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Fraternity and sorority members have long been charged with fulfilling the espoused values of their organizations. Although several studies have explored the gap between the actions and values of undergraduate fraternal members and their institutions, few have
examined the degree to which the publicly stated values of fraternal organizations are enacted by members. Using qualitative methodology, researchers compared the creeds and mission statements of undergraduate fraternal organizations to member actions observed on the campus transit system. Results indicated that while there is some congruence between organizational and institutional values and member actions, there are also areas of disconnect for members related to their values.

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55 ESTABLISHING BLACK IDENTITY AT A PREDOMINANTLY WHITE INSTITUTION: THE INFLUENCE OF A HYBRID PLEDGE/INTAKE PROCESS UTILIZING NGUZO SABA PRINCIPLES
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Racial identity is a critical aspect of individual identity (Chavez & Guido-DiBrito, 1999). Using a case study approach, the author investigated what influence a hybrid pledge/intake program that utilized Nguzo Saba, a set of seven African principles, had on Black identity development. Four Black males who attended a predominantly White institution (PWI) participated in an interview about their new member process. Findings showed that the hybrid pledge/intake process paralleled Nguzo Saba, and that this process may have positively influenced their racial identity (Howard–Hamilton, 1997). Therefore, student affairs professionals could seek to use the Nguzo Saba principles as a framework in their practice with Black students to support their racial identity development.
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Oracle: The Research Journal of the Association of Fraternity 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 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 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 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.

THE SECRET TO ADDING ARTICLE WRITING TO YOUR LIFE

J. Patrick Biddix, Ph.D.

Many potential authors we talk with tell us time is their biggest detriment to writing. Looking at the countless sessions at Association of Fraternity Advisors (AFA), ACPA: College Student Educators International (ACPA), and NASPA: Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education (NASPA) annual meetings on time management, it is easy to see time as an adversary to writing for publication. When I transitioned to faculty life, I thought I would suddenly have writing/research time as one of my “thirds” (teaching, research, service), but I soon found myself reading books on time management (and recognizing the irony) realizing little had changed since my practitioner days. That is, until I attended a workshop session that drastically and effectively changed my writing productivity.

American Educational Research Association’s (AERA) Emerging Scholars is an annual program aimed at helping early career scholars (both faculty and staff, aspiring and established), map and implement a research agenda. A highlight was the session on planning and productivity, led by a panel of top early and late career scholars. Pen in hand, I was ready for earth-shaking advice. So what was this hidden treasure? This sagely guidance I’d missed all these years? Schedule yourself a writing day.

Wait a minute, what?? At first, I dismissed what I thought was rather simplistic – a writing day? Every day is a writing day! I’m a faculty member now; I don’t have to sneak writing between governing council meetings any longer. I’ve got time built into my career. I’m supposed to be writing all the time. I found myself defensive, yet silently asking, what is a writing day anyway?

A writing day, according to the panel, is an inflexible part of your week devoted to research. More specifically, it is devoted to writing, not conducting research or reading. As the presenter who introduced this continued, I understood the mistakes I had been making. A writing day, she noted is not a Monday, which is a catch-up day. Friday is out, because you are hopefully reorganizing and preparing for the next week. The same goes for the weekend, which should be a combination of family, work catch-up, and relaxing activities. So, that leaves Tuesday-Thursday. Take out meeting-heavy days, during work time (if you are bound to a 9-5 schedule), meals, and any other constraints and you have your writing day.

For two years as a faculty member, and three before that as a practitioner, I had tried the “I will write when I get a free second method,” which I met with limited success. In the fall, we added an infant to our family, so a writing day, or more precisely, a few writing hours, became a necessity. For me, it was Thursday morning. From 8-1, I wrote. I did not look at email, I did not schedule meetings or calls (except for emergencies) – I wrote. Here is where the importance of setting rules came in: I chose this time because 1) I write better “fresh,” first thing in the morning, 2) Thursday was late enough in the week that I could pull articles or look over my data during the week, 3) I teach at night, so it was not interfering with class and more importantly, 4) my office was quiet.
At the end of the semester, I was astonished. I had submitted four articles for publication (two with new research, two that have been sitting as drafts in my stack for a year). Once I got into my flow, I found time on other days for writing. I had effectively changed my productivity routine. With just a few hours a week I gained productivity and lost guilt, since I now knew exactly when I’d be back at my computer.

Reflecting back, I can make a few important observations about this seemingly much shorter (but in reality much more productive) schedule. I tended to mistake looking up/reading research, catching up to where I left off, and/or conducting parts of a study with actual writing. That was an enormous mistake. Writing days are only for writing. I tend to have 15 minutes here or there during the week I can use for quick literature searches, article reads, or jotting notes. Then, when writing day comes, I write instead of being distracted by these other tasks. In the end, like completing a dissertation, persistence is critical – especially when there is no real deadline and no one is watching over your shoulder. If you truly want to write for publication, you have to commit to it and defining a writing day is a huge first step.

My writing day only works because I am ruthless about the time. It goes without saying that there had to be some upfront negotiation with work, family, friends, and myself. My dean was supportive, excusing me from any meetings during my writing day, my wife was similarly encouraging, and my students understood. You can get Dr. Biddix any time, but unless it is an emergency, Thursday is his writing day. As a practitioner, I worked under a dean who was similarly supportive, but I found that dissertation time for me had to be after hours because of students stopping by, random meetings, and the general life of an advisor. To write at night, however, I still had to be very protective of my schedule.

Perhaps you have really been wanting to get a submission into Oracle and even have some of it written? Or, perhaps you are considering a Ph.D. and are worried about the dissertation? I tell my students the same thing – your writing day is neither flexible nor negotiable. That is your time to write. You will be astonished at how far even just a two hour session, the same time each week, can go. The important thing is that the day/time does not get changed, pushed off, or postponed. At the end of your session, make yourself a note at the top of the page you’ve been working on to catch you up the next time. If inspiration strikes add to the note as you need, but know that come writing day, you’ll be focused and ready to work.

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“STEP UP AND DO IT”: FRATERNITY AND SORORITY MEMBERS’ BELIEFS ABOUT CITIZENSHIP

Amie Jackson and Susan V. Iverson, Ed.D.

This qualitative study sought to investigate fraternity and sorority members’ beliefs about citizenship and how students’ involvement in fraternities and sororities contributed to shaping their views on citizenship. Through focus groups and individual interviews with fraternity and sorority members at one private, research university in the Midwest, this study revealed students’ opinions on how their involvement in fraternities and sororities raised their awareness about social concerns, shaped their values, and modeled the necessity to take action in their community. Following a discussion of these findings, the authors propose suggestions for student affairs administrators to develop the role fraternities and sororities must play in fostering members' citizenship development.

The development of citizenship, which includes civic values, civic responsibility, and commitment to civic life, in college students is a central goal of U.S. higher education (Colby, Ehrlich, Beaumont, & Stephens, 2003; Ehrlich, 2000; Sax, 2004). However, within the last 20 years, there has been increasing criticism of education’s effectiveness in meeting the challenge of cultivating students’ civic efficacy (Dionne, Drogosz, & Litan, 2003; Galston, 2003). Hillygus (2005) notes that “as universities move away from a broad liberal arts curriculum toward a more technical and specialized curriculum….we should be aware of the potential unintended consequences for democratic engagement” (p. 41).

Despite the criticism, community outreach and service by college students continues to proliferate. The results from a recent survey by the Institute of Politics at Harvard University reveal that student volunteerism is at an all-time high (Spiezio, 2002). Universities sustain growing numbers of philanthropic efforts, from community service offices to alternative spring break trips, and student-led outreach is often at the forefront of campus initiatives. Notably, fraternity and sorority members are equally and sometimes more engaged in community service than their non-affiliated peers (Hayek, Carini, O’Day, & Kuh, 2002). Further, Pascarella and Terenzini (2005) found that affiliation in fraternal organizations has small, positive effects on civic engagement.

Scholars continue to raise important questions about the educational value of fraternities and sororities on college campuses (Mauk, 2006). Critics of the social fraternal system have pointed to research showing fraternity or sorority membership being associated with higher levels of alcohol use and abuse (Cashin, Presley, & Meilman, 1998; Danielson, Taylor, & Hartford, 2001; Wechsler, Kuh, & Davenport, 1996), higher levels of sexual violence (Copenhaver & Grauerholz, 1991; Sanday, 1996), and lower levels of academic achievement (Pascarella et al., 1996).

However, benefits exist with fraternal membership (Case, Hesp, & Eberly, 2005; Marmaros & Sacerdote, 2002; Mauk, 2006). Fraternities and sororities provide their members with opportunities for volunteerism and leadership development (Astin, 1993). Pike (2000) found that affiliated members had higher levels of involvement and cognitive development than did non-
affiliated students as a result of social involvement. Yet, there is a dearth of literature on the effects of membership on the development of citizenship. The purpose of this qualitative study was to investigate fraternity and sorority members’ beliefs about citizenship and how students’ involvement in fraternity and sorority life contributed to shaping their civic views.

The present analysis proceeds in three stages: first, a brief overview of the literature pertaining to citizenship in higher education; second, a description of findings from this study of fraternity and sorority members’ beliefs about citizenship and how students’ involvement in a fraternity or sorority contributed to shaping their views on citizenship; and third, the implication of these findings in light of citizenship goals and developmental opportunities.

**Review of the Literature**

### Citizenship

Westheimer and Kahne (2003) defined three conceptions of a good citizen: 1) personally responsible, focused on the individual and rights; 2) participatory, recognizing the importance of community and the collective; and 3) justice oriented, building upon the collective with a critical lens. Abowitz and Harnish (2006) mapped multiple citizenship discourses described by U.S. citizenship education texts, noting citizenship, as practiced in schools, is predominantly taught as a civics lesson—“factual consumption of American history, geography, and government, combined with varying degrees of patriotic identity and the liberal virtue of tolerance for difference” (p. 680). However, they illuminate alternatives (e.g., feminist and cultural discourses) that challenge dominant conventions of citizenship and suggest these alternatives could be inspiring ways for students to practice citizenship (Abowitz & Harnish, 2006).

