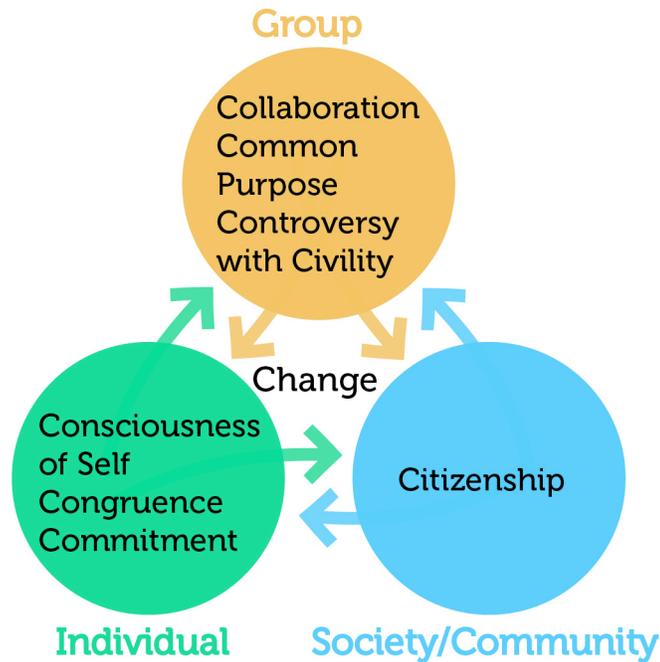


## Transforming the Social Change Model: Founding Principles Matter

Rich Whitney, DePaul University

The Social Change Model for Leadership Development (Higher Education Research Institute, 1996) is the ubiquitous model for leadership education on U.S. college campuses (Dugan, 2008). Many already align their programs and services with the three levels of the Social Change Model (figure 1). These circles (individual, group, and community/society) comprise the seven core values of the model, which contribute to one's capacity and efficacy for leadership.



SOCIAL CHANGE MODEL OF LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

Figure 1

The purpose of this article is to suggest a way to reframe the model for use within the fraternal movement. The reframed version of the model exemplifies how fraternity and sorority membership matters in the context of student leadership. We can use this leadership development language to enhance synthesis and learning as well as to communicate the value of the fraternal experience. The Social Change Model typically starts with the individual and moves to the group. By highlighting a defining point of fraternity/sorority membership emanating from an individual's congruence with the organization's founding values, we can shift the focus to begin with the *individual* chapter rather than the individual leader.

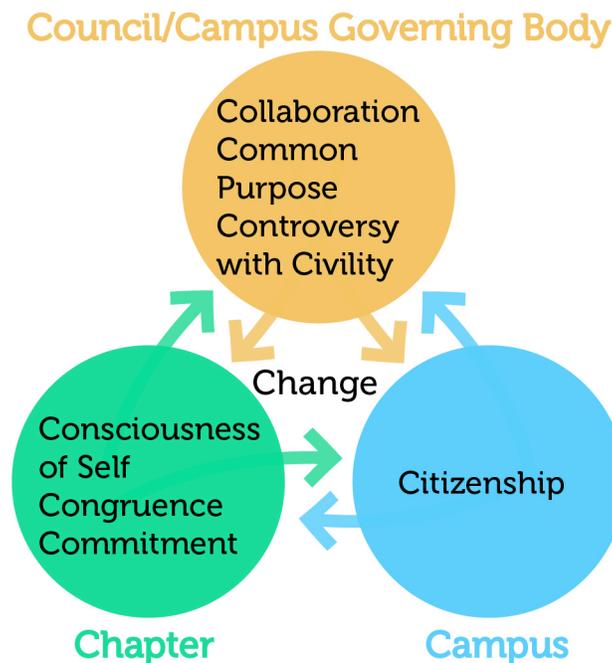
### The Expansion of Leadership

Leadership is a process, not merely a position. The fraternity and sorority movement develops leaders through action. "Leadership involves collaborative relationships that lead to collective action grounded in shared values of people who work together to effect positive change" (HERI, 1996, p. 16). Collective action is the basis of membership. Another important collective action is

how we model behavior across campus. The phrase “grounded in shared values” has special meaning for fraternities and sororities. Other student groups are organized through mission statements and constitutions, but fraternities and sororities have an identity through shared values, our founding principles.

### Reframing the Model

A new Social Change Model application transforms the model into a slightly different point of view. Go with me for a minute here – same circles, different approach (see figure 2).



