questioning,” and “Gay/Lesbian/Bisexual/Transsexual.” This item made the Fraternity/Sorority Assessment survey an appropriate instrument for answering the research question of this study.

Participants

Sampling approach. The dataset consisted of responses from 13,651 fraternity members at 56 four-year institutions across the United States. About 2% of the respondents identified as gay, bisexual, or transsexual and 1% identified as unsure or questioning. The researcher limited the analysis to institutions where at least three respondents identified as gay, bisexual, or transsexual. This was done to ensure the heterosexual respondents in the final sample were drawn from the same pool of institutions as the non-heterosexual respondents. Thirty-six institutions met this criterion. After controlling for missing values, the sample consisted of 10,013 fraternity members, including 196 gay, bisexual, or transsexual fraternity members and 89 members who indicated they were unsure about their sexual orientation. The researcher produced a final sample by using the full subsample ofGBTQ respondents and sampling an equally-sized group of heterosexual respondents. Using the “select cases” command in SPSS, the researcher randomly sampled 286 heterosexual fraternity members from the pool of 9,727 heterosexual respondents, thus generating a final sample size of 572 participants.

Sample Characteristics. About 20% of the participants were freshmen or first year students, 25% were sophomores, 28% were juniors, and 27% were seniors or older. The ethnic distribution of the sample was 5% Black/African-American, 2% Native American/Alaska Native/Inuit, 4% Asian/Middle Eastern/Pacific Islander, 4% Spanish/Hispanic/Latino(a), and 79% White/Caucasian. Ten participants identified as Other and 4% of the participants identified as Multiracial. The sample consisted of a greater percentage of students of color (21%) compared to the full dataset (16%). This is because nearly a third of theGBTQ respondents in the full dataset were students of color.

It should be noted all of the participants, except for two of theGBT participants and seven of the unsure/questioning participants, reported their gender as “Male.” The other participants marked “Other” and none of the participants marked “Female.” While it is possible some transsexual participants identified as male, this demographic information suggests the subsample of gay, bisexual, and transsexual participants is primarily a subsample of gay and bisexual participants.

Variables of Interest

This study focused on four outcome areas: personal gains, alcohol use, leadership experience, and satisfaction.

Personal gains. Nine measures of personal gains were studied: Sense of Belonging, Diverse Interactions, Interpersonal Relationship Skills, Interpersonal Competence, Leadership Skills, Personal Development Skills, Healthy Behaviors, Self-Worth, and Intrapersonal Competence. The factors were based on questions that asked respondents to report to what extent their fraternity experience enabled them to develop a particular skill. The response options ranged from “Not at all” (1) to “Extremely” (7). Sense of Belonging was a five-item scale ($\alpha = .940$) that measured respondents’ ability to meet people in their organization who shared similar interests, values, and beliefs. Diverse Interactions used three items ($\alpha = .909$) to measure the extent to which the fraternal experience influenced respondents’ interaction with and respect for people with different backgrounds. Interpersonal Relationship Skills was a five-item measure ($\alpha = .955$) of gains in the ability of respondents to meet new people and establish close friendships. Interpersonal Competence was a 10-item measure ($\alpha = .957$) of gains in cognitive and interpersonal abilities. Leadership Skills was a five-item measure ($\alpha = .922$) of gains in administrative abilities, such as managing finances, organizing events, and running meetings. Personal Development Skills was a six-item measure ($\alpha = .933$) of gains in academic and career-related abilities, such as time management, decision making, and oral and written communication skills. Healthy Behaviors was a three-item scale ($\alpha = .896$) that measured the extent to which the fraternity experience encouraged respondents to drink responsibly, understand the consequences of drug and alcohol use, and adopt a healthy lifestyle. Self-Worth measured respondents’ perceptions of the value of their contributions to their organization using five questions ($\alpha = .936$). The measure included questions pertaining to feeling passionate about achieving the goals of the organization, feeling a sense of accomplishment, and having pride as a member of one’s organization. Intrapersonal Competence measured the extent to which the fraternity experience influenced respondents’ understanding of their talents and limitations using four questions ($\alpha = .924$). A detailed description of these factors can be found in a summary report by the AFA/EBI Assessment Committee (2010).

Alcohol use. The alcohol use of respondents was measured from two variables. The first variable was the self-reported frequency of alcohol consumption of the respondents. The response categories were “I do not consume alcohol,” “Once per week or less,” “Two to three times per week,” “Almost every day,” and “Every day.” The second variable was a binary measure of binge drinking (1 = Consumed between 1 and 4 drinks per sitting, 2 = Consumed 5 or more drinks per sitting). Respondents who reported they did not consume alcohol were not included in this measure.

Leadership experience. Differences in the assumption of leadership roles were assessed by a question that prompted respondents to report the highest leadership position they held in the chapter. The response categories were “Executive Board member,” “Have not held an officer/committee chair position,” and “Other officer or committee chair.” The first and third response categories were combined to produce a dichotomous variable, Served as a Chapter Officer.

Satisfaction. Differences in satisfaction were assessed by two measures. The first measure was the three-item factor Overall Satisfaction ($\alpha = .875$). Respondents were asked to indicate their level of satisfaction with their fraternity experience and how inclined they were to recommend joining a fraternal organization at their campus. Respondents were also asked to report their satisfaction in terms of a cost-benefit analysis. The factor had the same response categories as the personal gains measures. The second measure of satisfaction was anticipated alumni involvement, which was measured from a question that asked respondents: “Do you plan to be involved in your fraternity/sorority (locally, regionally, and/or nationally) after graduation?” The response categories ranged from “Will definitely not be involved” (1) to “Will definitely be involved” (4).

Statistical Approach

The variables of interest had skewed distributions and were ordinal in scale. To assess the differences in the outcomes by sexual orientation, the researcher used the Brunner-Dette-Munk method described by Wilcox (2003, 2005). The approach is a rank-based analysis of variance (ANOVA) procedure that tests the null hypothesis that the distributions and relative effects of the groups being compared are the same. A relative effect (q) is the degree to which respondents in one group score high or low on a dependent variable relative to the scores of all of the respondents. The value of the measure can range from 0 to 1. If the null hypothesis for a given dependent variable is not rejected, then all groups should have relative effects of .50 (Erceg-Hurn & Mirosevich, 2008). Post hoc analyses were conducted using Cliff’s delta (d). Cliff’s delta is a nonparametric statistic that assesses the probability that a randomly sampled score from one population is higher than a randomly sampled score of another population, minus the reverse probability (Cliff, 1993, 1996). Cliff’s delta can be used for inferential statistics and as a measure of effect size. Familywise error rates were controlled using the Holm-Bonferonni approach (Cliff, 1996; see also Holm, 1979).

Results

The descriptive results of the differences in personal gains, alcohol use, leadership experience, and satisfaction by sexual orientation are presented in Table 1. As a group, heterosexual fraternity members had higher mean scores for all of the personal gains measures except for Diverse Interactions. Gay and bisexual (GB) fraternity members had the highest mean for Diverse Interactions ($M = 5.86$, $SD = 1.32$). The prevalence of binge drinking was similar across all three groups: 51% of heterosexual, 53% of unsure/questioning, and 51% of GB fraternity members indicated they consumed five or more alcoholic beverages per sitting when they drank. In terms of leadership experience, 72% of heterosexual, 66% of unsure/questioning, and 78% of GB fraternity members indicated they held a position of responsibility in their organizations.

Table 1

Means and Standard Deviations by Sexual Orientation

Measure	Heterosexual		Questioning		Gay or Bisexual	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
<i>Personal Gains</i>						
Sense of Belonging	6.24	0.92	5.74	1.50	5.86	1.32
Diverse Interactions	5.67	1.23	5.34	1.62	5.86	1.32
Interpersonal Relationship Skills	6.19	0.96	5.72	1.41	5.90	1.26
Interpersonal Competence	5.87	1.05	5.32	1.48	5.52	1.29
Leadership Skills	5.83	1.09	5.26	1.58	5.50	1.37
Personal Development Skills	5.59	1.14	5.13	1.59	5.26	1.42
Healthy Behaviors	5.41	1.44	5.01	1.80	5.27	1.60
Self-Worth	6.07	1.00	5.54	1.55	5.80	1.34
Intrapersonal Competence	5.94	1.15	5.35	1.58	5.70	1.29
<i>Alcohol Use</i>						
Frequency of Alcohol Use	2.47	0.76	2.71	1.11	2.51	0.89
Binge Drinking	1.51	0.50	1.53	0.50	1.51	0.51
<i>Leadership Experience</i>						
Served as a Chapter Officer	1.72	0.45	1.66	0.48	1.78	0.42
<i>Satisfaction</i>						
Overall Satisfaction with Fraternity/Sorority Experience	6.19	1.03	5.65	1.68	5.84	1.37
Anticipated Alumni Involvement	3.05	0.75	2.84	0.94	3.10	0.79

The one-way analyses of variance using the Brunner-Dette-Munk method revealed further insights into the experiences of fraternity members with minority sexual orientations. Significant differences were found for six of the nine personal gains measures: Sense of Belonging, Diverse Interactions, Interpersonal Relationship Skills, Interpersonal Competence, Leadership Skills, and Intrapersonal Competence (see Table 2). Follow-up pairwise comparisons were conducted to assess how the groups differed. Heterosexual fraternity members reported greater gains in Sense of Belonging compared to GB fraternity members ($d = .169, p = .001$) and greater gains in Intrapersonal Competence compared to fraternity members who were unsure about their sexual orientation ($d = .198, p = .009$). Compared to GB and unsure/questioning fraternity members, heterosexual fraternity members also reported greater gains in Interpersonal Relationship Skills ($d_Q = .179, p = .014; d_{GB} = .133, p = .013$), Interpersonal Competence ($d_Q = .204, p = .007; d_{GB} = .161, p = .002$), and Leadership Skills ($d_Q = .194, p = .011; d_{GB} = .133, p = .013$).

Table 2

Relative Effects (q) and One-Way Analysis of Variance of Differences by Sexual Orientation

Measure	Hetero- sexual	Ques- tioning	Gay or Bisexual	F	df ₁ , df ₂	Sig.	Follow-Up Analyses
	q ₁	q ₂	q ₃				
<i>Personal Gains</i>							
Sense of Belonging	.541	.460	.458	3.90	2, 208	.029	1 > 3
Diverse Interactions	.485	.448	.545	4.05	2, 205	.025	3 > 1, 2
Interpersonal Relationship Skills	.537	.446	.471	3.77	2, 219	.031	1 > 2, 3
Interpersonal Competence	.544	.438	.465	4.90	2, 204	.013	1 > 2, 3
Leadership Skills	.538	.439	.472	4.10	2, 206	.024	1 > 2, 3
Personal Development Skills	.532	.457	.473	2.48	2, 197	.097	
Healthy Behaviors	.514	.460	.498	1.25	2, 211	.284	
Self-Worth	.530	.451	.479	2.62	2, 198	.087	
Intrapersonal Competence	.535	.431	.481	4.32	2, 195	.021	1 > 2
<i>Alcohol Use</i>							
Frequency of Alcohol Use	.499	.543	.482	1.82	2, 203	.172	
Binge Drinking	.500	.525	.489	0.73	2, 229	.463	
<i>Leadership Experience</i>							
Served as a Chapter Officer	.494	.467	.524	2.35	2, 216	.107	
<i>Satisfaction</i>							
Overall Satisfaction with Fraternity/Sorority Experience	.532	.468	.468	2.34	2, 207	.109	
Anticipated Alumni Involvement	.500	.446	.524	2.90	2, 204	.068	

Note. Relative effects (q) represent the degree to which respondents in one group score high or low on a dependent variable relative to the scores of all of the respondents. Higher values correspond to higher ratings. Familywise error rates were controlled at the $\alpha=.05$ level using the Holm-Bonferonni approach. Significant differences are in **bold**.