Dominant conceptions of citizenship (e.g., personally responsible) can limit ways in which it may be exercised, such as voting, and risk citizenship becoming “civic voyeurism--watching other people ...act like citizens” (Parker, 1996, p. 12). As Westheimer and Kahne (2003) noted, the ways people conceptualize citizenship has significant implications for their civic engagement, for the design of educational environments, and for educational policy.

What contributes to the development of effective citizenship or engaged citizens? Eyler and Giles (1999), who recognized deep linkages between service-learning and the development of citizenship knowledge, identified five dimensions that comprise effective citizenship: values, knowledge, skills, efficacy, and commitment. Values are evident in students’ feelings of social responsibility. Students’ recognition of what “I ought to do,” Eyler and Giles observed, “provides powerful motivation for involvement” (p. 157). Students also need knowledge, “the expertise and cognitive capacity to make intelligent decisions about what needs to be done” (p. 159). Further, students must acquire practical experience and interpersonal skills to be effective. Being effective also “depends on the willingness to take the risk of involvement, which depends on personal self-confidence”—what Eyler and Giles termed efficacy (p. 161). Finally, the “ultimate test” of effective citizenship, according to Eyler and Giles, is the commitment to do something.

### The Role of Higher Education

Astin (1997) asserted that higher education plays a critical role in producing democratic citizens.
When it comes to describing its educational mission, the typical college or university will use language such as ‘preparing students for responsible citizenship,’ ‘developing character,’ ‘developing future leaders,’ ‘preparing students to serve society,’ and so forth. … [I]f we are to believe our own rhetoric, those of us who work in the academy see ourselves as serving the society and promoting and strengthening our particular form of democratic self-government. (pp. 210-211)

However, concerns abound about the effectiveness of higher education in achieving its mission. Derek Bok observed that “universities are disassociated with the civic missions on which they were founded – missions that assumed responsibility for preparing students for active participation in a democratic society and developing students’ knowledge for the improvement of communities” (as cited in Gibson, 2001, p. 11).

Some scholars believe the challenge of preparing students for effective citizenship resides in students entering college with different assumptions about what it means to be civically engaged. For instance, Sax and Astin (1998), citing increased apathy towards politics reported by entering first-year students, noted the number of students who believe it is important to stay up-to-date with political affairs has dropped by more than 50% in the past 30 years. A survey by the Institute of Politics at Harvard University revealed that political participation of first-year college students is at an all-time low (Spieazio, 2002), and Ehrlich (2000) adds that the individualistic nature of our society contributes to a decline of civility, mutual respect, and tolerance for others. Yet, in the face of these challenges, higher education continues to deploy strategies—in and out of the classroom—for providing educational and empowering citizenship experiences.

The Impact of Fraternal Membership
One of the founding purposes for most fraternal organizations is to provide an environment that affords individuals the opportunity for personal growth, while facilitating an understanding of interdependence that is critical in developing good citizens (Mauk, 2006). The founding principles of fraternities and sororities provide an ideal framework for citizenship development. Terms such as social responsibility, integrity, honesty, goodness, truth, equality, and honor permeate fraternity and sorority creeds, missions, and purpose statements and are consistent with characteristics of citizenship (Earley, 1998). Earley, in her examination of how fraternal organizations influence moral development, found the implementation of service projects by affiliated members had a positive effect on their moral development. She noted, “by interacting with people from various communities, Greek [sic] members can recognize their impact on others. In this way, fraternities and sororities can foster commitment to other causes, people, and communities” (p. 41). Mathiasen (2005), in his case study of the effects of one fraternity on students’ moral development, found the organization had a positive influence. He identified four themes – encouraging community service, recruiting quality students, emphasizing moral development, and upholding chapter traditions and reputation – as key contributors to enhancing students’ moral development.

Several scholars have found links between involvement in fraternal membership and students’ cognitive development. Randall and Grady (1998) determined that time constraints involved in membership detract from cognitive development (see also Pascarella et al., 1996). The effects are greatest in the first year of college and are much less pronounced in the second and third years; also, however, fraternal affiliation over time had a net negative effect on cognitive development.
in men but a positive effect on women (Pascarella, Flowers, & Whitt, 2006). Randall and Grady recommend implementing activities that cultivate critical thinking such as service projects with a self-reflection component. They argue that the development of higher-ordered cognitive skills allows students to “become better scholars and stronger members of fraternity or sorority chapter [sic], and thus valuable contributors to the institutional learning community” (p. 36).

This belief is supported by a growing body of research demonstrating the positive relationship between one’s cognitive development and engagement in service-learning (Eyler & Giles, 1999; Rhoads, 1997). Further, the development of critically-conscious thinking – acquiring skills to analyze, interpret, make judgments, and choose a course of action informed by more sophisticated understandings of social power and its implications – is important to the goals of education in a democratic society (Allan & Iverson, 2004).

Community outreach is one of the most visible contributions by which affiliated students put into practice stated principles of service and citizenship. This helps them appreciate how their actions affect other communities, and it integrates those principles into their daily lives (Earley, 1998). Yet, some have argued there is a widening gap between the professed principles of fraternities and sororities and the reality of their practice on college campuses (Kuh, Pascarella, & Weschler, 1996, April 19). Further, scholars critique programs that fail to move beyond personal development and charitable, episodic volunteerism to civic action or social responsibility (Gibson, 2001; Rhoads, 1997). Thus, while a relationship exists between involvement in fraternal organizations, participation in service efforts, and students’ development, it is unclear in what ways students’ involvement contributes to their beliefs about citizenship.

Method

The purpose of this qualitative study was to investigate fraternity and sorority members’ beliefs about citizenship and how students’ involvement in fraternal organizations contributes to shaping their views on citizenship. This section describes the methods of this study, which employed focus groups and individual interviews.

Site and Sample

The site for this study was a private, research university in the Midwest. Of the nearly 10,000 students enrolled, about 40% were undergraduates. There were 17 fraternities and 7 sororities, and the membership within these chapters equated to more than one-third of the undergraduate population. The mission of the Fraternity and Sorority Life Office asserts that all individuals and organizations must aspire toward the attainment of certain values including “honesty and integrity,” “mutual respect and support,” “responsibility in all our thoughts and deeds,” “accountability in our actions,” and “equitable treatment of others.”

Consistent with purposive sampling procedures, participants were “selected on the criteria that they would have something to say on the topic, [were] within the age-range, [had] similar sociocharacteristics and would be comfortable talking to the interviewer and each other” (Rabiee, 2004, p. 655). The participants for this study were also selected to reflect the student membership in the fraternal community, spanning sophomore through senior class standing. First-year students were excluded from the sample, since they were neither exploring potential fraternity membership nor
eligible for sorority recruitment in their first year. Further, participants were specifically selected to explore the range of beliefs about citizenship in the population (Khan & Manderson, 1992). The sample consisted of 16 students ranging from 18-23 years old, who were active in the fraternal community. While participants were predominately White, the sample also represented voices of a Hispanic female and two Asian students.

**Data Collection**

This study employed a multi-phase, data collection process utilizing focus groups and individual interviews. Focus groups are designed to gather information primarily about beliefs, values, and understanding (Khan & Manderson, 1992), and thus, were an appropriate method of data collection for this study of beliefs about citizenship. Focus groups coupled with interviews solicit unique perspectives for the researcher’s understanding of the phenomenon under investigation (Morgan, 1997). Prior to data collection, the researchers received Human Subject Committee approval, along with the written consent of each participant. Pseudonyms are used for references to participants.

Initially, two focus groups were conducted. The first focus group was comprised of six students (four male, two female), and the second focus group was comprised of six students (three male, three female). The focus group discussions were guided by open-ended prompts intended to elicit participants’ beliefs about citizenship and civic experiences at the University. This approach enabled ideas and themes to emerge in the context of the dialog; provided evidence of ways differences in perspectives are resolved and consensus is built; and demonstrated how participants interpret a key term, such as citizenship (Rabiee, 2004). Participants were encouraged to speak freely, raise issues important to them, and support their responses with examples from their undergraduate experience and more specifically their participation in fraternity and sorority life. The focus groups were 90 minutes in length and were facilitated by the primary researcher, videotaped, and transcribed for analysis.

To obtain more detailed information of participants’ beliefs about citizenship, four in-depth interviews were conducted with two sophomores, one junior, and one senior. Two of the interview participants were active leaders and two were emerging leaders. These interviews were designed to elicit differences and similarities across class standing in students’ beliefs about citizenship and civic experiences in the fraternal community. A semi-structured interview protocol was followed. Interview notes were maintained, and member checking ensured accuracy in data collection.

Participants from the two focus groups were also invited to participate in a follow-up session. This follow-up focus group with 14 (previous) participants provided an opportunity for participants to review, modify, validate, elaborate, and clarify their (previous) responses. Further, this meeting enabled clarification and amplification of emergent themes, and an opportunity to search out and include negative instances.

**Data Analysis**

Qualitative analysis occurred concurrently with data collection. Krueger suggests thinking about this process as a “continuum of analysis ranging from the mere accumulation of raw data to the interpretation of data” (as cited in Rabiee, 2004, p. 657). This study employed “framework analysis” (Ritchie & Spencer, 1994), an analytic process that involved distinct though highly
interconnected stages. This non-linear, overlapping process began at the point of data collection, through familiarity with the data while listening to tapes and recording observational notes. Then, the researchers independently employed inductive analysis to identify themes, ideas, or concepts arising from the data, clustering words and stretches of text, and identifying a shared list of codes. The next step involved “indexing” the data, a process of sorting out quotations and making comparisons across data sources. A descriptive framework began to emerge. The final step, “charting,” involved lifting quotations and rearranging them under thematic headings.

Reliability and Credibility
Data collection and analyses were multi-layered and iterative, with new data used to assess the integrity of the developing analysis. The use of independent coding coupled with comparing codes for agreement contributed to inter-rater reliability (Armstrong, Gosling, Weinman, & Martaue, 1997). Further, the triangulation of data sources and member checking contributed to the credibility of the findings (Creswell & Miller, 2000).