SOCIAL CHANGE MODEL OF LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

Figure 2

Imagine for a moment in our reframed Social Change Model, **individual** now means *individual chapters*. Individuals join specific groups. Each person seems to resonate with a particular fraternity/sorority for some reason. I submit it is the chapter’s *consciousness of self, commitment* and *congruence* that drives these personal connections. Our organizations’ founding values become our *consciousness of self*. Each group has a unique sense of self at the local and inter/national levels. Brotherhood and sisterhood unites the individuals within the chapter. Commitment to our values often begins with the initiation ceremony. It is the impetus for the bond of the present with our past. From the perspective of the fraternity and sorority this is the key ‘C.’ This relates directly to our founding principles. Founding principles are the foundation of our fraternities and sororities. The commitment to our founding principles as demonstrated by our behaviors on campus is a key aspect of how we matter. Congruence is the longevity of those founding principles that have stood the test of time over the years since our founders’ time. Congruence is also the connection between the current members and our interpretation with and among each other.

Normally, the **group** dynamic in the Social Change Model connects the individual with their group of choice. In this transformed version, the group is the campus association; the governing councils on campus. The *common purpose* of the individual organizations to the larger group is a federation of like-minded organizations into a stronger body – united in purpose. While the values of the individual organizations may be different, the theme unites us in solidarity toward the common purpose of fraternities and sororities that matter to the members. *Collaboration* and working toward the betterment of our organizations and the role they play on our campuses matters. A common understanding of founders, principles, and commitment to brotherhood/sisterhood creates the bond between the organizations. It is up to the collective fraternity/sorority community to work together to show the good that comes through our service, organization, leadership development, and personal growth. *Controversy with civility* is a good thing in any organization or association. These differences of opinions contribute to the overall goal of moving forward in our collegial mattering. The opposite of controversy with civility is apathy. Apathy will kill your organization and your collaboration.

Finally, within the model we have the circle of **community**/society. The campus is the community in our transformed model. The campus community and the obligation we have as members of fraternal organizations align with the *citizenship* value. As in our national culture, this is a right and a responsibility. This is the role modeling of why we have fraternities and sororities in higher education. This is philanthropy. This is service. Both the common bond of memories and connections through members' organizations, and the common campus experiences within the community create a bond of familiarity among even total strangers. That is citizenship.

### **Mattering – *There's an app for that***

An ideal place to use this transformed model would be within the transition meetings for new governing councils. This provides the new leaders with more vocabulary and talking points with other members, and re-emphasizes the importance of founding principles in their council's work. In addition, the model can be applied within training sessions and retreats at the chapter and community levels. Greek Week, or fraternity/sorority week, can be focused on the common purpose of founding values with programmatic nuances that show the mission of the fraternal movement. Order of Omega, Gamma Sigma Alpha, and other honoraries for our collective members are yet another opportunity to apply the concepts of the Social Change Model. With a greater understanding of their role in the community, they can display more leadership and common purpose.

Leadership is a process, action, and activity. Learning happens as we make meaning of life and our experiences. Expanding the Social Change Model of Leadership Development helps each individual member understand their role through the context of the individual chapter/organization. The examples provided within each of the seven Cs (see figure 3) provide some additional areas to utilize the Social Change Model as a rubric for effective fraternal leadership. Teamwork, collaboration, and the bond of membership within one organization can be used to make meaning out of our collective involvement in the fraternal movement.

## **Application of the Fraternity/Sorority Social Change Model**

### **Consciousness of Self**

Founding Principles  
Values  
Creed/Oath  
Local Chapter Identity Aligned with Inter/National Identity  
Inter/National Awards  
Risk Management Programs  
Membership Programs

### **Congruence**

Are all members respected – new & initiated?  
Do circumstances change our values?  
Do we live our “letters”?

### **Commitment**

Lifetime Association  
Living Our Ritual in Daily Life  
Chapter Culture  
Passing the Baton to Next Generation

### **Collaboration**

Cooperation Between Chapters  
Shared Values  
Joint Strategies Among Councils  
Campus Culture of Fraternal Leadership  
Chapter Relationships

### **Common Purpose**

Governing Council Purpose, Mission Statements, and Standards  
Campus Traditions  
National Offices

### **Controversy with Civility**

Community Standards  
Self-Governance  
Institutional Agreements

### **Citizenship**

Unified Governing Councils  
Living our Values in Public  
Intra-campus Relationships  
Student Government  
Campus Stewardship  
Philanthropy  
Relationships with Faculty & Staff

### **CHANGE**

Accountability  
Setting the examples rather than being used as an example  
Campus/Community Perception  
Leadership  
Seen as inclusive rather than exclusive  
Image  
Public Relations

Figure 3

Leadership and fraternity/sorority membership start with the individual, in a chapter, in an association, on a campus. If we just transform the Social Change Model into a leadership development tool for our community, we can model our prime leadership framework in a whole new fashion. The unity of the individual member with the individual chapters unites the collective councils to create positive momentum for our presence on campus, in the community, and beyond.

## References

Dugan, J. P. (2008). Exploring relationships between fraternity and sorority membership and socially responsible leadership. *Oracle: The Research Journal of the Association of Fraternity Advisors*, 13(2), 16-25.

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