Gay and bisexual fraternity members reported greater gains in Diverse Interactions compared to unsure/questioning ($d = -.179, p = .018$) and heterosexual fraternity members ($d = -.124, p = .018$). There were no statistically significant differences in the gains in Personal Development Skills, Self-Worth, and Healthy Behaviors by sexual orientation. The researcher also found no difference in the alcohol-related behaviors of respondents. GB fraternity members were slightly more likely to serve in a position of responsibility ($q = .524$) compared to their heterosexual ($q = .494$) and unsure/questioning ($q = .467$) peers, however the difference was not statistically significant. There were no differences in overall satisfaction and anticipated alumni involvement by sexual orientation.

Limitations

Care should be taken in interpreting the results of this study. The finding that heterosexual fraternity members tended to report higher gains than GBQ members does not imply GBQ members were less skilled. This simply means the fraternal environment was not as effective in developing the skills of the GBQ respondents. It is possible the GBQ respondents developed their abilities through other campus activities. Other limitations pertain to the design of the study. First, it is possible respondents were not honest when reporting their sexual orientation. Closeted GBQ respondents might have reported their sexual orientation as heterosexual. Thus, the results primarily reflect the experiences of “out” GBQ members. Second, the instrument did not allow one to differentiate between the experiences of gay, bisexual, and transsexual members. These subgroups may experience fraternal environments differently. Third, the cross-sectional design provides only a snapshot of the experiences of GBQ fraternity members. Since the sexual identity of students may change throughout the college experience (Case et al., 2005), collecting the data at a later point in time might have produced different results. A longitudinal study that accounts for the changes in the sexual identity of the respondents may provide additional insights into the educational gains of GBQ fraternity members. Lastly, while the study was multi-institutional in nature, the majority of the respondents attended large research institutions, thus the results may have limited generalizability to other campus contexts. Despite these limitations, the results are useful for understanding how the educational outcomes of gay, bisexual, and unsure/questioning members compare to those of heterosexual members.

Discussion

This exploratory study sought to assess if the gains fraternity members experienced as a result of their fraternity affiliation varied by sexual orientation. The study differed from previous studies on the experiences of fraternity members with a minority sexual orientation by including heterosexual members as a comparison group. Leftin (2009) suggested including heterosexual members in the study provides a more complete picture of the experiences of non-heterosexual members. The current study also differed from previous studies in that the experiences of fraternity members who were unsure about their orientation were assessed. Little or no published research had explored the experiences of this subgroup.

Personal Gains

The descriptive results revealed unsure/questioning respondents reported the lowest gains for all of the personal gains measures compared to the gay, bisexual, and heterosexual respondents (see Table 1). Follow-up analyses revealed statistically significant differences between unsure/questioning respondents and heterosexual respondents for four of the personal gains measures (Interpersonal Relationship Skills, Interpersonal Competence, Leadership Skills, and Intrapersonal Competence) with heterosexual members reporting greater gains for the measures (see Table 2). The factors primarily measured psychosocial concepts: that is, the respondents’ abilities to effectively interact within the social environment of the fraternal organization. A possible explanation for the lower gains is unsure/questioning members have to dedicate more time and energy toward coming to terms with their sexual identity compared to heterosexual members. This might leave less time and energy unsure/questioning members can dedicate to developing their interpersonal and intrapersonal abilities. This is plausible in light of the coming

out literature which states gay fraternity members may repress their sexual identity or fabricate a heterosexual outward image as coping strategies (see Trump & Wallace, 2006). These practices prevent unsure/questioning members from fully immersing themselves into the fraternal environment, which may negatively impact the gains of unsure/questioning members.

In regard to interpersonal abilities, Case et al. (2005) found developing social and interpersonal skills and forming friendships were two of the main benefits of fraternity membership for GB men. The descriptive results of the current study revealed the highest mean scores of GB respondents were for the measures of Sense of Belonging ($M = 5.86$, $SD = 1.32$) and Interpersonal Relationship Skills ($M = 5.90$, $SD = 1.26$), which affirm the findings by Case and his colleagues. The present study contributed to the extant literature by revealing unsure/questioning fraternity members benefit in these two areas, as well. Unsure/questioning respondents reported mean ratings of 5.74 ($SD = 1.50$) and 5.72 ($SD = 1.41$) for Sense of Belonging and Interpersonal Relationship Skills, respectively.

It should be noted that GB respondents reported less development in Sense of Belonging compared to heterosexual respondents (see Table 2). A review of the factor components revealed the fraternity experience enabled GB respondents to meet people with whom they enjoyed spending time ($M = 6.06$, $SD = 1.41$), but the experience was not as effective in helping GB respondents meet people who included them in activities ($M = 5.80$, $SD = 1.53$) and shared similar interests ($M = 5.77$, $SD = 1.42$) and beliefs ($M = 5.73$, $SD = 1.48$). According to these results, GB members enjoy the social environment in fraternities, but they may experience dissonance due to a perceived lack of fit. This mirrors the results by Case et al. (2005), who found gay, lesbian, and bisexual members' perceived need to hide part of their identity prevented the members from forming closer relationships with their peers. There was no difference in the development of sense of belonging between unsure/questioning and heterosexual respondents.

In regard to leadership abilities, the majority of respondents in the study by Case et al. (2005) reported the development of leadership skills was a benefit of fraternity membership. However, the current study revealed GB ($M = 5.50$, $SD = 1.37$) and unsure/questioning ($M = 5.26$, $SD = 1.58$) respondents reported moderate gains in leadership abilities. The high standard deviations of the Leadership Skills factor suggest GBQ members have varying experiences in this area. Some GBQ respondents reported high gains as a result of their fraternity experience and other GBQ respondents reported lower gains. There was less dispersion in the response pattern of heterosexual members ($SD_H = 1.09$), indicating the reported gains among heterosexual fraternity members were more similar.

As shown in Table 1, the Healthy Behaviors and Personal Development Skills factors received the lowest ratings within each group. The outcomes of all fraternity members can be improved by making the fraternity experience more conducive to gaining competencies pertaining to these two measures. The non-significant difference across the three groups implies that no particular subgroup is advantaged in the gains in Healthy Behaviors and Personal Development Skills. This strengthens the case that these two areas should be addressed. Campus-based professionals, organization staff, and volunteers can be integral in developing these competencies in fraternity members.

Alcohol Use

Fraternity membership has been associated with increased rates of alcohol use and binge drinking (Theall et al., 2009). In addition, research outside of the fraternity context associated having a minority sexual orientation with an increased risk of alcohol abuse (DeBord et al., 1998; McCabe et al., 2003; Pope et al., 2001). These findings lead one to suspect the prevalence of alcohol abuse among GBQ fraternity members might be greater than among heterosexual members. The results of the current study revealed no difference in the alcohol use of gay, bisexual, unsure or questioning, and heterosexual fraternity members. According to this finding, the fraternity environment does not influence the drinking behaviors of GBQ members any more than the environment may influence the drinking behaviors of heterosexual members. The non-significant difference in alcohol use is comparable to the results by Ridner, Frost, and LaJoie (2006), who found no difference in the drinking behaviors of gay and heterosexual college men. The researchers, however, did not provide an explanation for the finding. A possible explanation for the non-significant difference in alcohol use by sexual orientation is GBQ members avoided engaging in behaviors that placed them in a negative light. Researchers suggested fraternity members with minority sexual orientations might become highly engaged in chapter activities to prove themselves to other members (see Case et al., 2005; Trump & Wallace, 2006). If this is the case, then one would expect GBQ members to avoid engaging in socially unacceptable behaviors, as well. Based on the experiences of the researcher, consuming alcohol excessively (that is, more often than other fraternity members) and engaging in destructive behaviors as a result of one's drinking behaviors is censured in fraternal organizations. It is possible the fraternal environment prevents some GBQ members from using alcohol as a coping mechanism.

Leadership Experience

Previous studies exploring the leadership experiences of GB fraternity members suggested members with a minority sexual orientation have a propensity to serve in formal leadership roles, especially executive-level positions (Case et al., 2005; Trump & Wallace, 2006). A limitation of these studies was the absence of a comparison group of heterosexual members. Thus, the studies did not reveal if gay and bisexual members were more likely to serve in leadership roles compared to heterosexual members. The ANOVA in the current study revealed no difference in the prevalence of gay, bisexual, unsure/questioning, and heterosexual chapter officers (see Table 2), suggesting GBQ and non-GBQ members serve in formal leadership roles at comparable rates. Despite the non-significant difference in the prevalence of chapter officers by sexual orientation, the descriptive results support the finding that gay and bisexual members serve in formal leadership roles at high rates. Seventy-eight percent of the GB respondents served as chapter officers. Moreover, 44% of GB respondents—compared to 33% of unsure/questioning respondents and 38% of heterosexual respondents—indicated the highest leadership position they held in their chapter was an executive-level position.

Satisfaction

Respondents with a minority sexual orientation were satisfied with their fraternity experience as demonstrated by the high ratings for the Overall Satisfaction factor. Compared to the ratings for the personal gains measures, the Overall Satisfaction factor had the third highest mean for unsure/questioning respondents ($M = 5.65$, $SD = 1.68$) and the fourth highest mean for GB respondents ($M = 5.84$, $SD = 1.37$). The mean for heterosexual respondents ($M = 6.19$, $SD = 1.03$) was higher, however the researcher found no statistically significant difference in the

overall satisfaction of fraternity members by sexual orientation, indicating GBQ fraternity respondents were at least as satisfied as their heterosexual peers. Furthermore, GB fraternity members were slightly more likely to anticipate being involved in their organization post-graduation compared to their questioning and heterosexual peers, as shown by the means in Table 1. Case et al. (2005) suggested the level of satisfaction of fraternity members with a minority sexual orientation was comparable to that of heterosexual fraternity members. The results of the current study affirm these conclusions.

Implications for Practice

The results of this study revealed differences in the experiences of fraternity members by sexual orientation. Heterosexual fraternity members reported significantly greater gains for the majority of the personal gains measures compared to GBQ fraternity members. Moreover, questioning fraternity members expressed gaining the least from their fraternity experience for most of the personal gains measures. These results have several implications for practice and research.

Implications for Practice

Chapter advisors, organization staff, and campus-based professionals (hereafter referred to as advisors) can be integral in ensuring fraternities are effective in developing the abilities of all members, regardless of the sexual orientation of the members. Strategies include establishing safe and inclusive social environments, developing the academic and career-related abilities of members, and encouraging members to make healthy lifestyle choices.

Establish safe and inclusive social environments. The results revealed the fraternity experience was less effective in producing personal gains for gay, bisexual, and unsure/questioning respondents compared to heterosexual respondents. The difference might be a result of sexual-orientation-related stress. Zubernis and Snyder (2007) stated students with minority sexual orientations “experience the same stresses and concerns that affect college students in general, but have the additional stress related to managing the stigma of being a sexual minority” (p. 76). Advisors should work with chapter members to create social environments that are accepting and supportive of people with non-heterosexual identities. Adding diversity programming to the membership education curriculum that improves members’ understanding of sexual identity development and ways to support brothers with minority sexual orientations would be beneficial. In addition, advisors should work with chapter members to make their organization less heteronormative. These efforts may limit the additional sexual-orientation-related stress GBQ members may experience. Consequently, GBQ members may have more time and energy to dedicate to developing their abilities.

Develop the academic and career-related abilities of members. Personal Development Skills was the lowest rated measure for GB respondents and the second lowest for heterosexual and unsure/questioning respondents. These descriptive results revealed the fraternity experience was mildly effective in developing the academic and career-related abilities of members, such as time management, decision making, and oral and written communication skills. Advisors should consider adding hands-on workshops on business writing and developing public speaking skills to membership education programs. Chapter-based or community-wide support programs, such

as Toastmasters, may also be beneficial in developing the academic and career-related abilities of members.