Limitations
Data were collected at only one institution, limiting this study’s generalizability. However, the researchers did not intend to draw generalizable conclusions; rather, the findings from this study are offered as a perspective on fraternity and sorority members’ beliefs about citizenship and how students’ involvement in fraternity and sorority life at one university contributed to shaping their views on citizenship. Second, the use of focus groups, rather than exclusive use of interviews, and the small sample size could be viewed as limiting factors. However, the intentionality in sampling procedures, searching out and including negative instances, member checking, and use of independent and comparative coding were employed to limit researcher bias in data collection and analysis (Marshall & Rossman, 1999). Further, the multi-method collection of data (interviews, focus groups) contributes to a more robust research design (Morgan, 1997).

Findings and Interpretations
Analysis revealed three dominant themes: (1) Awareness, (2) Values, and (3) Action. For each of these themes, the authors will illustrate with quotations the ways in which participants identified how their involvement in fraternity and sorority life shaped their views on citizenship.

Awareness: “You need to know yourself”~Amanda
Participants believed that an awareness and understanding of one’s self, community, and role within the community were essential to their conception of citizenship. As Amanda, a junior, succinctly stated, as a citizen “you need to know yourself.” Several observed that this awareness and understanding does not occur suddenly, but instead evolves over time, and at times only upon reflection is one aware of one’s role within a community. For instance, Angie, a senior, considered what shaped her understanding of citizenship:

I don’t think there is just one moment; it is all the little things and watching people take care of each other. For example, one day when it was raining and I was walking across the street, my bag flew open and three people stopped to help me. These things help to make your community a little better.
Greg, also a senior, added that this awareness of one’s self as a citizen occurs when you take someone else’s needs or interests into account: “It can be as simple as opening the door for someone or letting someone else go ahead of you in the line. Anytime you make a small gesture or sacrifice that perhaps takes away from you but gives something greater to someone else.”

Mike, a sophomore, echoed these observations that no single moment contributes to one’s awareness of one’s self as a citizen, but that it is “more of a progression.” Mike reflected upon his experience in a military high school, his adherence to rules and standards, and his participation in leadership and service opportunities. However, he emphasized, it was not until he “realized that [his] decisions and actions not only affected [him] but everyone in [his] unit” that he began to understand himself as a member of a community, and thus his role as a citizen.

In response to questions about how fraternity and sorority life contributed to shaping their awareness, participants identified the ways in which this involvement pushed individuals to see how they are situated in a larger context. For instance, Nathan, a junior, noted, “when you come to college you think you know what is … going on in the world,” but involvement in fraternity and sorority life is “an eye opening experience,” revealing “opportunities you didn’t know existed and seeing how these things have an impact and can improve you as a citizen.” He offered as an example his involvement in a service project in which his fraternity served dinner to the homeless. This experience challenged him to reflect on his own privilege; the fact that he would leave this soup kitchen and return to his dining hall on campus. He began to consider the “big picture,” meaning his awareness of the diversity of lived human experiences within the same city in which he attended college: “you do not see those things unless you get out there.”

Brian, a sophomore, shared a similar experience, reflecting upon his alternative spring break trip with his fraternity brothers. He noted that the town where they stayed “was night and day from where we are from. These new experiences help to open your mind to the world.”

While service experiences were a prominent example of how one’s involvement in a fraternity or sorority impacts an evolving understanding of one’s self in a community, other evidence emerged. For example, Derek, a sophomore, described how meetings of the Panhellenic Council and the Interfraternity Congress (the governing boards for the fraternal communities) helped to reveal that each individual is part of something larger. He noted that at these meetings he sees that matters impact more than just him or one chapter, but “you see 18 fraternities which is what a nation is; it is a community.” He added that a “certain socialization happens;” noting that “forty guys with all different views [undergo] an educational process because you have the larger community.”

Sonya, a junior, echoed some of Derek’s sentiments in her assertion that fraternity and sorority life provided an excellent framework for understanding one’s role within the community, and how this awareness “is quite transferable to being a good citizen.” She elaborated:

Each chapter is like its own individual society and learning how to function within that society and learning your role and how you impact others and they impact you. You learn how to respect other people. In terms of elections, you have to stand up in front of the group and say this is who I am and this is what I do and I need you to see me in this role. It teaches you to look beyond day-to-day and see how it all figures in. … It forces you to evaluate yourself and others in your society.
Participants articulated the importance of coming to know one’s self, and that through growing self-awareness, one sees oneself as part of something larger. The students’ comments echoed Eyler and Giles’ (1999) identification of students’ need to acquire knowledge -- “the expertise and cognitive capacity to make intelligent decisions about what needs to be done” (p. 159). This awareness is one of several dimensions of citizenship.

**Values: “Are we being good to each other?”~Sonya**
A second theme emerging from analysis was values. Once an awareness and understanding of self, community, and role within the community are acquired, participants amplified the feelings of social responsibility, feelings of connectedness to their community, and a commitment and accountability to these learned values in their decision-making. As Angie, a senior, stated, one is responsible for “holding yourself accountable and holding others accountable;” which means “not only being responsible for yourself and not just your brothers and sisters [in Fraternity and Sorority Life], but for everyone’s actions.” Christine, a junior, echoed this expectation: “We have a strong sense of responsibility. If you do something wrong, we expect a knock on the door or a bunch of emails from the Director of Fraternity and Sorority Life.”

Participants were quick to connect the values of their fraternal community and the standards and expectations articulated by their fraternity or sorority as the guidepost for behaving as a “good citizen.” Greg, a senior, observed the way in which chapter rituals, in particular, teach these community values and self-responsibility.

> You first begin to see it [community values] and think [about] it [as a new member], but as an older member, you start to memorize it and perform it. Every time you go through [chapter ritual], you learn more about being a good person and citizen because it teaches the values that we all hold. Ultimately, however, it is the actions that you take as a result of thinking about these rituals and values that make you a good citizen.

Sonya, a junior, also referred to the importance of rituals for instilling shared values and fostering citizenship.

> Our chapter gets together to discuss how our actions affect other people’s thoughts and feelings: Are we being good to each other? Are we practicing our values? If not, why? What is the problem? It is a time of introspection but it is also a time to look at your relationships with one another and that fosters really good citizenship.

Further, Greg emphasized the importance of “using our values from Greek Life and our chapters to better the community and to hold ourselves to standards,” underscoring that “the more we hold to our values in a public setting, the better citizens we are going to be.”

For several participants, the internalization of community values was evidence of personal integrity. As Sonya noted, “integrity and being true to your character is really important,” adding that “Greek Life stresses values and forces you to assess whether you are holding true to your values.”

Internalizing community values and holding oneself accountable to community standards contributed to values-based decision-making. For instance, Greg emphasized the importance of consulting his values before making decisions. He recognized that he was not likely to do this before each decision, but the more he did, the better citizen he would become. Mike extended
this belief, noting that “a good citizen should not only utilize [his or her] values to make decisions but also maintain respect for how the community operates and maintain respect for the individuals you are serving and their decisions and [his or her] own personal values.” Sonya further amplified the importance of “holding true to your values” when making decisions and added that individuals must “look outside yourself to see how other chapters function. …Taking time to learn about other chapters and their values and what they stand for helps you be a good citizen because you take into account the whole community around you.” Participants’ values are evident in their feelings of social responsibility, what Eyler and Giles identify as what one “ought to do” (p. 157). Increasing internalization of these values contributes to the development of personal self-confidence and the willingness to take risks, such as standing up for one’s beliefs.

**Action: “Step up and do it”—Greg**

A final theme emerging from analysis was action. This theme is exemplified by Greg’s declaration: “if you have the capability to do something, then it is your responsibility to step up and do it.” Whereas values were evident in students’ commitment, responsibility, and the internalization of community standards, action is the performance of these internalized beliefs. In this theme, individuals emphasized the necessity to take action and initiative; to stand up and speak out. For instance, Mike noted, “it is your actual involvement rather than a title that will make a difference.” Tim asserted, “many of us have future goals that have to do with helping people; however, instead of sitting around and waiting, we should try to help people now … You do not need a degree to have an impact on the world.”

Nathan observed that “contributing is more of a process than one single action. It takes people to organize and make the plans, so if that is their way of contributing and making a difference, then that is what they should do.” Several others echoed this call to “get involved and take action” (Christine); to “use service and philanthropy to improve your community” (Brian); to “utilize your strengths to improve society” (Greg); and to “help others” (Angie).

For a few participants, sometimes the best action to take was to step aside. For, as Amanda articulated, being a citizen is not a solo act, but rather taking action in the context of a community and in relationship to others.

We just had elections for [my sorority] and I had already fulfilled my service to the chapter serving on the executive board but some individuals in the chapter wanted me to run for president. I felt that I needed to step back from the situation and let someone else take that role because they would do better. It was important for me to recognize… that someone could do it better than me.

Similarly, Tim reflected on the importance of collaboration and participatory leadership when he started a student organization:

I sought individuals to get involved but was not having much luck and thought people were being self-centered and selfish. I realized that it was more self-centered of me to ask them to help me; they were putting their energy in other things where they had the motivation to get things done. This year, people have stepped up to help me and I help them in their areas of interests.

These students had discovered the importance of not only taking individual action, but also of the need for mutuality, reciprocity, and compromise, enabling collective action.
The participants in this study stressed that taking action, fulfilling one’s responsibility, making a difference, and helping others are essential ingredients in their conception of citizenship. As Christine explained, “If you don’t do what is required of you, then something is going to fall through. It gives you a sense of responsibility, which is integral in terms of citizenship.” Mike also observed, “The willingness to give something of yourself to others is where citizenship begins.” Finally, Sonya noted that fulfilling this responsibility can be challenging when you feel alone in standing up for what you believe. She illustrated this with an example of a controversial vote within Fraternity and Sorority Life on inviting a new chapter to the campus. “I felt a strong internal conflict. I wanted to do what was best for the community. Every other chapter voted yes… but I felt that I had to stand up for what I believed and I had to vote no” (Sonya).

Of note, several participants, when asked how fraternity and sorority life contributed to shaping their views on citizenship, observed shortcomings between a professed commitment on the part of the fraternal community to cultivate good citizens and the potential to realize this commitment through their experiences as part of it. Participants advocated for improvements in facilitating students’ civic awareness and involvement; bolstering students’ understanding of democratic process and the potential for their voice in this process; and strengthening students’ orientation toward values-based decision-making. The implications of their observations for practice will be discussed below.