Encourage members to make healthy lifestyle choices. The Healthy Behaviors factor received the lowest rating by heterosexual and unsure/questioning respondents and the second lowest rating by GB respondents. Furthermore, half of the respondents indicated they binge drink when they consume alcohol. Advisors should consider offering educational programs on health, wellness, and the consequences of alcohol and drug abuse. In addition, advisors should work with organization members to reduce the prominence of alcohol at social events. Traditions, such as initiations, anniversaries, parent weekends, and homecoming, should be commemorated through activities that do not promote the use of alcohol as a bonding mechanism. This would teach members they can be social without consuming alcohol.

Implications for Research

While this study expanded the literature on the experiences of fraternity members with minority sexual orientations, some questions remain unanswered. The instrument of the current study did not allow one to differentiate between the experiences of gay, bisexual, and transgendered respondents. Additional research is needed to understand how the experiences of these subgroups compare. More research on members who are unsure or question their sexual orientation is needed, as well. The results of the current study revealed questioning students reported fewer gains as a result of their fraternity experience compared to GB and heterosexual fraternity members. Future research should explore why the differences might exist. Future research should also explore if fraternities can facilitate the identity development of gay and bisexual students and under which conditions this might occur. Research indicated serving in a leadership role in a GBQ student organization facilitated the identity development of GBQ students (Renn, 2007; Renn & Bilodeau, 2005). Since fraternity members with a minority sexual orientation have a tendency to serve in chapter leadership roles, the right conditions may enable GBQ members to explore and refine their sexual identity. Further research should also explore if differences exist in the experiences of GBQ members by living arrangement. It is possible the experiences of members who live in a chapter house are different compared to the experiences of members who reside in other living arrangements.

Conclusion

This study contributed to the existing literature by shedding light on the differences in outcomes of fraternity members by sexual orientation. While GBQ were more likely to report fewer gains as a result of their fraternity experience, members with a minority sexual orientation reported comparable levels of the assumption of leadership positions and satisfaction compared to their heterosexual peers. Programs and interventions by campus-based professionals, organization staff, and volunteers can be integral in ensuring gay, bisexual, and questioning members have positive fraternal experiences.

For resources on supporting non-heterosexual fraternity and sorority members, advisors should visit the Lambda 10 Project website (www.lambda10.org). The website features resources for gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgendered, and questioning (GLBTQ) members, such as a list of “out”

fraternity and sorority members, stories about GLBTQ fraternity and sorority members, and recommendations for things to consider when coming out to one's chapter. The website also includes resources for GLBTQ allies. These resources include recommendations for fraternity/sorority professionals, an anti-homophobia training manual, climate assessment checklists for fraternities and sororities, and descriptions of ways to develop a fraternity/sorority ally program. In addition, chapter advisors, organization staff, and campus-based professionals can improve their GLBTQ advising abilities by attending an educational program on supporting students with minority sexual orientations. Advisors who are affiliated with an institution of higher education might attend a safe zone training program, if one is available. Alternatively, advisors might consider attending a conference or training session, such as the week-long Advisor Book Camp organized by Campus Pride (www.campuspride.org/camppride).

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SPIRITUAL VALUES AMONG FRATERNITY MEN COMPARED TO UNAFFILIATED MEN AND THE INFLUENCE OF HEGEMONIC MASCULINITY

Jason B. Goldfarb and Charles G. Eberly

The article is based on the Center for the Study of the College Fraternity's 2009 Adele Williamson Outstanding Masters Research Award winning thesis entitled, "Student Spiritual Development Associated with Fraternity Affiliation." Using data (n = 1,211) from the Higher Education Research Institute (HERI) at the University of California at Los Angeles (UCLA) 2003 pilot survey instrument, College Students' Beliefs and Values, funded by the John Templeton Foundation, this study examined the relationship between fraternity affiliation, hegemonic masculinity, spirituality, religion, and other associated spiritual/religious factors. Significant differences were found regarding measures of spirituality and associated beliefs and values between fraternity-affiliated and non-affiliated participants, as well as respondents' relative levels of hegemonic masculinity. Discussion and implications for practice offer consideration for practitioners and fraternity advisors with enhancing local chapter programming, creating new programs, or finding ways of reinforcing college fraternal organizations' core values, particularly as they address issues of spirituality and personal religious growth, and a healthy conception of manhood.

Most college men are aware of the positive masculine traits they wish to exhibit (e.g., honor, loyalty, respect) but fall victim to acting-out their peers' perceptions of what it means to be a "man" (Harris, 2008). College fraternities are often cited as organizations that foster hyper-masculine behaviors (e.g., misogyny, excessive alcohol consumption, homophobia). Pressure from fellow members to live-up to a socially constructed definition of masculinity requires fraternity members to constantly be vigilant in proving their masculinity to their peers (Edwards, 2007; Harris; 2006; Kimmel, 2008; Sanday, 2007; Syrett, 2009). While members often feel pressure from their fraternity brothers or from their own perceptions of masculinity to deviate from the organization's espoused principles and values, they realize these behaviors are contradictory to the espoused mission of character development found in many fraternal organizations (Syrett, 2009).

Phi Beta Kappa, the first American college fraternity, was founded at the College of William & Mary on December 5, 1776. Friendship, morality, and learning were the founding principles of this organization. Phi Beta Kappa's motto derived from its Greek letters, "[I]ove of wisdom the guide of life" (Robson, 1966, p. 23). Fraternity rituals, the moral and ethical foundation of the organizations, are often cited to espouse such positive ideals (Brooks, 1967; Callais, 2005; McMinn, 1979). Embedded in these fraternal ideals is the concept of building guiding principles for living a more fulfilled life. Interestingly, spirituality is cited as a key component needed to attain such a life (Love & Talbot, 1999).

Even though fraternity ritual is seen as a positive influence on those who belong, fraternity membership is often observed as a negative influence (Bartholow, Sher, & Krull, 2003; Caudill et al., 2006; Kuh & Arnold, 1993). The dissonance between the two influences often appears to be quite problematic and has been a topic of concern in higher education (Pike, 2000). While the majority of current research on fraternities focuses on the negative effects of fraternity affiliation, it is equally important to assess the moral foundations of these organizations and how members are influenced as a result. Two key questions to be asked are whether fraternities enhance their members' spiritual development and if so, in what manner do they enhance spiritual development?

Review of Research

Spirituality and Fraternity Affiliation

There has been a growing interest in the spiritual development of college students; however, there has been little empirical research that examined spiritual development among fraternity members (Webb & Mueller, 2009). Webb and Mueller (2009) studied 123 fraternity/sorority members and non-affiliated students at a mid-sized, mid-Atlantic institution and found the only significant difference between affiliated and non-affiliated students was their level of connectedness. While both sets of participants were found to score low on the connectedness scale of the Assessment of Spirituality and Religious Sentiments (ASPIRES) (Piedmont, 1999), affiliated students scored significantly lower on the connectedness scale than their non-affiliated peers. Webb and Mueller defined connectedness following Piedmont's (2005) definition, "as 'feelings of belonging and responsibility to a larger human reality that cuts across generations and groups'" (p. 48).

Eberly (1970) analyzed data for college men based on length of fraternity membership from the ground-breaking Lehmann and Dressel (1962) four-year, longitudinal study (1958-1962). He found the measured change in attitudes and values during college suggested a meaningful spiritual foundation was important.

Greeks selected fraternity, family, and Church as three of their most reinforcing influences on original attitudes and beliefs during college. These three factors, among others, might be taken to represent 'traditional American values,' to be honored and preserved from a fraternity point of view. It then might follow that fraternity group selection and self-selection into fraternities should be such that those selected are the most likely, throughout their college experience, to honor those values (p. 102).

More recent research using data from the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) supported Eberly's reflection (Hayek, Carini, O'Day, & Kuh, 2002). Hayek et al. found that compared to other students, fraternity and sorority members had greater levels of engagement in educationally effective practices, including experiences and exposure to diversity and self-reported gains in various educational and personal growth areas. However, Hayek et al. did not directly address the issue of student spirituality and beliefs.

Fraternity rituals, through symbols or myths, communicate the philosophical or religious meaning of the organization. Brooks (1967) described the fraternity ritual to be, "based solely on intellectual, moral, and spiritual pursuits" (p. 198). Callais (2005) explained the fraternity ritual allowed members to become connected with the fraternal organization, as well as knowledgeable

of the expectations and responsibilities assumed based on their developmental stage. The ritual experience was an important component of students' developmental process because it helped students transition from one stage of their lives to the next. Eberly (1967) compared the perceptions of a sample of fraternity members in two chapters with the perceptions of a set of inter/national officials regarding the influence of fraternity rituals on members. A majority of participants reported that rituals should have a high value in their moral development, but unfortunately they reported their ritual values were not congruent with their behavior. Owen and Owen (1976) similarly described how the spiritual elements of fraternities' rituals reinforced feelings of reverence and brotherhood for many members.

Syrett's (2009) history of White college fraternities, however, offered disconfirming evidence of the spirituality of fraternity men dating from the founding of the organizations. His argument is based on the fact that early American colleges were founded principally to educate young men into the clergy. Men who later became fraternity members, however, grained against the atmosphere of piety supported by the colleges' faculty members, themselves likely to be clergy. Young men joined fraternities because they "offered an escape from the monotony, dreariness, and unpleasantness of the collegiate regimen which began with prayer before dawn and ended with prayer after dark" (Rudolph, 1990, p. 146). Thus, even in the earliest years of the college fraternity, men less likely to pursue a career in the clergy were the men most likely to join such organizations.

As the effects of the industrial revolution changed men's occupational roles and women entered college and the workforce in direct competition with men, men's concept of masculinity changed to a definition that stipulated "being a man" was the opposite of femininity. Thus, demonstrating manhood came to mean demonstrating one's heterosexuality and one's differentiation from the feminine, specifically in terms of treating women as objects to demonstrate one's manhood to other men (Syrett, 2009). In addition, restricting one's own self-expression of tender emotions by labeling expressions of affection as "gay" and avoiding association with men who appeared to be feminine (e.g., homosexuals). Syrett's historical analysis and Kimmel's (2008) sociological analysis of contemporary males from the ages of 18 to 26 reinforce the unhealthy consequences of what has come to be known as hegemonic (hyper) masculinity on college men; whether or not they are members of college fraternities.

College Men and Hegemonic Masculinity

Edwards (2007) and Harris (2006) addressed issues surrounding hegemonic masculinity among college men. Edwards found that college men felt great pressure and strained to conform to unrealistic societal perceptions of what it meant to be a man. All ten participants from a large university on the east coast in his qualitative study responded, to some level, that they were unable to become the ultimate perception of what a man is, and subsequently felt "they could never fully live up to society's expectations of them as men on their own" (2007, p. 111). When these individuals tried to liberate themselves from the pressure of trying to live up to the quintessential definition of what it means to be a man, they felt overwhelmed rather than liberated.

Harris (2006) discovered that when college males experienced pressure from both external and internal influences (e.g., personal perceptions, peer groups, campus involvement, etc.), they

adopted behaviors such as “misogyny, alcohol consumption, homophobia, having a work hard/play hard mentality, and male bonding” (p. 191). Participants perceived that all of these behaviors and attitudes were common among college males.