**Discussion**

Participants’ views on citizenship were evident in their descriptions of gaining awareness, understanding the values of their community and how these values informed their decision-making, recognizing they are part of and accountable to something greater, and taking action and making a difference in their community. As Angie considered, “maybe being a good citizen is not about doing the easy thing.” As Ehlrich (2000) notes, being civically engaged means not only having the desire to want to make a difference within your community, but also utilizing a combination of knowledge, skills, values, and motivation to be an actively engaged citizen. Viewed in this way, citizenship can be understood not as a static identity, but instead as a continuum of behaviors.

These findings can inform practitioners’ efforts to structure programs and interventions that would support the development of students’ competencies as effective citizens. First, it is necessary to build awareness of the community and self to expand awareness of one’s self in a broader social context. Such awareness is an important developmental shift in students’ cognitive growth, illuminating a student’s ability “to construct knowledge in a contextual world, an ability to construct an internal identity separate from external influences, and an ability to engage in relationships without losing one’s internal identity” (Baxter Magolda, 1999, p. 12).

Such changes appear foundational to subsequent growth as a citizen; students must first “know” before they can proceed to “do something” about what they know (Eyler & Giles, 1999). Also, awareness contributes to the realization of one’s strengths and weaknesses and provides an opportunity to truly reflect upon personal values and how to use them to inform decisions. It is also important to develop individuals’ awareness of the community and its needs. This begins to connect individuals to a cause about which they feel passionate and want to make a difference.
Second, motivated by a sense of social responsibility – what Eyler and Giles (1999) refer to as “I ought to do” – students who feel increasingly connected to their communities are motivated for involvement. Coupled with an awareness of social issues and one’s role in society, this connectedness can lead to active citizenship (Eyler & Giles). One can begin to recognize that societal issues are perpetuated by a lack of knowledge about these issues, which may inspire questions about the root causes of the problems (Rhoads, 1997). This newfound perspective lends itself to educating individuals about their civic efficacy to identify and utilize all avenues to make a difference. Finally, once motivated to act, it is necessary to cultivate the skills necessary to make a difference. It is the attainment of these skills that empowers individuals to enact the awareness, values, and commitment they have developed.

**Recommendations**

Higher education practitioners have an obligation to design programs that will help students develop as effective citizens (Hamrick, 1998). Recognizing various conceptions of citizenship exist, practitioners can shape environments that can challenge and support students’ development as active citizens. This section offers recommendations for practitioners to cultivate the role fraternities and sororities must play in fostering members’ citizenship development.

1. Connect members with transformative community service to develop their “abilities for critical thinking and group problem-solving, their commitments and values, and the skills they need for effective citizenship” (Cousins, 1994, p. 1). Participating in service projects can allow students to understand how certain actions affect others’ welfare; it also contributes to further development of their awareness, knowledge, and skills as engaged citizens (Earley, 1998; Gibson, 2001). Since fraternity and sorority outreach already (generally) focuses on charitable, altruistic forms of service, members could be encouraged to implement projects that extend beyond one-time philanthropic efforts. The challenge for practitioners is to design empowering service experiences that are more than episodic volunteerism promoting charity, and instead develop students’ abilities to enact civic activism “concentrating on root causes of social problems, politics, and the need for structural change” (Kahne, Westheimer, & Rogers, 2000, p. 44). Consistent with Rhoads’ (1997) call for critical community service, students’ enactment of change-oriented community outreach enables greater understanding of community needs; increased likelihood that students will see the impact of their work, and holds the most potential for cultivating critical thinking and civic consciousness.

2. Engage in critical discussions about citizenship. Too often, the sole message students receive about their responsibility as a citizen is to vote. However, alternative conceptions were emphasized by the students in this study. Their active participation in their communities – both leadership within the fraternal community and through community service – enabled them to further develop their understanding of what it means to be an effective citizen. Higher education practitioners can facilitate conversations and design activities with affiliated students that can build cognitive complexity and stimulate individuals to see and understand experiences in different ways. As Putnam (2002) observed, “the way we teach students about community engagement and political
participation is likely to have a powerful and long lasting effect on the way younger Americans think about the problems and possibilities of achieving an authentically democratic society” (¶5).

3. Empower and support students to speak out. It is critical, once students know what they “ought to do” (Eyler & Giles, 1999), to develop students’ skills to act on their civic commitment. Baier and Whipple (1990) found affiliated students in leadership positions may have a clear sense of what should be done but may struggle with doing the right thing for fear of peers' rejection, retaliation, and alienation. As Earley (1998) notes, “students must be educated and supported in efforts to question and change norms” (p. 42). Higher education practitioners, and in particular administrators and advisors involved with fraternities and sororities, can influence this process by engaging students in constructive debate about how specific norms and rituals may support or impede their organizational principles.

Conclusion

Today’s society needs its citizens to be more engaged in the community through both political and non-political realms. University administrators need to assume greater responsibility for educating students about the values, knowledge, and skills needed for effective citizenship. Fraternal membership is a promising venue for learning civic values and practicing civic engagement. Involvement exposes students to the meaning of being a part of a community and helps members understand their role within that community. It is important for administrators working with students to design campus plans to develop competent citizens using the resources of the institution, community, and the individual chapters.

References


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THE IMPACT OF VISION STANDARDS ON FRATERNAL LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS

Sarah E. Schoper

At the University of Maryland, four governing councils oversee 57 chapters within the fraternal community. For over 10 years, each chapter has been obligated to fulfill Vision Standards, set by the University, to be considered in “good standing” status. The influence of the Vision Standards on a chapter beyond “good standing” status is unknown. This preliminary study uses discriminant function analysis to document the impact of the Vision Standards on chapters’ learning environments. Exploring the impact of the Vision Standards on chapters’ learning environments is consistent with the value of scholarship held by fraternal organizations and would allow chapter environments to be intentionally structured for academic success. Finally, understanding the impact of the Vision Standards on chapters’ learning environments would allow the fraternal community to articulate how it contributes to a positive learning environment.

Fraternities and sororities were originally formed upon a set of values or principles. Since the turn of the century, both inter/national organizations and colleges and universities have increasingly emphasized both adherence to and congruence with founding principles and values (Drath, 2003; Komives, Lucas, & McMahon, 2007; Lee & King, 2001). Emphasizing congruence between the chapter, its international organization, and the collegiate institution “connects hearts, minds, and the collective work of the organization” (Brandes & Stuber, 2004, ¶ 3) and supports flexibility, cohesion, and trust (Vogelsang, 1998), all of which benefit fraternal organizations. When chapters are congruent with their espoused values, dangerous practices such as hazing and other negative behavioral issues are seen by members as out of place and unacceptable (Bureau, 2007a, 2007b; The Franklin Square Group, 2003).

Today, international organizations and chapters are marketing their positive values congruence, as evidenced by Web pages and commitment statements (www.jointke.org; www.pibetaphi.org; The Franklin Square Group, 2003; www.greekmovement.com). There is also an increase in the desire to close chapters that do not follow their founding values (Jordan, 2008). Further, campus administrators have worked with chapters and their volunteers to establish institutional congruence programs, often resulting in the creation of recognition policies, required programming, and award systems intended to help chapters align with not only their values, but also the mission and policies of the institution. Taken together, this has resulted in a congruence movement meshing chapter, organizational, and institutional values in an effort to align local organizations with their founding values.

Such emphasis on values congruence as a means of organizational change is occurring at the same time that higher education is being asked to demonstrate what students are learning as a result of their college experience (ACPA–College Student Educators International [ACPA], 2007; Fischer & Hebel, 2007; National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education, 2004; U.S. Department of Education [USDE], 2006; Woodard & Komives, 2003). This study examines
the impact of an institutional fraternal values initiative on the learning environment for fraternity and sorority members.

**Context for the Study**

In 1994, the University of Maryland created a document designed to help its fraternities and sororities align themselves more consistently with the values upon which they were founded (Office of Fraternity and Sorority Life [OFSL], 2004). This document became known as the “Vision Statement” and was composed of 19 standards. Each of the 19 standards was identified for purposes of chapter enhancement, with the idea that through the realization of the 19 standards, undergraduate members within chapters would have a greater chance of behaving in congruence with their espoused values and missions. The Vision Statement was also created in an effort to increase accountability among undergraduate fraternity and sorority members after two decades of behavior inconsistent with espoused chapter values and the University’s educational mission. Finally, the standards within the Vision Statement were created to improve the relationship between undergraduate chapter members and the University. Specifically, the Vision Statement was designed so that through the fulfillment of the standards the chapters’ collective behaviors would “complement the institution’s academic mission; develop leadership in members; serve the community; foster character development; promote personal development; build community; and encourage lifelong friendships” (OFSL, 2004, p. 1).

The Vision Statement required fraternal organizations at the University of Maryland to participate in a performance assessment. Each spring, all chapter executive committees are required to submit an annual report documenting their efforts to complete the 19 Vision Standards. The professional staff within the Office of Fraternity and Sorority Life receives the annual report and additional program documentation from each chapter. The professional staff then recommends chapters to be placed in one of four categories. This categorization provides an incentive for chapters to complete all standards and document their efforts thoroughly.

Fulfillment of all 19 Vision Standards places a fraternal chapter into category one. Placement into category one means that the chapter is in “good standing” with the University and receives all the benefits of a recognized student organization at Maryland, including the opportunities to reserve room space for free and participate in campus-wide activities such as Maryland Day. Chapters ranking within category one can also participate in fraternal community activities such as Greek Week and Homecoming.

A chapter receives a category two standing when there is evidence of violating the social host event policies and other minor infractions or failure to meet the all-men’s and all-women’s grade point average (GPA). Chapters receiving category two standing are viewed as having demonstrated “good faith effort”. While these chapters receive the same University benefits as those chapters assigned the category one ranking, category two chapter leaders are required to schedule a meeting with an advisor from the Office of Fraternity and Sorority Life, during which a plan will be created so that all 19 Vision Standards are achieved during the next year.