Fraternities have been identified as groups that foster atmospheres encouraging hyper-masculine behaviors such as high-risk drinking and hazing (Nuwer, 1999). Due to the exclusive nature of these organizations, fraternity members feel pressure to try to conform to the traditional male gender role, and that pressure consequently explains the reason for their excessive use of alcohol (Capraro, 2000; Edwards, 2007). Fraternities have also been identified as organizations that promote misogynist attitudes. For many fraternity members, in-group misogynistic attitudes directly impact their interactions with women. As DeSantis (2007) explained, “many of the women...interviewed [for the study] disclosed incidents of abuse by acquaintances, most of whom were fraternity friends or boyfriends” (p. 96). While the women DeSantis interviewed realized there were other fraternities that did not recruit hyper-masculine, hypersexual members, they explained that those members were the nice, sweet guys that reminded them of their little brother; not the dating type. The sex role conformity faced by college males is clear.

Methods

The purpose of the present study was to examine spirituality among fraternity members compared to non-affiliated male respondents in a representative sample of college men. A subset of data from the University of California at Los Angeles (UCLA) Higher Education Research Institute (HERI) 2003 pilot survey, College Students' Beliefs and Values (CSBV), was used for the study. The CSBV was designed as a longitudinal follow up of participants from the annual Cooperative Institutional Research Program (CIRP) Survey of Entering Freshman, re-administered to a matching group during their third year at a diverse sample of colleges.

College Students' Beliefs and Values (CSBV) Survey

The HERI staff examined many definitions of “spirituality” and was unable to find an existing instrument that fit their needs due to the narrow focus on specific aspects of spirituality or religiosity. They sought to develop a survey instrument that would be inclusive of all students’ beliefs, whether or not their spiritual beliefs stemmed from personal religious convictions or from other sources. As a result, the CSBV included both spiritual beliefs and perspectives and spiritual practices and behaviors. Most importantly, the HERI staff wanted to create a survey that did not assume the religious or spiritual beliefs of the student, referenced God minimally, and was inclusive of many beliefs—both conventional and unconventional. The instrument was also user friendly—a survey short in length and that used easily comprehended terminology (HERI, 2004c).

After the HERI staff developed the criteria for the survey instrument and administered the 175 item pilot survey, a factor analysis of the data resulted in identifying 19 principal factors (HERI, 2004d). The 19 factor scales measured six broad areas of spirituality, (1) Religious/Social Conservatism, (2) Religious Skepticism, (3) Self-Esteem, (4) Equanimity, (5) Psychological Distress, and (6) Spiritual Distress. The final pilot survey instrument factor scales included measures of spirituality, aesthetically-based spiritual experience, religious commitment, self-esteem, equanimity, spiritual distress, psychological distress, spiritual/religious growth, growth

in global/national understanding, growth in tolerance, growth in leadership, religious engagement, charitable involvement, religious/social conservatism, religious skepticism, spiritual quest, social activism, artistic orientation, and compassionate self-concept (HERI, 2004a). Cronbach's Alpha reliabilities for the 19 factor scales as reported ranged from .97 to .65 (HERI, 2004a).

Proxy Measure of Hegemonic Masculinity

Goldfarb and Eberly developed a twentieth scale from CSBV items, designed to approximate a measure of hegemonic masculinity (Table 1), using classical measurement theory (Winston, 2000). The researchers selected items from the CSBV that were consistent with descriptions of hegemonic masculinity found in two recent dissertations (Harris, 2006; Edwards, 2007). The list of selected items was forwarded to Dr. Frank Harris for his expert review, and he agreed that the items had face validity for the purposes of the present study (personal communication, January 10, 2008).

Hegemonic masculinity as defined for the purposes of the present study involved being highly athletic, dominant (e.g., ability and social group), exhibiting high alcohol use, and including misogynistic beliefs. Individual items selected are listed in Appendix A. The resulting 18 item scale was tested for Cronbach's Alpha reliability of .681, then used to examine fraternity and non-affiliated respondents' relative position as a proxy measure of hyper-masculinity in relationship to respondent scores on the CSBV Factor Scales previously identified in the pilot survey analysis. This new scale was used in conjunction with the 19 principle factors developed by HERI staff.

CSBV Data Collection

In March 2003, a postcard was sent out to a random sample of about 250 third-year students at each of 47 universities across the country to notify 2,000 CIRP student participants that they would receive the CBSV survey in the mail with more information about the survey. In addition to the survey and associated information, surveys were randomly selected to include a monetary incentive (e.g., \$0, \$2, \$5). Two weeks later, the HERI mailed the four page questionnaires with a cover letter explaining the purpose of the study. Another attempt was made to get students to participate in the study by sending an email reminder to a sample of the total population. Two weeks after the email reminder a second survey was sent to the research participants. In the end 32% of the responses were usable for the study (HERI, 2004b).

Treatment of the Data for the Present Study

Both fraternity member ($n = 237$) and non-affiliated male ($n = 974$) subsets of the data were examined to determine if the independent datasets had the same underlying factor structure as the original, combined set of HERI data. Internal Consistency Reliability (Cronbach's Alpha) was calculated to test if the reliability of the 19 factor scales for affiliated and non-affiliated males were similar (Appendix B). If the factor scales were stable (e.g., underlying factors from both sub-sets were similar), then finding similar reliabilities would strengthen the use of the survey factors for the present analysis. If the factor structures were somewhat different, this outcome would support the idea that there were underlying differences between the data sets of fraternity members and non-affiliated male participants. The affiliated and non-affiliated factor scales had parallel reliabilities for all 19 scales. Multiple Analysis of Variance (MANOVA) was used to

determine significant differences, if any, between fraternity and non-affiliated participants on each of the 19 factor scales. Scheffé post-hoc tests were used to determine specific scale mean differences (Klockars & Hancock, 2000).

Results

Since all relationships between variables identified in the analysis of CSBV data were reported in terms of correlations, no causality of any kind can be inferred from the original HERI results or results of the present study (McMillan & Schumacher, 2001). The data reported below are descriptive of a nationally representative sample of college men, because the 46 baccalaureate institutions chosen for the pilot study were purposefully selected based on different institutional characteristics (e.g., type, control, geographic location, etc.) to ensure a diverse sample of colleges and universities (HERI, 2004b).

Fraternity Membership and College Students' Beliefs and Values

Displayed in Table 1 are the results of a one-way MANOVA examining the relationship between fraternity membership and 20 scale factors (e.g., 19 CSBV factors and the hegemonic masculinity scale developed for the purposes of this study). Affiliated participants, compared to non-affiliated participants, reported higher levels of religious skepticism [$F(1,665) = 7.66, p = .006$] and hegemonic masculinity [$F(1,665) = 34.75, p < .001$]. Non-affiliated participants demonstrated higher levels of spirituality [$F(1,665) = 9.23, p = .002$], religious commitment [$F(1,665) = 13.03, p < .001$], spiritual/religious growth [$F(1,665) = 16.22, p < .001$], religious engagement [$F(1,665) = 14.35, p < .001$], and religious/social conservatism [$F(1,665) = 22.89, p < .001$] compared to affiliated participants.

Table 1
Means and Standard Deviations of Affiliated and Non-Affiliated Participants and MANOVA Results

Measures	Affiliated		Non-Affiliated		MANOVA ^a (Between-groups effects)	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	F(1, 665)	η^2
Spirituality	36.36	5.97	38.23	6.19	9.23**	0.014
Aesthetically-Based Spiritual Experience	10.08	2.32	10.66	2.45	5.56	0.008
Religious Commitment	39.59	8.28	42.49	7.96	13.03***	0.019
Self-Esteem	26.73	3.75	25.99	4.07	3.35	0.005
Equanimity	14.15	2.17	14.39	2.27	1.13	0.002
Spiritual Distress	8.41	2.12	8.60	2.04	0.87	0.001
Psychological Distress	6.06	1.26	6.20	1.33	1.18	0.002
Spiritual/Religious Growth	9.98	2.46	10.96	2.41	16.22***	0.024
Growth in Global/National Understanding	11.77	1.75	11.92	1.76	0.85	0.001
Growth in Tolerance	11.31	1.73	11.17	1.74	0.66	0.001
Growth in Leadership	8.25	1.14	8.14	1.19	0.97	0.001
Religious Engagement	20.50	7.16	23.32	7.50	14.35***	0.021
Charitable Involvement	10.57	1.91	10.14	1.93	5.05	0.008
Religious/Social Conservatism	15.42	3.89	17.36	4.09	22.89***	0.033
Religious Skepticism	17.96	4.25	16.82	4.14	7.66*	0.011
Spiritual Quest	25.93	4.92	26.44	5.26	0.94	0.001
Social Activism	19.26	4.07	19.76	4.23	1.42	0.002
Artistic Orientation	8.05	2.52	8.27	2.69	0.69	0.001
Compassionate Self-Concept	22.53	3.39	22.64	3.22	0.11	0.000
Hegemonic Masculinity	49.24	6.47	45.28	6.76	34.75***	0.050

*p < 0.01; **p < 0.005; ***p ≤ 0.001

^a Results of MANOVA for the Group main effect: $F(19,661)$, $p < 0.001$, $\eta^2 = .996$ (F value is Wilks' lambda)

Hegemonic Masculinity and College Students' Beliefs and Values

Examining the relationship between the participants' level of hegemonic masculinity and the scale factors, a one-way MANOVA was executed using a scale developed to assess respondents' relative conformity to hegemonic masculinity (Table 2). Due to the lack of participants who demonstrated levels of either extreme or scarce hegemonic masculinity (e.g., being more than two standard deviations), the two groups were combined with the groups that were between one and two standard deviations. The four hegemonic masculinity groups were categorized as: Low (≤ -1 SD), Medium-Low (between -1 SD and the mean), Medium-High (between the mean and $+1$ SD), and High ($\geq +1$ SD).

Table 2
Means and Standard Deviations of Participants' Level of Hegemonic Masculinity and MANOVA Results

Measures	Low		Medium-Low		Medium-High		High		MANOVA ^a Between-groups effects	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	<i>F</i> (3, 663)	η^2
Spirituality	39.67	5.15 ^{1,2}	38.50	6.20 ³	37.21	5.96 ¹	35.67	6.91 ^{2,3}	9.66***	0.042
Aesthetically-Based Spiritual Experience	11.34	2.33 ^{1,2}	10.66	2.37 ³	10.35	2.32 ¹	9.75	2.64 ^{2,3}	8.77***	0.038
Religious Commitment	45.69	6.02 ^{1,2}	43.17	7.71 ^{3,4}	40.49	8.07 ^{1,3}	37.55	8.58 ^{2,4}	24.97***	0.102
Self-Esteem	23.21	3.38 ^A	25.58	3.90 ^A	27.07	3.55 ^A	29.02	3.29 ^A	53.98***	0.196
Equanimity	14.42	2.25	14.38	2.34	14.32	2.16	14.22	2.26	0.19	0.001
Spiritual Distress	8.68	1.99	8.71	2.07	8.50	2.13	8.23	1.93	1.53	0.007
Psychological Distress	6.40	1.40	6.21	1.29	6.01	1.27	6.15	1.33	2.25	0.010
Spiritual/Religious Growth	11.58	2.31 ^{1,2}	11.15	2.34 ³	10.40	2.45 ¹	9.70	2.37 ^{2,3}	15.30***	0.065
Growth in Global/National Understanding	11.50	1.55	11.89	1.79	11.93	1.83	12.25	1.68	3.48	0.015
Growth in Tolerance	11.17	1.55	11.23	1.67	11.32	1.91	10.90	1.76	1.35	0.006
Growth in Leadership	7.90	1.15	8.21	1.30	8.27	1.08	8.35	1.06	3.54	0.016

* $p \leq 0.01$; ** $p < 0.005$; *** $p \leq 0.001$

^ASignificant differences amongst all of the groups.

^{1, 2, 3, ...} Significant differences between the groups with the same superscript.