Placement into category three occurs when a sufficient number of standards have not been reached and major infractions have occurred, or if the chapter has not met at least the all-men’s and all-women’s GPA and has failed to increase the chapter GPA by 0.10. Chapters receiving a
category three ranking are placed on probation for one semester, which may result in the loss of events such as Greek Week or Homecoming.

If a chapter demonstrates little to no effort to complete a minimal number of Vision Standards, it receives a category four ranking from the University. Chapters receiving a category four ranking are granted one year to comply with all of the standards before University recognition is revoked. This ultimate consequence is intended to create motivation for all 57 chapters at the University of Maryland to fulfill all of the Vision Standards.

Each of the 57 chapters at the University of Maryland is governed by one of four governing councils. The Interfraternity Council (IFC) governs 23 North-American Interfraternity Council fraternities, the Panhellenic Association (PHA) governs 14 National Panhellenic Conference women’s fraternities and sororities, the Pan-Hellenic Council (PHC) governs 7 historically African American fraternities and sororities and one Latina sorority, and the United Greek Council (UGC) governs 12 multicultural fraternities and sororities. While it is not the responsibility of these Councils to administer the Vision Statement, their leaders do coordinate programs that meet Vision Standards and educate chapter members about the standards with help from staff members within Maryland’s Office of Fraternity and Sorority Life.

Despite the “fundamental purpose” of the Vision Statement to “compel chapters to return to the founding values central to the development of fraternity and sorority men and women” (OFSL, 2004, p. 1), no research has been conducted on the impact of the Vision Standards on Maryland’s fraternal organizations. At the same time staff in the Office of Fraternity and Sorority Life are challenging fraternal organizations to fulfill the Vision Standards at the category one level, they are being challenged to demonstrate the outcomes of their programs and services. Specifically, within the student affairs division a learning outcomes committee is working to operationalize outcomes-based practice among all departments (ACPA, 2007; ACPA & NASPA, 2004; Keeling, 2006; Love & Estanek, 2004). The learning outcomes movement is a response to various stakeholders within higher education asking what students are learning while in college that successfully prepares them for life after college (Association of American Colleges and Universities, 2007; USDE, 2006). This questioning of what students are learning, as well as efforts designed to help chapters align the actions of undergraduate members with their fraternal values, leave the fraternal community to struggle with documenting the benefits of membership. This challenge to specify the value-added learning outcomes associated with fraternity and sorority membership is especially difficult for those professionals within fraternity and sorority life offices, because it means they must provide evidence for the learning occurring through a myriad of experiences, while at the same time accounting for complementary movement toward values congruence.

**Vision Standards and Chapter GPA**

One way for University of Maryland fraternity and sorority life professionals to demonstrate learning within the fraternal community is to examine the impact of their policies on fraternal chapters. This can be done by exploring the impact of the Vision Standards on chapters’ grade point average (GPA) by council. Such an examination provides insight into how the expectations to comply with the Vision Standards impact a chapter’s movement toward values congruence, as
well as how the Vision Standards impact the academic learning environment. GPA has been established as an indicator of student learning (Astin, 1993), so it is therefore reasonable to use GPA as one variable for indicating the impact of Vision Standards on the learning environment. Furthermore, examining the chapter GPAs by council is logical considering that the organizations within each council have agreed to the policies and mission of that council. Examining the impact of the Vision Standards on chapter GPA is practical, because all of the chapters in existence at the University of Maryland demonstrate their value of scholarship by requiring a minimum GPA for membership, thus chapter GPA should be of interest. Lastly, many university-based fraternity and sorority life offices explicitly state the enhancement of academics as a purpose of membership (DeBard, Lake, & Binder, 2006).

Through the exploration of the Vision Standards, insight into how the University of Maryland’s Office of Fraternity and Sorority Life enhances academics can be transferred to other institutions.

If the Vision Standards are to be examined for their impact on chapter GPA, then research regarding the impact of the fraternal experience on GPA is worth exploring. Unfortunately, there is minimal research regarding the impact of membership in fraternal organizations on GPA or other academic outcomes. Gardner (1991) studied academic outcomes of new members and was not able to find significantly higher academic outcomes for new members of fraternal organizations. Marji (1994) found no difference between affiliated and non-affiliated members in regard to their academic achievement.

A bit more helpful in understanding the impact of the fraternal experience on GPA was Jelke’s (2001) research seeking to identify characteristics of high-performing fraternal systems on two campuses. One of the characteristics Jelke identified was academics, and he found several contributing factors. First, both the chapter and individuals within the chapter were seen to have responsibility for academics. Second, information regarding grades was posted and distributed to chapters, advisors, and the media. Third, institutions had high expectations for academic performance, the guidelines designed to reach those expectations were enforced, and there was recognition for high academic achievement. Finally, DeBard et al. (2006) found that academic outcomes were greater when fraternity and sorority organization membership was deferred until second semester.

While all of these findings are informative, missing from the conversation is an examination of the institutions’ policies upon the academic achievement of fraternal organizations. Norman’s (2003) study of the Five Star Chapter Evaluation Program at the University of Delaware included an exploration of the impact of institutional policies on chapter GPA. Norman found that chapter GPAs increased significantly after implementation of the Five Star Chapter Evaluation Program when compared with chapter GPAs prior to the implementation of the Program. The present study continued that same line of inquiry in regard to the influence of institutional requirements on chapter GPA by exploring the impact of the University of Maryland Vision Standards upon chapter GPA.
Method

Data
The data used in this study was originally collected by the Office of Fraternity and Sorority Life during the 2006-2007 academic year for purposes of Vision categorization. Data was collected from all 57 fraternal chapters and one colony recognized by the IFC, PHA, PHC, and UGC. A colony is the designation of a fraternal chapter prior to becoming an officially recognized fraternal chapter by one of the governing councils. Consequently, the sample size was the entire fraternal population. Permission to do a secondary analysis of the data was obtained through the University of Maryland’s Institutional Review Board.

In this study, all of the independent variables were Vision Standards (Table 1) and were entered simultaneously, since it was unknown how they affected chapter GPA. GPA was established as a categorical variable using a common grading scale and served as the outcome categories (Table 2). Transforming GPA into a categorical variable also served as the method for coding each of the chapters.

Procedure
Each council has unique polices which govern its chapters, and these policies impact the chapters’ environments in concert with the Vision Standards. Thus, the fraternal chapters at the University of Maryland were studied based on council affiliation (IFC, PHA, PHC, UGC).

Table 1
Independent Variables Vision Standards

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Code</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Faculty Advisor</td>
<td>FA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter Advisor</td>
<td>CA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical House</td>
<td>PH</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Membership Development Plan</td>
<td>MEMDPL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter Management Plan</td>
<td>CHMANGPL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annual Report</td>
<td>ANLRPT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outreach Program</td>
<td>OTRCHPRG</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diversity Program</td>
<td>DIVPRG</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Greek Evaluation</td>
<td>NGEVAL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alumni Program</td>
<td>ALUPRG</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alumni Newsletter</td>
<td>ALUNWSLR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outline of Internal Judicial System</td>
<td>OTLNEJSY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Membership Activity List</td>
<td>MEMACTU</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Service Learning</td>
<td>COMMSERL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campus Service</td>
<td>CMPSSRVC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Third Party Vendors</td>
<td>BYOB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Chapter Members</td>
<td>NM</td>
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</table>
Table 2
Dependent Variable GPA Categories

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GPA</th>
<th>Code</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>3.75-4.0</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>3.25-3.5</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.00-3.25</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.75-3.00</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.5-2.75</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.25-2.5</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.0-2.25</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Analysis**

Discriminant function analysis was used to determine the fit of the Vision Standards in predicting the chapter GPA by council. Discriminant function analysis explains how specific independent variables relate to the outcome categories to which cases belong (Hair, Black, Babin, Anderson, & Tatham, 2006). Therefore, discriminant function analysis helped explain how specific Vision Standards related to GPA categories by chapters within each council. The nonparametric Wilks’ Lambda was used since the variable of interest, GPA by chapter, meant that sample sizes, although composed of the entire population, did not meet requirements for the analysis of variance.

**Results**

For IFC, three discriminant functions were created. None of the discriminant functions were significant (Wilks’ $\lambda$: D$_1$= 0.546; D$_2$= 0.871; D$_3$= 0.869) indicating that the relation between the GPA categories the IFC chapters fell within and the Vision Standards was not consistent. Results for UGC chapters, where two discriminant functions were created, were also not significant (Wilks’ $\lambda$: D$_1$= 0.419; D$_2$= 0.743), indicating an unreliable relation between the GPA categories the UGC chapters fell within and the Vision Standards.

For two of the councils, PHA and PHC, a relation between chapter GPA and the Vision Standards was identified. For PHA two discriminant functions were created. The first discriminant function was significant (Wilks’ $\lambda$: D$_1$= 0.126), and the second was not significant (Wilks’ $\lambda$: D$_2$= 0.880). The significance of the first discriminant function indicated a reliable relation existed for each chapter between its GPA group and the Vision Standards. The discriminant analysis used 12 of the Vision Standards as predictors to classify the chapters into their GPA categories. The loading matrix of correlations between the Vision Standards and the discriminant functions is depicted in Table 3. The discriminant analysis for PHA showed that Third Party Vendor (BYOB), Community Service Learning (COMMSERL), Alumni Newsletter (ALUNWSLR), Membership Development Plan (MEMDPL), Diversity Program (DIVPRG), and the Number of New Members (NM) were the significant predictors and correctly classified 86.4% of the chapters. The classification results presented in Table 4 indicate that all but two of the 12 chapters were classified correctly.
Table 3  
**PHA Structure Matrix of Correlations Between Predictor Variables and the Discriminant Function**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task</th>
<th>Function 1</th>
<th>Function 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BYOB</td>
<td>.426</td>
<td>.103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMMSELR</td>
<td>.345</td>
<td>.213</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ALUNWSLR</td>
<td>.345</td>
<td>.213</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MEMDPL</td>
<td>.177</td>
<td>-.073</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DIVPRGR</td>
<td>.177</td>
<td>-.073</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NM</td>
<td>.152</td>
<td>.080</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OTLNEJSY</td>
<td>-.077</td>
<td>.605</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CMPSSRVC</td>
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<td>.482</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ANLRPT</td>
<td>.051</td>
<td>.335</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MEMACTLI</td>
<td>-.038</td>
<td>.295</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NGEVAL</td>
<td>.149</td>
<td>.294</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OTRCHPRG</td>
<td>.088</td>
<td>.174</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4  
**PHA Classification Results of Discriminant Function Analysis**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GPA Group</th>
<th>2.00</th>
<th>3.00</th>
<th>4.00</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2.00</td>
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<td>3</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For PHC, there were also two discriminant functions created. The first discriminant function was significant (Wilks’ $\lambda_{D1} = 0.096$), while the second explained .5% of the between-group variability and was not significant (Wilks’ $\lambda_{D2} = 0.810$). The significance of the first discriminant function indicated that a reliable relation existed between the GPA categories into which the chapter fell and the Vision Standards. The discriminant analysis used 12 of the Vision Standards as predictors to classify the chapters. The loading matrix of correlations between the Vision Standards and the discriminant functions is depicted in Table 5. The discriminant analysis for PHC showed that Campus Service (CMPSSRVC), Non-Greek Evaluation (NGEVAL), Alumni Program (ALUPRG), and Number of Members (NM) were the significant predictors and correctly classified 100% of the chapters. The classification results presented in Table 6 indicate that all eight chapters were classified correctly.
Table 5
PHC Structure Matrix of Correlations Between Predictor Variables and the Discriminant Function

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task</th>
<th>Function 1</th>
<th>Function 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CMPSSRVC</td>
<td>-.643</td>
<td>-.449</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NGEVAL</td>
<td>.576</td>
<td>-.540</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ALUPRG</td>
<td>.539</td>
<td>-.115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NM</td>
<td>.073</td>
<td>-.061</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OTLNEJSY</td>
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<td>.313</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OTRCHPRG</td>
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<td>.286</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FA</td>
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<td>-.073</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ANLRPT</td>
<td>.036</td>
<td>.073</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CA</td>
<td>-.036</td>
<td>-.073</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MEMDPL</td>
<td>-.036</td>
<td>-.073</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHMANGPL</td>
<td>-.036</td>
<td>-.073</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMMSERL</td>
<td>-.036</td>
<td>-.073</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Table 6
PHC Classification Results of Discriminant Function Analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GPA Group</th>
<th>Predicted Group Membership</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<tr>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.00</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Discussion

The results of this study were inconclusive regarding the impact of the Vision Standards on chapter GPA for IFC and UGC. The inconclusive findings may be due to factors such as the limited range of GPA classification categories for the chapters within those councils or sensitivity to sample size of discriminant function analysis. Further analysis should be conducted to determine if a relation does exist between the Vision Standards and the IFC and UGC. For the PHA and PHC a relation was found between specific Vision Standards and chapter GPA. Identifying specific Vision Standards as GPA predictor variables for PHA and PHC chapters was a useful finding for each respective council, the chapters composing each of the councils, as well as the Office of Fraternity and Sorority Life.

The Vision Standards identified as predictor variables were especially useful for the PHC and its chapters, because the discriminant function analysis correctly classified 100% of the chapters. The 100% classification means that the significant predictors can be used to determine a PHC chapter’s GPA category correctly. It also means that the significant predictors can be used for planning interventions by having a chapter’s members focus specifically on completing criteria to attain specific Vision Standards if they are attempting to increase the chapter’s GPA. For example, the Vision standard of Campus Service was identified as a significant predictor variable for PHC. Programming for PHC chapters to fulfill the Vision Standard of Campus Service might include volunteering during Family Weekend, Maryland Day, Maryland’s Leadership
Conference, or at the recycling center. A recommendation would be to compare equivalent requirements to the Vision Standards required by other institutions to see if the significant predictor variables for PHC chapters were universal. The results of the PHA analysis can be used similarly, although 100% classification should not be expected.

Many fraternity and sorority life professionals express the enhancement of scholarship as a purpose for their campus office (DeBard et al., 2006). This study demonstrated that the policies promulgated by fraternity and sorority life professionals could indeed have an impact on a chapter’s learning environment. Furthermore, the Maryland Vision Standards are often similar to programming inter/national organizations require of their chapters. For example, one of Maryland’s Vision Standards is conducting a diversity program, while Pi Beta Phi fraternity has a parallel programming requirement for its chapters titled Cultural Horizons (www.pibetaphi.org). Thus, insight about the Vision Standards that were found to be significant predictor variables impacting chapter GPA may transfer into insight about the impact of similar requirements originating from inter/national organizations on chapter GPA. A next step would be to assess how multiple policies established by fraternity and sorority life officials on campuses and within fraternity/sorority inter/national organizations impact chapter GPA, because often more than one policy exists at a time.

Finally, given that this study indicates that fraternity and sorority life policies impact chapter members’ learning, it is recommended that fraternity and sorority life officials continually assess the impact of their policies with a focus on student learning. Indeed, for the University of Maryland this study served as a preliminary study into the impact of institutional policies on chapter learning. Assessment of institutional policies on chapter learning will allow for intentional adjustment to be made to the policies, so that the desired learning outcomes can be reached. It also allows fraternity and sorority life officials to participate in the greater learning outcomes movement occurring within student affairs, while simultaneously providing feedback about efforts designed to help move chapters and their members toward values congruence.

**Limitations**

Discriminant function analysis is sensitive to the ratio of sample size to the number of predictor variables. It is suggested that for each predictor variable there are five observations (Hair et al., 2006). In this study, there were 17 predictor variables. Based on the recommended ratio, 85 observations would be needed for each council. In this study, samples were not taken, but rather the entire population was used for data analysis. Unfortunately, the council with the greatest number of chapters was IFC with 23 chapters, which is well short of the 85 recommended. Therefore, those using the results of this study should be mindful of potential instability in the analysis. In order to meet the underlying statistical assumptions of the discriminant function, an analysis could be conducted after cumulating GPA data by chapter within governing council across several years. Across time enough data would be available to use the discriminant function without violating its statistical assumptions.

Another limitation of the present study is in the use of chapter GPA as the only learning outcome criterion. The concept of values congruence has at least as much if not more to do with character, integrity, and leadership as it has to do with academic performance. Other measures of college
learning outcomes, such as data from the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) or the University Learning Outcomes Assessment (UniLOA), may offer more meaningful criterion measures than cognitive academic performance (NSSE, 2008; UniLOA, 2008).

Conclusion

In conclusion, while significant Vision Standards predictor variables were not identified for each council, it was still useful to conduct this study. Both the PHA and the PHC now have Vision Standards predictor variables that can help guide their strategic decision-making. Furthermore, these prediction models can be stabilized over time, and results can be used as a starting place for future research about the impact of fraternity and sorority life on the learning environment. Institutional fraternity/sorority life policies focusing on values congruence can impact individual chapter GPAs and should be explored for their effectiveness. Undergraduate members of individual chapters can be encouraged to move toward a place where they are more congruent with their organization’s espoused values using Vision Standards as guidelines, while campus-based fraternity and sorority life officials will be simultaneously participating in their institution’s outcomes-based learning goals assessment.

References


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LIVING IN YOUR LETTERS: ASSESSING CONGRUENCE BETWEEN ESPoused AND ENACTED VALUES OF ONE FRATERNITY/SORORITY COMMUNITY

Heather Matthews, Leigh Featherstone, Lisa Bluder, Allison J. Gerling, Sarah Loge, and Rachel B. Messenger

Fraternity and sorority members have long been charged with fulfilling the espoused values of their organizations. Although several studies have explored the gap between the actions and values of undergraduate fraternal members and their institutions, few have examined the degree to which the publicly stated values of fraternal organizations are enacted by members. Using qualitative methodology, researchers compared the creeds and mission statements of undergraduate fraternal organizations to member actions observed on the campus transit system. Results indicated that while there is some congruence between organizational and institutional values and member actions, there are also areas of disconnect for members related to their values.

In publicly accessible creeds and mission statements, the values of fraternities and sororities align with university values (Bureau, 2007; Franklin Square Group, 2003; Wall, 2006). However, some researchers have questioned the application of values within fraternities and sororities (Kuh, Pascarella, & Weschler, 1996; Pike, 2000; Whipple & Sullivan, 1998), and university administrators have noted a widening gap between the rhetoric of these organizations and the realities of members’ behaviors (Franklin Square Group, 2003; Kuh, Pascarella, & Weschler, 1996). Examining the consistency between actions and espoused values provides professionals the knowledge base to create “a Greek community [that] can enhance student learning and leadership, build strong ties between the institution and its future alumni, and develop well-rounded students who value community and citizenship” (Franklin Square Group, 2003, p. 4).

This study examined the level of congruence between espoused and enacted values (Kuh & Hall, 1993) of fraternity and sorority members at a large, Midwestern, public university. The researchers sought to answer the question: to what extent are the espoused values of fraternities and sororities congruent with the enacted values of their members? To situate this study in the current research, a review of literature on fraternal affiliation as a student subculture and espoused and enacted values of fraternal organizations was conducted.

**Literature Review**

*Student Culture*

Student culture emerges from the ways in which students adapt to the college environment (Feldman & Newcomb, 1969). Each such group has distinct group norms for behavior and for responding to issues. Social fraternities and sororities are considered student subcultures for several reasons: members are in constant contact, loyalty makes them susceptible to group influence, a clear distinction arises between members and non-members, and members share values (Kuh & Whitt, 1988). Specifically, members instruct newcomers on organizational norms and behaviors by passing down values from one student generation to the next (DeBard, Lake, & Binder, 2006; Kuh & Arnold, 1993).
Espoused Versus Enacted Values

Values are the “espoused as well as the enacted ideals of an institution or group and serve as the basis on which members of a culture or subculture judge situations, acts, objects, and people” (p. 6). Espoused values are “…assertions about such institutional aspirations as expecting students to be responsible for their own behavior or embracing diversity…. Enacted values are those that guide policy, decision making [sic], and other practices” (p. 7). Both espoused and enacted values inform student behavior, but espoused values may not be reflected in the actions of everyone in the group (Kuh & Whitt, 1988). To inform professional practice, it is important to assess how the espoused and enacted values of a student subculture align. The results of this study identify traditions, customs, or behaviors that conflict with espoused values of fraternities and sororities.