^a Results of MANOVA for the Group main effect: $F(19,645)$, $p < 0.001$, $\eta^2 = .997$ (F value is Wilks' lambda)

Participants who displayed the lowest level of hegemonic masculinity reported higher levels of spirituality [$F(3,663) = 9.66, p > .001$], aesthetically-based spiritual experience [$F(3,663) = 8.77, p = .006$], religious commitment [$F(3,663) = 24.97, p < .001$], spiritual/religious growth [$F(3,663) = 15.30, p < .001$], religious engagement [$F(3,663) = 51.56, p < .001$], and religious/social conservatism [$F(3,663) = 60.37, p < .001$] than all other participants. Participants who reported the highest level hegemonic masculinity revealed higher levels of self-esteem [$F(3,663) = 53.98, p < .001$] and religious skepticism [$F(3,663) = 26.23, p < .001$].

To further examine the relationship between hegemonic masculinity and the scale factors, a one-way MANOVA was performed to examine both hegemonic masculinity and fraternity affiliation (Table 3). Due to the low numbers of affiliated participants, the hegemonic masculinity factor had to be condensed into two groups to have large enough samples to run the MANOVA test. The groups were split between low (less than the mean) and high (greater than the mean).

Table 3
Means and Standard Deviations of Fraternity Affiliation/Level of Hegemonic Masculinity and MANOVA Results

Measures	Affiliated				Non-Affiliated				MANOVA ^a	
	Low		High		Low		High		Between-groups effects	η^2
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
Spirituality	37.71	5.74	35.65	5.99 ²	39.03	5.90 ^{1,2}	37.06	6.42 ¹	8.82***	0.038
Aesthetically-Based Spiritual Experience	10.26	2.13	9.99	2.42	10.96	2.40 ¹	10.20	2.46 ¹	6.36***	0.028
Religious Commitment	42.81	7.45	37.90	8.23 ²	44.14	7.26 ^{1,2}	40.07	8.33 ¹	20.33***	0.084
Self-Esteem	24.98	3.90 ^{3,4}	27.65	3.34 ^{2,4}	24.79	3.90 ^{1,2}	27.76	3.67 ^{1,3}	33.30***	0.131
Equanimity	14.29	2.27	14.08	2.12	14.41	2.31	14.36	2.22	0.48	0.002
Spiritual Distress	8.50	2.17	8.36	2.11	8.73	2.02	8.42	2.05	1.30	0.006
Psychological Distress	5.95	1.34	6.11	1.21	6.31	1.32	6.04	1.32	2.47	0.018
Spiritual/Religious Growth	10.98	2.44	9.46	2.32 ²	11.33	2.32 ^{1,2}	10.42	2.44 ¹	15.91***	0.067
Growth in Global/National Understanding	11.55	1.47	11.86	1.88	11.79	1.75	12.10	1.74	2.02	0.009
Growth in Tolerance	11.60	1.40	11.16	1.88	11.16	1.65	11.18	1.86	0.79	0.004
Growth in Leadership	8.00	1.08	8.39	1.15	8.05	1.27	8.26	1.04	2.73	0.012

* $p \leq 0.01$; ** $p < 0.005$; *** $p \leq 0.001$

^{1,2,3,...} Significant differences between the groups with the same superscript.

^a Results of MANOVA for the Group main effect: $F(19,645), p < 0.001, \eta^2 = .995$ (F value is Wilks' lambda)

Individuals who reported both a low level of hegemonic masculinity and were affiliated demonstrated higher levels of religious engagement [$F(3,663) = 39.52, p < .001$] than all other groups. Participants who reported a low level of hegemonic masculinity but were non-affiliated revealed higher levels of spirituality [$F(3,663) = 8.82, p < .001$], aesthetically-based spiritual experience [$F(3,663) = 6.36, p < .001$], religious commitment [$F(3,663) = 20.33, p < .001$], spiritual/religious growth [$F(3,663) = 15.91, p < .001$], and religious/social conservatism [$F(3,663) = 48.52, p < .001$]. Individuals who reported a high level of hegemonic masculinity and were a member of a fraternity exhibited higher levels of religious skepticism [$F(3,663) = 21.22, p < .001$], while participants who demonstrated a high level of hegemonic masculinity and were not a member of a fraternity displayed a higher level of self-esteem [$F(3,663) = 33.30, p < .001$].

Discussion and Considerations

Findings of the present study indicated that non-affiliated participants demonstrated higher levels of spirituality, religious commitment, spiritual/religious growth, religious engagement, and religious/social conservatism than affiliated participants. Fraternity members compared to non-affiliated men reported only a higher level of religious skepticism, meaning that fraternity men as reflected in the respondents from the CSBV Survey were more questioning of parental religious beliefs and practices and formal religious conventions. It would seem that current fraternity members might not have a strong spiritual or religious connection. Webb and Mueller (2009) found similar results in their study of fraternity/sorority members and non-affiliated participants at a mid-sized, mid-Atlantic region institution. Affiliated students scored significantly lower on the connectedness subscale than their non-affiliated peers. Connectedness in Webb and Mueller's study was defined "as 'feelings of belonging and responsibility to a larger human reality that cuts across generations and groups'" (p. 48).

Dr. Seth R. Brooks (1967), a visionary past president of Beta Theta Pi Fraternity, suggested that the fraternity ritual was a bridge between a young man's early life and his post-college life, during which many young men took a furlough from formal religious practice. Most fraternities have religiously based rituals that stress the important values and beliefs of the organization (Robson, 1976). Fraternity leaders should implement ritual-based educational programming that helps members connect their beliefs and values to the fraternities' guiding principles, creating a spiritual foundation that would allow young affiliated men to explore their own personal beliefs and values. While Ryan's (2009) study examined the experience of female college students who joined Greek letter organizations, such values-based programming could also help college fraternity men establish appropriate expectations and norms for behavior and should begin the moment a man joins a fraternity.

Fraternities have been identified as groups that foster atmospheres that encourage hyper-masculine behaviors (Edwards, 2007). Harris (2006) described hegemonically masculine males as those for whom "misogyny, alcohol consumption, homophobia, having a work hard/play hard mentality, and male bonding" (p. 191) were primary characteristics of their identity. Using a locally developed proxy scale assessing hegemonic masculinity using items from the CSBV Survey, the researchers found quantitative outcomes that supported both Harris' and Edward's

qualitative research. Fraternity members reported higher levels of hegemonic masculinity than non-affiliated participants.

Buchko (2004) found that men were not likely to turn toward religion for advice during times of trouble. One impact of hegemonic masculinity on male resiliency is the inability to cope with trauma and the range of emotions associated with such experiences (Harris, 2006; Edwards, 2007). A reflection of the inability to cope with trauma and its emotional challenges is the high-risk drinking associated with exaggerated masculine behavior (Capraro, 2000) often found in all-male societies.

Both affiliated and non-affiliated men who reported lower levels of masculinity exhibited lower levels of self-esteem compared to their male counterparts who reported higher levels of masculinity. However, men with more moderate levels of masculinity exhibited healthier levels of spirituality along with men who reported they had leadership training. Since college men often adopt their peers' views of masculinity, it is important to provide the necessary programming that is sensitive to the specific needs of college men. Practitioners need to be cognizant of the specific stressors that men face and be willing to work with them through difficult times. Edward's study revealed that "men put on a performance that was like a mask in that it allowed them to portray an image that conformed to society's expectations and cover up the ways they felt they didn't measure up to society's expectations" (p. 179). The "college man' culture" (Kuh & Arnold, 1993, p. 331) that promotes high-risk drinking is parallel to Edwards's (2007) concept of hegemonic masculinity. The results of this study indicated the need for promoting personal self-confidence as a counterpoint to conceptions of hegemonic masculinity for both affiliated and non-affiliated men. One method to do so among fraternity men is to expand leadership education opportunities to all members of a chapter, not just to members of executive committees in regional leadership academies. A second method is to establish clear behavioral expectations at the moment a man joins (Eberly, 2009).

Limitations

There were several limitations to the present study. First, all analyses were based on self-reported information. Self-report bias could lead to participants over-reporting the number of hours in a typical week members and non-members spend partying, drinking beer, drinking wine or liquor, and/or socializing with a person of a different racial or ethnic group. Also, some students might not be willing to reveal how "spiritual" they actually were. They may have felt uncomfortable responding to the CSBV Survey content, particularly as items related to their personal values. Additionally, respondents may have (no matter how hard instrument developers worked to eliminate ambiguity) confused spirituality with organized religious beliefs and institutions (Bryant, 2007).

In one item on the CSBV Survey participants were asked if they had joined a fraternity or sorority after entering college, but were not able to indicate whether the organization joined was traditionally White (e.g., North-American Interfraternity Conference, National Panhellenic Council), traditionally Black (e.g., National Pan-Hellenic Conference) or associated with other cultural backgrounds (e.g., National Association of Latino Fraternal Organizations). Also, the researchers for this study did not request racial classification data from the HERI. However, Bryant (2007), using the same data set as the researchers, reported that only four percent of total

respondents were Black, four percent were Asian, and two percent were Latino/a. Some results may be confounded based on the inability to control for racial identity within fraternity affiliation. If information regarding racial identity were available, actual numbers of participants based on Bryant's percentages may well have been too small to carry out inferential statistical analyses (Glass & Stanley, 1970). Lastly, the small number of affiliated students required collapsing some of the response categories during the analysis to have a large enough sample to carry out inferential statistical analyses. A larger initial sample would have resulted in richer data for analysis.

Conclusion

The purpose of the study was to examine the correlation between fraternity membership and the development of spirituality within its members, and to determine how the level of spirituality of fraternity members compared to the level of spirituality among the general college male population. There were significant differences on the 19 CSBV factors between fraternity members and non-affiliated male respondents. In addition, there were significant findings among the six planned analyses and the hegemonic masculinity scale developed from CSBV items for the purposes of this study. Analyzing the CSBV factor scales among members of fraternities, compared to non-affiliated participants, demonstrates the need to enhance local chapter programming promoting the development of spiritual and ethical values, creating entirely new character development programs, and finding other meaningful ways of reinforcing college fraternal organizations' core ritual values, particularly as they address issues of spirituality and personal religious growth supported by a healthy conception of manhood.

Appendix A

Proxy Measure of Hegemonic Masculinity (Cronbach's Alpha = .681)

Athleticism

Question 6: Since entering college have you:

Item 8: Participated in: intercollegiate football or basketball

Item 9: Participated in: other intercollegiate sport

Question 7: During the past year, how much time did you spend during a typical week doing the following activities?

Item 4: Exercising/sports

Dominance: religion, ability, social group, etc.

Question 8: For the activities listed below, please indicate how often you engaged in each since entering college.

Item 1: Socialized with someone of another racial/ethnic group (reverse coded)

Question 9: Compare with when you first started college, how would you now describe your:

Item 2: Knowledge of people from different races/cultures (reverse coded)

Question 13: Please indicate the importance to you personally of each of the following:

Item 2: Becoming an authority in my field

Item 6: Being very well off financially

Item 11: Becoming successful in a business of my own

Question 31: Rate yourself on each of the following traits as compared with the average person your age. We want the most accurate estimate of how you see yourself.

Item 7: Drive to achieve

Item 16: Leadership ability

Question 31: Rate yourself on each of the following traits as compared with the average person your age. We want the most accurate estimate of how you see yourself.

Item 24: Self-confidence (intellectual)

Item 25: Self-confidence (social)

Question 19: Please indicate the extent to which each of the following describes you.

Item 5: Feeling good about the direction in which my life is heading

High Alcohol Use

Question 7: During the past year, how much time did you spend during a typical week doing the following activities?

Item 5: Partying

Question 8: For the activities listed below, please indicate how often you engaged in each since entering college.