The enacted values of a group can be communicated through statements made by people within the group, if they are repeated often and accompanied by behavior that reinforces their authenticity (Kuh & Whitt, 1988). To examine enacted values, one may study verbal artifacts that include organization-specific words and phrases commonly used and understood by a group’s members (Kuh & Hall, 1993).

Enacted and Espoused Values in Fraternities and Sororities on College Campuses

A growing body of research illustrates how fraternity and sorority membership promoted practices and traditions inconsistent with espoused institutional values (Kuh, Pascarella, & Weschler, 1996; Pike, 2000; Whipple & Sullivan, 1998), but few studies identified whether the actions of fraternity and sorority members were consistent with their organizations’ values. For institutions to value these organizations, Callais (2005) noted, “fraternities and sororities must have congruence between their actions and their stated purpose and mission” (p. 33).

Inconsistencies are exhibited through socially disruptive, “self-destructive” behavior (Owen & Owen, 1995), which erodes the academic purpose of the university. Research showed how high-risk drinking could inhibit intellectual progress for members of fraternities and sororities (Alva, 1998; Carton, Hovey, & Moskey, 2004; Kuh, Pascarella, & Wechsler, 1996; Wall, 2006). Foubert, Garner, and Thaxter (2006) found fraternity men more likely to be sexually coercive and to use alcohol to lure women into sex; behaviors often reinforced by fraternity culture. Multi-institutional studies have shown fraternity and sorority members have a decreased level of cognitive development compared to students who don’t participate in a new member process (Pascarella et al., 1996; Pascarella, Flowers, & Whitt, 2006).

Fraternity or sorority membership can have a negative effect on openness to diversity, as some students remain unaware of their privilege, which results in incidents of outward discrimination (Pascarella et al., 1996; Pettitt, 2008). Researchers stress that organizations must address this problem quickly through recruitment and educational efforts, because perpetuating homogeneous culture is incompatible with university values (Pascarella et al., 1996). They suggested that professionals should review activities, traditions, and expectations of fraternities and sororities to determine whether members’ actions are inconsistent with institutional values. If “fraternities are indifferent to academic values,” the experience could “short-change the education of many members” (Kuh, Pascarella, & Weschler, 1996, p. 68).
Although research illustrated how behavioral trends of fraternity and sorority members compared with institutional values, there is little data about how student behavior compares to espoused organizational values. This study sought to fill this gap, focusing on the question: to what extent are the espoused values of fraternities and sororities congruent with the enacted values of their members?

**Method**

This study followed a qualitative research design, using document analysis and observation techniques (Creswell, 2005). Data collection took place in two phases. The first phase was aimed at assessing espoused values and involved a study of fraternal creeds and mission statements. The second phase was aimed at assessing enacted values, and involved an observation of fraternity/sorority members in a public setting, specifically, the campus transit system. Based on data collection procedures, this study was not submitted for Office of Human Subjects (OHS) review. Observations were collected in a public place and recorded in such a way that participants could not be individually identified, meeting OHS guidelines for non-reviewable research at the study institution. A description of procedures follows.

**Site**

The present fraternity/sorority community at the host institution reflects the realities outlined in the referenced literature. The Greek Life Coordinator at the host institution stated that members value social interactions defined by “alcohol abuse, drug use, parties and events” (personal communication, September 19, 2007). However, many students have an interest in philanthropic causes, exemplified through the events they host and in which they participate. Campus involvement and leadership are important to fraternity and sorority members, as seen through their participation in other campus activities and organizations. The Greek Life Coordinator noticed recent increases in hands-on community service, as more groups partnered with civic entities for service programs, in addition to their customary philanthropic programs. The fraternal community’s grade point average has been consistently above the all undergraduate average, showing academic success. For example, in fall 2007, when this study was conducted, the all-fraternity-and-sorority-average was .0412 above the all-undergraduate GPA.

**Assessing Espoused Values**

**Data sources.** Developing rules for the analysis process includes determining what to analyze and how to select content (Whitt, 1992). The researchers reviewed mission statements, purpose statements, and/or creeds of 38 fraternities and sororities at the host institution. The documents chosen define the values members pledge to incorporate into their lives when they accept membership. Creeds, mission statements, and purpose statements of the inter/national organizations are a public, concentrated source of an organization’s espoused values. The 38 participating groups are housed along the bus route that was designed to transport students from fraternal housing to campus buildings. Members of these organizations represent more than 89 percent of the fraternity/sorority community at this institution. This study excludes the 16 historically African American and multicultural chapters and 10 NPC or NIC chapters without houses along the transit route.
**Data collection.** The researchers collected mission statements, purpose statements, and/or creeds from Web sites of the participating fraternities and sororities. While each organization utilized its own terminology for identifying a mission, the researchers selected the document(s) that most resembled a declaration of values.

**Data analysis.** To determine espoused values, the researchers used document analysis, which includes four basic steps: developing rules for the analysis process, coding data, interpreting data, and drawing conclusions about the meaning of themes or patterns (Whitt, 1992). Words and phrases that represented values were coded and then classified into similar groupings. For example, wisdom, knowledge, and academic achievement fit into the same group: pursuit of knowledge. To draw conclusions, all categorical themes were assessed to determine what values were most prevalent among the organizations. The themes that arose most frequently were inferred to be the core set of espoused values of the 38 fraternities and sororities.

**Assessing Enacted Values**

**Data sources.** To determine enacted values, the primary technique used was observation, which enabled the researchers to better understand a particular place, group, or organization (Gerson & Horowitz, 2002). The purpose of the bus route observations was to understand the values-based aspect of the culture of fraternities and sororities. Observational techniques were the most effective, because the researchers wanted to study student interactions in a specific social setting to observe ongoing daily patterns.” This technique enabled the observation of fraternity and sorority members in an informal and non-organizational environment of this subculture to evaluate how the behaviors and conversations between members corresponded to their espoused organizational values (Glesne, 1992).

The bus is known to serve fraternities and sororities and has an identity associated with this community (Kase, 2007). According to the head of the student bus advisory committee, the B route was created in 1967 to serve the fraternity/sorority community, and now makes about 5,000 unique trips a week (personal communication, September 18, 2007). The 38 organizations whose values statements were analyzed are those that have houses on the bus route. Therefore, the students observed were most likely members of these fraternities and sororities. The bus was ideal for this study because a sizable group of fraternity and sorority members use it to move about campus. It is an unstructured, daily environment that does not contain an obvious authority figure, increasing the likelihood that the researchers, as non-participant observers, could study undisturbed, natural interactions and behaviors.

**Data collection.** Four members from the research team rode the bus in pairs twice each week during a five-week period in the fall. The researchers wore casual clothing, without intending to fit in or stand out. No effort was made to dress like the students on the bus. Each observational period was defined as one full loop of the route. Bus ridership varied from a few students to more than 30 students. When choosing a position in the environment, one observer sat in the front half of the bus and the other sat in the back, providing unique observation points within the same environment. Researchers compared their observations after the rides, detailing a more complete picture of occurrences.
Researchers began observations by noting natural occurrences to situate the environment. Also noted were details that might connote values, including student behaviors, conversation topics, and articles of clothing or other accoutrements. Researchers took field notes during and after the bus rides, with each observer taking time to expand his/her individual notes, providing additional, accurate descriptions but avoiding making judgments (Glesne, 1992). Researchers then reviewed each set of notes together between observations, adding reflections and discussing what values emerged.

As non-participant observers in the environment, the researchers did not engage in conversation with riders to prevent unduly impacting the environment. As riders were observed, the researchers concentrated on the “events as they unfolded and relationships as they naturally occurred” (Gerson & Horowitz, 2002, p. 212).

**Data analysis.** Since the research design was ethnographic, the research team believed it was crucial to allow themes to emerge from the collected data rather than attempt to fit data into predetermined categories (Creswell, 2005; Gerson & Horowitz, 2002). After the first round of data collection, the data was organized into broad categories of enacted values based on relationships between them. As data was continuously collected, the researchers reevaluated the categories initially conceptualized after each round. The categories were analyzed to understand what values were represented. After five rounds of observation, the categories were saturated, providing thick descriptions of the values consistently expressed.

**Trustworthiness.** The observational research team consisted of four women: two sorority alumnae and two unaffiliated women. The researchers worked in pairs, coupling a sorority alumna with an unaffiliated woman. Rounds of coding were conducted collaboratively by the four observers. While it is impossible to guarantee that researchers were able to note every detail and action, the way in which observers sat separately in different areas on each bus ensured a representative sample. Approaching observation from the perspective of an insider and an outsider to this campus subculture balanced the researchers’ comprehensive outlook (Glesne, 1992). The alumnae identified trends and themes not readily apparent to the unaffiliated researchers.

**Congruence Between Enacted and Espoused Values**
Using the values that emerged from observational research and document analysis, the researchers analyzed the extent of congruence between the enacted and espoused values of the studied fraternity/sorority community. By understanding what each value entailed, the espoused and enacted values were able to be compared and contrasted.

**Results**

The results of this study address the extent to which the espoused values of fraternities and sororities are congruent with the enacted values of their members by defining the values that emerged in this study and exploring the correlation between them. Twelve espoused and enacted values of the fraternity/sorority community were clearly identified in our analyses. Five espoused values emerged from the document analysis: *civic engagement, commitment to organization, fostering community, integrity, and pursuit of knowledge*. From observations of riders on the bus,
seven enacted values emerged: academic excellence, alcohol use, commitment to organization, connectedness, homogeneity, pride in alma mater, and wellness. In this section the researchers define and provide examples of each value.

**Espoused Values Defined**

**Civic engagement.** Engagement in and commitment to society define this value. Contributions to community, organization, God, mankind, country, and alma mater all qualify as ways for an individual to be a good citizen.

**Commitment to organization.** This value encompasses the statements in the documents that pertain to one’s loyalty to and involvement in a fraternity or sorority. Examples of words used by organizations to convey this value include brotherhood, sisterhood, and lifetime commitment.

**Fostering community.** This value encompasses one’s participation in tradition, mission, and relationships. These organizations detail a commitment to creating ties beyond the chapter.