Item 5: Drank Beer

Item 6: Drank wine or liquor

Misogyny

Question 29: Please indicate your agreement with each of the following statements:

Item 10: If two people really like each other, it's all right for them to have sex even if they've known each other for only a very short time

Item 11: The activities of married women are best confined to the home and family

Appendix B

Internal Consistency Reliability of 2003 CSBV Pilot Study^a, Affiliated, and Non-Affiliated Participants (Cronbach's Alpha)

Variable	Overall ^a	Affiliated	Non-Affiliated
Spirituality	0.86	0.862	0.855
Aesthetically-Based Spiritual Experience	0.78	0.797	0.799
Religious Commitment	0.97	0.936	0.946
Self-Esteem	0.79	0.692	0.782
Equanimity	0.75	0.690	0.749
Spiritual Distress	0.65	0.722	0.675
Psychological Distress	0.66	0.632	0.645
Spiritual/Religious Growth	0.88	0.821	0.798
Growth in Global/National Understanding	0.82	0.721	0.796
Growth in Tolerance	0.70	0.679	0.67
Growth in Leadership	0.71	0.680	0.654
Religious Engagement	0.87	0.878	0.879
Charitable Involvement	0.68	0.621	0.63
Religious/Social	0.82	0.77	0.802
Religious Skepticism	0.85	0.799	0.803
Spiritual Quest	0.83	0.838	0.83
Social Activism	0.81	0.813	0.81
Artistic Orientation	0.70	0.693	0.716
Compassionate Self-Concept	0.78	0.759	0.769

^a2003 Pilot Study of College Students' Beliefs and Values Conducted by the Higher Education Research Institute at UCLA.

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CHANGING TRENDS IN THE UNDERGRADUATE FRATERNITY/SORORITY EXPERIENCE: AN EVALUATIVE AND ANALYTICAL LITERATURE REVIEW

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Fraternal organizations in American institutions of higher education have a significant influence on student life and campus culture. Historically, research has shown that fraternities and sororities provide environments that support negative and often illegal activities that can be detrimental to individuals and communities at large. However, recent research has identified new trends that suggest this may be changing. This article identifies these trends and implications.

Due to the large number of fraternal organizations, the historical presence of fraternities and sororities on college campuses, and the high visibility of members; students who are members of fraternities and sororities exert a major influence on the culture of American higher education. Regretfully, the influence of these organizations is not always positive. As will be demonstrated in the text of this article, many empirical studies have shown fraternity/sorority membership is a contributing factor leading to or further aggravating substance abuse, poor academic performance, intolerance for human differences, and involvement in illegal activities such as hazing, physical abuse, and sexual assault. It appears to many that fraternal organizations have slipped from their original purposes of loyalty, respect, democracy, service, scholarship, and morality (AASCU, 2005; Shonrock, 1998).

Contemporary research suggests membership in fraternal organizations can expose students to negative aspects of group culture (Gregory, 2003). Highly visible instances of substance abuse and participation in illegal activities associated with fraternity/sorority membership have been highlighted through many studies (Bohner et al., 1998; Caron, Moskey, & Hovey, 2004; Claudill et al., 2006; Cokley et al., 2001; DeSimone, 2009; Foubert, Garner, & Thaxter, 2006; Nuwer, 1999; Park, Sher, Wood, & Krull, 2009; Riordan & Dana, 1998). Despite some of the negative outcomes associated with fraternity/sorority affiliation, new data suggest a change in recent trends.

The purpose of this study was to identify these recent developments and encourage additional research into the undergraduate fraternity/sorority experience. After exploring the literature surrounding the topics of alcohol abuse, hazing, sexual assault, diversity, cognitive development, and social capital and civic engagement, we conclude by identifying the implications of this research and offering recommendations for research and practice in student affairs. The topics or themes selected emerged as the most important issues facing fraternities and sororities after reviewing the most popular and relevant Web sites, journals, and books in student affairs and related disciplines. The vast majority of this research and commentary comes from peer-reviewed journals of the last 15 years. The order in which these topics appear was based on the researchers' view of their importance to the sustainability of fraternity/sorority life.

Review of Literature

Alcohol Abuse

The college years have become synonymous with experimentation and growth among traditional age students. For many, experimentation includes pushing the boundaries of safe and legal alcohol consumption (Caron et al., 2004). Caudill et al. (2006) reported that drinking was a normative element of fraternity/sorority culture. The stereotype of “drunken frat parties” has persisted as students who already have a higher propensity to drink heavily continue to join fraternities with heavy drinking reputations on campus, thus continuing the cycle (Juth, Smyth, Thompson, & Nodes, 2010). Fraternity/sorority membership has been consistently correlated with binge drinking, which is defined as consumption of five or more alcoholic beverages in a row (Larimer, Turner, Mallert, & Geisner, 2004; Riordan & Dana, 1998). Because the fraternity/sorority system has been associated with alcohol abuse, members of fraternal organizations typically have been used as participants in research on college drinking behaviors (McCabe et al., 2005; Workman, 2001).

DeSimone (2009) found fraternities were responsible for a considerable portion of campus activities or events at which alcohol is present and readily available to students. In his meta-analysis of Harvard College Alcohol Study results from 1993 to 2001, DeSimone found that substantially more fraternity/sorority-affiliated students reported alcohol intoxication than non-affiliated students. Fraternity/sorority members also reported higher incidents of risky and unsafe behaviors such as unprotected sex, vandalism, and driving while intoxicated because of excessive consumption of alcohol. Data were analyzed from 54,740 students representing 140 universities to determine whether fraternity membership was causally related to risky alcohol consumption (DeSimone, 2009).

Consistent with the results of the Harvard College Alcohol Study, DeSimone (2009) also found a strong correlation between fraternity/sorority membership and binge drinking. The self-selection of members into fraternities accounted for a significant portion of this correlation. In other words, students with pre-existing preferences towards drinking tended to join fraternities that facilitated this preference. DeSimone determined “fraternities affect drinking intensity, frequency, recency, as well as additional outcomes of drinking that are potentially harmful to the drinker and other individuals” (p. 349). DeSimone recommended college administrators intervene in fraternal affairs to combat the negative effects of fraternity/sorority membership on drinking behaviors. Alcohol-awareness campaigns, mandatory alcohol education training for new members, and harsher penalties and sanctions for alcohol-related violations on campus were just a few examples of these recommendations, already in place on many campuses.

In response to research demonstrating that heavy drinkers prior to college tend to increase drinking during college due to self-selection into fraternal organizations, Park, Sher, Wood, and Krull (2009) sought to characterize the mechanisms underlying the fraternal selection process. Park et al. (2009) studied the fraternal selection process with respect to personality and pre-college drinking, as well as the alcohol-conducive environmental factors fostered by fraternity/sorority influence. A total of 3,099 participants from the University of Missouri at Columbia were administered surveys based on personality traits and self-reported perceptions of

and experiences with alcohol during the summer before their freshmen year. The researchers followed participants through their first six semesters to determine the changes in drinking behavior and involvement in fraternal life. Park et al. determined that personality traits of impulsivity, extraversion, and neuroticism were commonly seen in heavy drinking fraternity/sorority students. They also established these traits were consistent with heightened alcohol misuse. Additionally, the researchers examined perceptions surrounding normative drinking habits among fraternity/sorority students, as well as the availability of alcohol to students. Park et al. noted the prevalence of bars placed near college campuses and the strategic marketing used to target college students. Younger fraternity/sorority students often became friends with upperclassmen members of these organizations who could purchase alcohol for them, and fraternities commonly sponsored social functions involving alcohol where age verification was not strictly enforced. These factors combined with predisposing personality traits and preconceived positive perceptions of alcohol use contributed significantly to the heightened tendency of alcohol misuse by members of fraternal organizations (Park et al., 2009).

Strano, Cuomo, and Venable (2004) also studied student perceptions of alcohol consumption. The researchers found students who perceived no disapproval from their close friends and those who were fraternity/sorority members were almost three times more likely to have engaged in binge drinking. These same students were two times as likely to binge drink more frequently than those who perceived friends' disapproval or were not members of fraternities or sororities. Despite the organizations students were a part of or whether binge drinking was the norm, the students' idea of positive results and the degree to which students viewed drinking as a risk predicted their drinking behavior (Strano et al., 2004). These observations indicated drinking behaviors might be related to membership in fraternal organizations.

In a similar study, reviewing the effect of fraternity/sorority membership on alcohol consumption, Barry (2007) found "members [of these organizations] drank in greater quantities and more frequently than did their non-fraternity/sorority counterparts...[and] fraternity members had the highest alcohol consumption rates, followed by sorority members, non-fraternity men, and non-sorority women" (p. 309). Furthermore, one-third of fraternity/sorority members admitted to being intoxicated at least once a week. The attitudes and beliefs about alcohol among fraternity/sorority members, however, were the most interesting reported findings. Members of fraternities and sororities were far more likely to assume their peers drank excessively; they perceived far less risk in consuming alcohol; they consistently acknowledged excessive drinking behaviors of others as opposed to their own and "40% of [the] members of these groups did not perceive their drinking behavior as problematic" (pp. 55-56). The evidence of alcohol abuse in the fraternal community was clearly correlated to membership. There is a larger context for this issue, however.

Pace and McGrath (2002) conducted a study to determine the prevalence of alcohol abuse in fraternal organizations compared to other student groups. Although membership in fraternities and sororities was hypothesized to predict a higher frequency of binge drinking, and though this hypothesis was partially supported, researchers found no significant differences between members of fraternities/sororities and students in volunteer organizations in a number of problematic behaviors associated with binge drinking. These binge drinkers included having trouble with authorities, damaging property, thinking they have an alcohol problem, being

arrested for driving under the influence (DUI) or driving while intoxicated (DWI), being taken advantage of sexually, taking advantage of another sexually, trying unsuccessfully to stop using, seriously trying to commit suicide, and being hurt or injured (p. 228). This study supported the hypothesis that differences between fraternity/sorority members and members of other student organizations may not be as distinctive as previously assumed (Pace & McGrath, 2002). Bruce and Keller (2007) examined fraternal organizations based on social norms theory and attempted to develop an approach to reduce alcohol abuse. By using marketing tools and presentations to educate fraternity/sorority members on the actual levels of drinking on campus, many fraternity/sorority affiliates in this study realized that they consumed alcohol far more frequently and in larger quantities than the “typical” student. In this case, the social norms theory approach was effective in altering both fraternity/sorority and other affiliation groups’ perceptions of drinking behaviors.

The most significant shift in literature pertaining to alcohol abuse was that the attention to this issue has broadened. The target of this scrutiny has shifted from the fraternity/sorority system and individual chapters (Riordan & Dana, 1998), to general student involvement (Pace & McGrath, 2002), to specific groups, such as athletes, men in fraternities, and unaffiliated men (Strano et al., 2004), and to perceptions of social drinking norms in general, where fraternal organizations have an influence on how norms are perceived by other students (Barry, 2007; Bruce & Keller, 2007). It is important to note that all the literature reviewed suggested widespread normative changes to address alcohol abuse. Lastly, most of the recent literature reported that college-aged men in general, not just men in fraternities, not only abused alcohol more frequently, but encouraged other populations on campus to abuse alcohol as well (Barry, 2007; Pace & McGrath, 2002; Strano et al., 2004).

Hazing

College student hazing is a serious issue that has been widely addressed by policy makers. As of 2005, 44 states have enacted statutes making hazing illegal (Nuwer, 2005). In addition to prosecuting the perpetrators of hazing, some states charge students criminally for knowledge of such situations, especially if the incident causes harm to another student. As a result of student deaths linked to hazing, some states such as California are reclassifying their penalties from misdemeanors to felonies (Matt’s Law, 2006).

Hazing is linked to creating dependencies on the group that further exacerbates and encourages a continuation of hazing practices in fraternal organizations (Keating et al., 2005). Overall, hazing practices preserve groupthink and its success requires the establishment of an exclusive social network, a goal well served by emphasizing the uniqueness of group membership and its social distinctiveness from those outside the group. Many group advisors have struggled to find ways to combat hazing activities. In general, hazing is extremely hard to prevent, and the consensus among college administrators on handling incidents of hazing is to “incorporate applicable state statutes into institutional policy” (Hennessy & Huson, 1998, p. 73). Unfortunately, hazing continues to be an issue facing fraternal organizations and current policies merely attempt to deter hazing activities.

Although hazing is mostly associated with collegiate social fraternities in the present day, it has actually played a role in other organizations within American society for generations (Lipkins,

2006; Nuwer, 1999). Countless instances of hazing have been reported in military organizations, high schools, sports teams, clubs, bands, camps, and even professional organizations (Allan & Madden, 2008). However, due to several high profile cases involving wrongful death of fraternity men, national attention and focus has been drawn to the hazing rituals of fraternal organizations on college campuses, bringing with it considerable criticism and attempted reforms (The Franklin Square Group, 2005; Cokley et al., 2001; Gregory, 2003). With the rising number of deaths occurring as a result of fraternity hazing rituals, researchers have studied the process of hazing in an attempt to gain a better understanding of the nationwide college phenomenon.

Spurred by the hazing-related death of a 17-year-old pledge of Theta Chi fraternity, Stephen Sweet (2004), a professor at New York State, applied symbolic interactionist theory to hazing rituals as a way to investigate this tradition. This theory is a sociological perspective that states people in groups gain shared meanings of culturally derived social matters created primarily through face-to-face social interactions. Sweet (2004) argued that hazing was not illogical, beyond reason, or the product of immaturity. He posited that hazing was the result of group-interaction processes that are linked with students' need for belonging, their isolation from other social relations on campus, and sub-cultural definitions that legitimize hazing events as a necessary component of fraternity initiation rites.

Sweet (2004) evaluated his theory by performing a study involving approximately 20 fraternity men in informal, unstructured interviews regarding the feelings and beliefs surrounding hazing activities. He found the source of hazing problems was not due to flawed, sadistic personalities or to intellectual inadequacies, as many had prematurely concluded, but rather it could be explained by the social phenomenon of symbolic interactionism and groupthink, or "Greekthink" as Nuwer (1999) dubbed it. Although Sweet's ground-breaking work offered an explanation of a social evil through a new perspective, his methods of data collection left room for criticism. Fraternal organizations are inherently secretive in nature and members are often reluctant to speak truthfully and openly about fraternity activities, which can create serious roadblocks for researchers. These criticisms notwithstanding, Sweet's (2004) work in the area of fraternal hazing casts a shadow of doubt on former assumptions and offers an explanation for which there was previously none.

The attitudes of fraternity/sorority members and non-member students should also be considered. According to Kimbrough (2002), although hazing is officially banned by all fraternal organizations, it is nonetheless a prevalent issue in these organizations' activities. One study of hazing analyzed how fraternity/sorority and non-member students would respond to a given hazing incident in which one student was force-fed alcohol, and another voluntarily consumed alcohol (Drout & Corsoro, 2003). Drout and Corsoro observed "the differential response to victimization that was voluntary and that which was forced is not at all surprising... both sets of students attributed similar levels of responsibility to the president and brother as perpetrators of the hazing incident" (2003, p. 541). Furthermore, sorority members and non-member students viewed the commitment to the initiation process and organizational obligation as more significant causal factors in bringing about the hazing event. In another study using a quantitative analysis, researchers determined that fraternity/sorority member beliefs were similar in regards to pledging and hazing (Cokley et al., 2001). Thus, hazing and pledging activities seem to be viewed similarly by fraternity/sorority members, except when asked to determine responsibility.

Although hazing has been reported among many organizations and peer groups for generations (Lipkins, 2006), recent hazing tragedies resulting in national media coverage have placed fraternities in the spotlight and spurred the creation of hazing laws (Drout & Corsoro, 2003; Hennessy & Huson, 1998; Sweet, 2004). Groupthink plays a significant role in these incidents (Sweet, 2004) and not surprisingly, fraternity and sorority members react similarly when faced with hazing scenarios (Cokley et al., 2001; Drout & Corsoro, 2003).

Sexual Assault

Recent studies have also linked fraternity culture to sexual assault. Foubert et al. (2006) conducted a study to examine more closely the link between fraternity culture and alcohol-related sexual encounters at a mid-sized public university in the Southeast. Specifically, the researchers examined the terms of consent in sexually intimate encounters involving the use of alcohol. Foubert and his colleagues divided 37 traditional-aged undergraduate fraternity men into three separate focus groups and performed a series of group interviews. Members from all 14 fraternities at the same university were represented in the focus groups. Overall, almost all participants described ambiguity in defining consent in alcohol-related sexual encounters. The study revealed most men relied on self-interpreted nonverbal signals and cues to determine a woman's willingness to engage in sexual activity, especially with women less familiar to them. A few of these nonverbal signals included a woman flirting with a man, remaining in close proximity or contact with a man, undressing in front of a man, and dancing with a man. Most men in this study admitted never specifically asking for consent because they either viewed it as too awkward to approach or a potential "moment killer" (Foubert et al., 2006). These men also described consent as being contextual. Some believed that if the man and woman were in a dating relationship, consent was assumed. Some also expressed the belief that if both parties had consumed alcohol, consent was unnecessary and no fault was placed on either individual for initiating sexual activity. It should be noted that these assumptions are false under most state laws and illustrate the need for additional education.

Foubert et al. (2006) also discussed potential rape preventative programming for fraternity men within the focus groups. Most men agreed that helpful rape prevention programs would involve actual rape stories rather than fictitious scenarios or role-play programming. They believed that hearing from rape victims themselves would be beneficial in gaining different perspectives on the issue. Anderson and Whiston's (2005) meta-analysis of the effectiveness of these and other similar programs concluded that such programs could increase rape knowledge and decrease myth acceptance. Based on this suggestion, Foubert et al. (2006) recommended this style of rape prevention programming be implemented among male fraternal organizations and tested for desired outcome effects.

According to Bohner et al. (1998), rape myths are prejudiced beliefs that serve to excuse the rapist and blame the victim. Examples of such beliefs are that flirty women are promiscuous, women like men to be sexually aggressive, and that women secretly desire to be dominated. Foubert (2000) implemented an all-male peer education rape prevention program at a Mid-Atlantic public university with 23 on-campus fraternities in an attempt to determine whether all-male peer programs would have a significant effect on fraternity men's beliefs regarding rape myths and sexual assault. He found that this style of rape prevention programming lowered

men's likelihood of committing rape for a full academic year as well as decreased men's beliefs in rape myths.

Locke and Mahalik (2005) examined masculinity norms among college males relating to sexual assault. They found men who used alcohol problematically and conformed to masculine norms were more likely to be perpetrators of sexual assault. The masculine norms identified were the belief in being a "playboy," scorning homosexual male activity, being dominant, aggressive, violent risk-takers, and believing that women should be subservient to men. They reported that men's beliefs and behaviors about masculinity norms were the most powerful predictor of sexual violence (Locke & Mahalik). This is consistent with Foubert et al. (2006), who found fraternity men exhibited more traditional beliefs toward women and embrace rape-supportive attitudes. Fraternity men were also more likely than their unaffiliated peers to have access to large quantities of alcohol and display one or more of the above-mentioned masculine norms. These individual characteristics influencing rape-supportive mentalities coupled with the fact that fraternity males are exposed to groupthink and social situations involving alcohol show fraternity men have a higher likelihood of becoming involved in sexual assault or rape incidents on campuses.

Some argue "fraternities have been identified as organizations that often serve to reinforce rape-supportive attitudes and behaviors because of their traditional views of masculinity and their endorsement of rape myths" (Choate, 2003, p. 167). Fraternity members may be able to combat this problem by participating in rape prevention programming. Research showed some of these interventions may be effective (Anderson & Whiston, 2005). Choate (2003) suggested the use of a model to recruit men who oppose violence, which "incorporates a socio-cultural approach to prevention by emphasizing the gendered nature of violence...to redefine male and female relationships in an equitable manner" (p. 168).

The psychology of sexual assault is a complex issue. Issues of consent, alcohol abuse, violence and stereotypes about women play important roles. If fraternity men were to incorporate elements of this model and others into their educational processes, it may help curtail some of the traditional views of masculinity, promote positive relationships with women, and in turn help reduce sexual assaults.

Diversity

Prior to the 1960s, the prevalent college student demographic was White male. Racial exclusion and racism was a dominant practice among White fraternal organizations (Hughey, 2007). Today, colleges and universities are far more diverse than when fraternal organizations were first established. Unfortunately, many groups still lack significant racial/ethnic diversity.

As the campus demographics change, Bocshini and Thompson (1998) project the traditional-aged White student will become the minority on many campuses in the next 15 years. Incorporating students from various backgrounds and cultures can broaden fraternal organizations' educational and learning potential, as well as viability. Inducting individuals from different ethnic and racial backgrounds into fraternities and sororities will allow these organizations to continue to flourish. Without such diversity, fraternal organizations may struggle to exist in the future.

Historically Black organizations have had a significant positive effect on Black students. McClure (2006) suggested fraternities not only connect their memberships to the campus and to Black history, but also function in the creation and maintenance of social networks that connect members to each other and to society. Furthermore, members report improved levels of morale, self-esteem, political efficacy, and community orientation as well as lower levels of alienation, apathy, and social withdrawal. In addition, Black organizations have improved the persistence of African American students, increased academic performance, and have been essential in promoting cross-racial membership in fraternal organizations (Harper, 2007).

There has been a proliferation of literature pertaining to White and Black fraternal organizations in the past 15 years. On the other hand, Asian Americans have been overlooked. During the same time period, Asian American student populations have grown slowly on college campuses (Park, 2008). As the population of these students has grown, so too have their fraternal organizations. Their presence has increased on historically White campuses.

Park identified inherent elements of the Panhellenic system that subtly discouraged Asian American women from joining. In her study, some of the same women who were critical in their assessment of the uneven distribution of women of color in fraternal organizations defended recruitment as an open system. The participants in the study suggested the reason why sororities were not more diverse was because the decision to join was an individual choice. The “notions of rush [sic] as a structured and institutionalized transaction of insider knowledge and privilege” (p. 116) were never acknowledged. Instead, the women in this study claimed the women of color were at fault for not choosing to go participate in formal recruitment. This dynamic suggested how the recruitment process for fraternal organizations may deter people of color from joining.

Diversity in fraternal organizations was not addressed in depth until recently. Early studies on diversity in fraternal organizations were rare and served as a quiet reminder that the demographic make-up of college campuses was changing (Boschini & Thompson, 1998). Before 2000, the majority of literature focused on White members of fraternities and sororities. During the last 10 years, a proliferation of studies have been conducted on Black fraternal organizations (Hughey, 2007; McClure, 2006). In the last five to seven years, other underrepresented groups have been the subject of inquiry (Park, 2008). All of the literature pertaining to diversity in fraternal organizations stressed the importance of integrating diversity into the mission of fraternities and sororities as a means to continue their existence on college campuses (Boschini & Thompson, 1998; Hughey, 2007; Park, 2008; McClure, 2006).

Cognitive Development

Research on the influence of fraternal organization membership on student development was another major theme found in the literature. Pike (2000), for example, examined the relationships among the backgrounds, membership, involvement, and cognitive development of college students using a causal model of college effects. He found fraternity/sorority students reported higher levels of social involvement and gains than non-affiliated students. He also concluded fraternity/sorority students have higher levels of “academic involvement, integration of college experiences ... [and] gains in math and science reasoning than expected” (p. 134). Pike also discovered the unique effects of fraternal affiliation were more pronounced for college

experiences than for cognitive development. Membership was directly related to students' social involvement and integration of college experiences, and indirectly related to gains in those general abilities associated with cognitive development. Lastly, Pike concluded the relationships between students' college experiences and cognitive development differed depending on the element of cognitive development being examined. For example, general cognitive abilities were directly related to academic and social involvement, but academic and social involvement was indirectly related to gains in mathematical and scientific reasoning. This research indicated cognitive outcomes did not necessarily have to be negative. Fraternity/sorority membership was related to higher levels of social involvement, and involvement in turn, led to higher levels of cognitive ability.

Pascarella, Flowers, and Whitt (2001) examined the effects of fraternity/sorority affiliation on yearly measures of cognitive outcomes for men and women. They found "broad-based negative effects of fraternity/sorority affiliation on standardized measures of cognitive development during the first year of college...[but] the negative effects of fraternity or sorority membership were much less pronounced during the second or third years of college" (p. 297). Furthermore, the researchers found differences in cognitive outcomes by race; specifically fraternity/sorority membership had a large negative effect on the cognitive development in White men during their first year of membership, whereas as men of different ethnicities experienced positive gains in cognitive outcomes. These negative results were surprising especially since involvement is typically equated with academic success.

Although there are many indicators of cognitive performance, grade point average serves as an excellent indicator of cognitive ability. DeBard, Lake, and Binder (2006) explored the impact fraternity/sorority membership had on first-year students' grades. A number of outcomes were observed as a result of this study. Non-sorority women achieved GPAs that were significantly higher than predicted. Sorority women's actual first-year GPA matched their predicted GPA of 2.70 but first-year fraternity men did not achieve their predicted results.

Further, these researchers found men who joined fraternal organizations in their first semester did not meet the predicted standard but men who joined in their second semester achieved higher levels of academic performance than expected (DeBard et al., 2006). In addition, although non-affiliated women outperformed sorority members, retention rates for sorority women were much higher than non-sorority women. With respect to their male counterparts, non-fraternity men significantly outperformed fraternity men academically. However, the retention rates for fraternity men were significantly higher than for non-affiliated men. These trends indicated students who defer membership to at least their second semester, have a significantly higher opportunity for academic success.

Little cognitive development research has been conducted on Black fraternities and sororities. The research that has been conducted on socially driven outcomes of Black fraternities and sororities has led some college administrators to consider eliminating them from campus. However, Harper's (2007) work on the cognitive development of Black students on predominantly White campuses sheds important new light on this issue. Harper found Black students were more likely to experience higher degrees of leadership development and perceived the value of leadership skills more positively than uninvolved and unaffiliated students.

In addition, Harper (2007) noted Black students who were members of fraternities felt self-motivated to provide the missing minority perspective, and felt some responsibility for educating their White peers and instructors on issues related to their race and other people of color when they were underrepresented in the classroom. Black students also felt the need to actively participate in class because they were representing their organizations (Harper). The Black students in the study also noted feeling a sense of collective responsibility. Specifically, the impact of individual grades on the overall success of the chapter, as well as the importance of being a responsible role model for other Black students, was repeatedly mentioned throughout the interviews. This sentiment was largely expressed because of the negative stigmas associated with their membership in Black fraternal organizations (Harper).

The literature on the cognitive development of members of fraternal organizations during the past 20 years has faced significant challenges. Initially the literature focused on the skills that have been directly or indirectly affected by fraternity/sorority membership (Pascarella et al., 2001; Pike, 2000). Increasingly, the literature has focused on formal evaluations of cognitive development, such as grade point average. Researchers have also incorporated increasingly diverse participants in their studies and have discussed issues facing specific and underrepresented populations (DeBard et al., 2006; Harper, 2007; Pascarella et al., 2001).

Social Capital and Civic Engagement

Whipple and Sullivan (1998) identified the most important positive effect of fraternity/sorority membership as social capital. The term social capital refers to social connections and social cohesion, the “glue” that holds societies together. In other words, social capital includes the networks, norms, and trust that allow individuals to work together for collective goals (Green & Brock, 2005). Fraternal organizations share the collective values of service, civic engagement, and volunteerism. Consequently, members regularly volunteer their time in service-related activities. Green and Brock (2005) found individual interactions were as beneficial as group interactions through organizational membership in terms of increasing “generalized trust, feelings of connectedness, [and] expectations of mutual aid” (p. 2). Both forms of interaction resulted in different beneficial outcomes. Membership in formal organizations led to increased exposure to diverse perspectives, which in turn created a broader worldview and a greater tolerance of differences (Green & Brock, 2005).

Wang and Graddy (2008) determined that charitable behavior is directly related to civic engagement. The researchers found students who volunteered, participated in organizations, and had a more developed social networking system were more likely than their peers to donate time and money to secular and/or religious causes. Field (2003) also determined that there was a positive correlation between civic engagement and a commitment to lifelong learning.

From his reading of the research, Gregory (2003) concludes that students who joined fraternities and sororities have greater tendencies to engage in civic activities which positively affected their persistence in their education. He also suggested that involvement in community activities carry over after graduation as affiliated alumni reported higher levels of participation in service-oriented activities and greater financial contributions to their alma maters. Gregory also

concludes that fraternity and sorority members were generally more satisfied with their college social experience.

Undergraduate fraternity/sorority members are more likely than their unaffiliated peers to be involved in multiple campus organizations, feel more connected to campus, exhibit leadership skills, and to be more satisfied with their social development throughout their college years and beyond (Green & Brock, 2005; Gregory, 2003). Alumni of fraternal organizations are more likely to volunteer and to financially contribute to charitable organizations (Gregory, 2003; Wang & Graddy, 2008). These factors taken as a whole suggest that alumni who have participated in fraternities and sororities are more likely to remain involved in positives ways with their alma maters and their communities.

Considerations and Recommendations

This review uncovered some persistent problems, stigma, and opportunities for further development that fraternities and sororities will continue to need to address. The following considerations and recommendations were grounded in the contemporary research reviewed for this study.

1. Some of the most current research suggests members of fraternal organizations do not abuse alcohol differently than members of on-campus organizations. Incorporate these positive research results into media campaigns to modify the fraternal culture.

Alcohol abuse is a persistent issue student affairs professionals and inter/national fraternal leaders have been attempting to address for years. Research reviewed in this study showed fraternity and sorority members still abuse alcohol beverages. However, the overwhelming media and socialization process in becoming a fraternity or sorority member inundates students with false notions of social drinking norms. This exacerbates the drinking problem in fraternities and sororities.

Fraternal leaders and student affairs professionals should address the cultural context of these groups so that the behavior of fraternity members more closely emulates the goals espoused by the fraternity. As Arnold and Kuh (1992) stated, this is “the greatest disappointment...[,] and those who choose to support them, have not taken action” (p. 14). If fraternal organizations intend to remain on college campuses, it is absolutely necessary for fraternity/sorority students, alumni, advisors, and student affairs professionals to form a partnership in eliminating these exaggerated social norms.

2. Create grass-roots educational programs to combat hazing and sexual assault for members of fraternal organizations.

Besides alcohol abuse, hazing and sexual assault seem to be the most prevalent theme found in the literature during the past 15 years. Hazing continues to be an issue despite the formal statements all fraternal organizations have against it – not to mention the laws that exist in a wide variety of states to deter this detrimental behavior. New research suggests certain types of

violence prevention programs do work and they should be incorporated into the risk management programs for all fraternal organizations.

3. Fraternity and sorority members need to not only consider the diversity of their own membership, but the structures of the fraternity/sorority system, including the membership intake or recruitment processes, for indications of racial or ethnic exclusion and alienation.

The world is changing quickly, and the college campus – an increasingly racial and ethnic blender – is an environment that needs to react to keep up. The majority of fraternity/sorority members do not intend to be racist, or even elitist. In many cases, the system or process of becoming a member of a fraternal organization has deterred those who might benefit from or contribute to these organizations from joining. American society is increasingly multicultural. Colleges and universities face increasing demands to prepare graduates who can live and work effectively in a global society. The issue of incorporating diversity into fraternal organizations' missions is a controversial and a difficult issue to tackle. However, considering the increasingly diverse environment in which fraternal organizations operate, it is essential that fraternity/sorority members take the initiative to reform practices that make underrepresented groups feel unwelcome or alienated.

4. Fraternal membership recruitment could be restricted to either the second semester of the first-year or the second year to reduce the negative effects on cognitive development and academic success.

College campuses are changing, and as increasing demands for accountability have surfaced, administrators have responded to these pressures by renewing an emphasis on the core functions of higher education: teaching and learning (Gregory, 2003, Pascarella et al., 2001). There is no question student organizations can provide appropriate learning environments. Fraternal organizations should focus on improving the academic success and persistence of their members. It is also important to understand the implications of this research, namely, that fraternal membership does not have to effect cognitive development negatively. As the literature has shown, student involvement is typically equated with higher academic performance. Gains are made after the first year and initiation. If this is the case, then positive chapter cultures must be having an effect on students' cognitive abilities.

5. Civic engagement activities should focus on those issues that have the greatest negative impact on fraternity/sorority members.

Faculty advisors, student affairs professionals, and the fraternal leadership at the inter/national level should help members of campus-based chapters refine or expand their volunteer, service-learning, civic engagement, and philanthropic activities to focus on the issues of substance abuse, homelessness, and violence against women. The logical extension of the most recent research on social norming theory, service learning, college student drinking, and sexual assault would suggest that greater empathy, sensitivity, and behavioral change on these issues might be created if members of fraternal organizations were given an opportunity to confront them in some concrete, time extended, and meaningful way. Working with real victims of substance abuse,

homelessness, and violence may provide a much more powerful learning opportunity than traditional lecture series or educational programs.

Conclusion

Fraternal organizations provide an important contribution to the lives of their student members, create lifelong friendships, add value to the lives of their alumni, and make many positive contributions to their host institutions. Some of the founding principles of fraternal organizations include: “an appreciation of learning, a commitment to lead, an ethic of service, a love for one’s brothers and sisters, and the belief in democratic ideals” (Jackson & Harless, 1997, p. 23). These ideal characteristics align with the national movement in higher education to provide better learning communities for students. However, there is an ever-increasing gap between the founding principles of fraternities and sororities and the reality of their current state. A return to the founding principles should be an important focus for all fraternal organizations in the future, not only to bolster a declining public reputation, but also to gain perspective on the originating purpose of fraternity/sorority life.

Literature from the past 15 years on fraternal membership has clearly presented some disturbing issues. Although a significant amount of research has been conducted, more studies would be beneficial in helping to identify causal trends rather than correlational relationships. More research needs to be conducted in the areas of diversity, normative thinking, and personality-related explanations for continued substance abuse in fraternity/sorority self-selection. Formal recruitment, as a selection process, needs to be studied as well. Most importantly, however, an emphasis needs to be placed on research regarding the effectiveness of educational programming such as rape prevention, hazing intervention, and substance abuse prevention. In addition, it would be useful to discover whether the presence of peer prevention programs reduces not only the alcohol consumption for members of fraternal organizations, but by extension, all students on campus (Bruce & Keller, 2007).

Some campus administrators have “solved” these problems by banishing fraternal organizations from college campuses altogether. This is not a proactive, effective, or reasonable solution. It is apparent through a review of the research conducted in the field that many of the problems lie with the underlying issues of individuals themselves, not the fraternal organization. Fraternities and sororities simply provide an outlet for already formed negative habits and perceptions. Fraternity/sorority members, their alumni, and inter/national advisors cannot solve these problems single-handedly. Student affairs professionals, other campus administrators, and community leaders can help provide the guidance and necessary support to facilitate the transition away from negative trends and toward original founding principles. Fraternal organizations have a long and distinguished history in society and have become a hallmark in the American higher education system. Although it is challenging for a system so steeped in history and tradition to change, it is necessary, now more than ever, for these organizations to adapt to meet the needs of a changing world.

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