**Integrity.** Fraternities and sororities include references to being true to the ethic of one’s organization and the shape of one’s moral character. This value emerged from consistent references to faith, strengthening character, and morality.

**Pursuit of knowledge.** Many of the values statements affirmed that members should commit to lifelong learning and scholarship. Beyond academic achievement, this value encompasses wisdom, intellectual integrity, and knowledge.

**Enacted Values Defined**

**Academic excellence.** Students frequently discussed their academic endeavors or studies. Discussion topics included grade competition, schedules, dissatisfaction with academic advising, and cheating. Most students expressed resistance to academic dishonesty because of the threat of reprimand or sanction. Not one student was heard to mention anything related to the value of learning, scholarship, or desire for knowledge.

**Alcohol abuse.** Although this term is not typically recognized as a value-laden phrase, it is clearly considered a social norm within the community and meets our definition of value. This value emerged from in-depth discussions about going to bars or parties for the purpose of consuming alcohol. Students told stories about “being drunk in a frat house,” “blacking out,” vomiting, taking shots, and obtaining fake identification.

**Commitment to organization.** Through their discussions of chapter events and activities, many students exhibited commitment to their organizations. Topics included housing, recruitment, and leadership roles. Though some students referred to required activities with resistance, they sought to fulfill the requirements of their organizations.

**Connectedness.** This value emerged from students’ needs to have friendships, relationships, and other connections to fellow individuals and organizations. Many boarded and rode the bus with brothers or sisters and talked with members of different chapters. Making
phone calls or text messaging was popular with those not otherwise engaged. Finally, behaviors
associated with politeness, like speaking to the bus driver or greeting others, indicated awareness
of the importance of making connections.

**Homogeneity.** This value emerged in large part from the lack of diversity among the
riders, who seemed to lack an understanding of those different from the students within
fraternities and sororities. Nearly all riders were White, a higher concentration than the overall
student body, which had a minority student enrollment of 10.65 percent in fall 2007. Virtually
everyone wore expensive, name-brand clothing in similar styles and brands. Nearly all carried
technological devices including cell phones and mp3 players, and students articulated the need to
have up-to-date or “cool” cell phones. Most female students wore makeup, expensive jewelry,
and had their hair styled. In seven out of 10 observation periods, a student was heard mocking or
disparaging another person for being visibly different from others on the bus, including
derogatory statements about Asians, people viewed as overweight, those with non-Midwestern
accents, and a student dressed in athletic attire.

**Pride in alma mater.** Many students exhibited pride in the university through wearing
university apparel. Some students read the campus newspaper or referenced involvement in
campus activities, such as athletic events and major traditions.

**Wellness.** Students enacted the value of wellness by making time to workout, eat, sleep,
or relax. Students dressed in athletic attire exited at the student recreational center, while others
discussed going to play group sports. Students often brought food and drink onto the bus,
including bagels, grapefruit, and water bottles. Eating meals at chapter houses or restaurants
were a common conversation topic. Finally, the importance of rest emerged through discussions
about “recharging,” scheduling nap time, and avoiding illness. Students were aware of the need
to sustain and to support their physical well-being.

**Congruence Between Espouse and Enacted Values**

The espoused values that emerged were partially congruent with the enacted values. Some values
were closely related. *Pursuit of knowledge* (espoused) and *academic excellence* (enacted)
showed a commitment to educational endeavors, but the espoused value sought additional
critical thinking and the quest for new knowledge. *Fostering community* (espoused) related to
*connectedness* (enacted) as both focus on relationship-building; however, the organizations also
espoused a commitment to connect beyond the organization, which was where the enacted value
fell short. *Fostering community* (espoused) also could have been influenced by a second related
enacted value, *pride in alma mater*, which prompted participation in the larger university
community.

Other enacted values proved to be incongruent to the espoused values and worked against their
intentions. The enacted values of *alcohol abuse* and *homogeneity* negatively impacted the
involvement sought in *commitment to organization* (espoused). Some of the behaviors observed
were in sharp conflict with the espoused value of *integrity*. Additionally, *homogeneity* (enacted)
was incongruent to *civic engagement* (espoused) because enacting it provided a visible and
behavioral exclusion of the society beyond fraternities and sororities.
Discussion and Implications

The varying levels of congruence between the espoused and enacted values lead to implications for student leaders and professionals, as well as suggested avenues for future research. While students engaged in worthwhile involvement and relationships through their fraternities and sororities, some behaviors observed were counter to the values that the organizations espouse. By utilizing the connections between the espoused and enacted values, professionals can create opportunities to address incongruence, highlighting a realistic view of what students’ behaviors show they value. Discussion and implications for each enacted value follow.

Academic Excellence
While fraternity and sorority members seemed concerned about succeeding academically, they placed little importance on learning as encompassed in the value of pursuit of knowledge. Community recognition programs should be designed to recognize and promote scholarship programs that also highlight the development of critical thinking. Such programs would facilitate active learning and cognitive development for fraternity and sorority members, bringing a greater level of congruence.

Alcohol Abuse
Students were comfortable talking about their experiences with alcohol, revealing that it is socially acceptable to “black out,” vomit, and consume large quantities. They focused on how much and how often they drank, but never on why. The pattern of usage confirms conclusions reached through others’ research as outlined in the literature (Kuh, Pascarella, & Wechsler, 1996; Caron, Hovey, & Moskey, 2004; Caudill et al., 2006), but the determination of causal factors is an area for future research. If professionals know why alcohol abuse is valued, they can concretely address how it is inconsistent with espoused values of the fraternity and sorority community as well as the enacted value of wellness.

Commitment to Organization
While fraternity and sorority members demonstrated commitment to organization, other enacted values like alcohol abuse and homogeneity encompassed behaviors which contradicted this obligation, as they would result in a poor representation of the organization. Professionals should work to challenge students on how their behaviors conflict with the espoused values and diminish the significance of their commitment.

Connectedness
Connectedness correlates with the espoused value of fostering community, as students keep in constant contact with each other; yet some of the relationships observed on the bus appeared superficial. Students did not engage beyond acknowledging each other and ignored those they saw as outsiders -- those who were not wearing fraternity/sorority letters, had dissimilar clothing, or who were not White -- which relates to homogeneity. Building deeper relationships is important to advancing the espoused value of civic engagement and can be furthered through developing opportunities for fraternity and sorority members to engage both with each other and those outside the community.
Homogeneity
Subcultures socialize members to conform to a set of values and norms (Kuh & Whitt, 1988), and fraternity and sorority members have embraced this conformity. Through seeking to be with like-minded individuals, students do not grasp the benefits of diverse perspectives. Professionals could use the espoused value of civic engagement as an avenue to educate members about diversity issues facing the greater community, (Pettitt, 2008). Opportunities for learning could include partnering with cultural organizations and including diverse chapters in university-facilitated fraternity and sorority programming. Education and exploration of privilege, as well as performing service in the local community, could help students to gain a greater understanding of the benefits of diversification.

Pride in Alma Mater
Fraternity and sorority members show pride in the university, from their apparel to their activities. This enacted value would provide a foundation to encourage the practice of their espoused value of fostering community. One method of increasing congruence between these values could be encouraging chapters to incorporate education on the institution’s mission, history, and traditions into member development programs. Further interest in the broader community may cultivate interactions and bonds with students outside fraternity and sorority life.

Wellness
Students exhibited inconsistencies in how they valued wellness in their lifestyles. While they articulated the need for positive mental health, they did not connect how alcohol abuse could sabotage their well-being. This shows that when professionals create programs about alcohol use, they should also focus on how it affects wellness. Fraternity and sorority members need to understand how to maintain a healthy lifestyle if they choose to use alcohol. Focusing on wellness as a value could be an avenue for professionals to address unhealthy behavior, like alcohol abuse or risky sexual practices (Foubert, Garner, & Thaxter, 2006).

Conclusion
The enacted values of the fraternity/sorority community members riding the bus are only partially congruent with those espoused by their organizations. This disconnect is significant and alarming, because students are enacting values through behaviors that put themselves and their organizations at risk. It is evident that although chapters build community and friendships through their activities, they still foster destructive values like alcohol abuse, homogeneity, and poor cognitive development, as found in the literature. Professionals, both campus-based and organizational, should capitalize on opportunities to address incongruence. By knowing what fraternity and sorority members value, one can move past conversation confined to organizational creeds into an action-based approach by helping develop programs, activities, and behaviors that connect the enacted and espoused values.

Further research should investigate why fraternity and sorority members engage in destructive behaviors and whether they connect their actions with organization and community values. Research on how members make sense of organizational mission and values also merits interrogation, including the role these principles have in the recruitment process. Along with this
study, such research would provide a strong foundation for professionals to empower fraternity and sorority members to elevate their communities through living the espoused values of their organizations.

References


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SORORITY MEMBERS’ PERSPECTIVES OF CHAPTER RACIAL INTEGRATION

Jennifer T. Edwards, Ed.D.

The survival of social fraternal organizations may depend on whether or not members understand the importance of increasing the racial/ethnic diversity of their membership (Boschini & Thompson, 1998). Higher education institutions can emphasize the importance of diversity through university culture, vision, and support systems. A qualitative study was conducted to identify and compare the perceptions of members of historically Black and White sororities regarding racial diversity within their chapters. The purpose of this study was to explore the level of openness towards racial integration among members of both historically Black and White sororities. Findings suggest members of sororities may not support the recruitment of racially diverse members.

Colleges and universities have a responsibility to address the needs of a diverse student body (Seurkamp, 2007). In this regard, one area neglected by administrators at many colleges and universities is the social fraternity/sorority system. The survival of social fraternities and sororities depends on whether or not these organizations understand and embrace the importance of diversity (Boschini & Thompson, 1998). Higher education institutions can provide a foundation for change in these organizations through the university culture, vision, and support systems.

A paucity of research exists regarding social sororities and their acceptance of members of other races and/or ethnicities. The lack of research addressing this topic and the need for further synthesis of the literature were significant rationale for conducting the study.

The purpose of the study was to explore the level of openness towards racial and ethnic integration among members of historically Black or White sororities. The social fraternity/sorority system may experience a decline in membership or may appear to be unprogressive if members do not accept people of other races or ethnicities in their organizations (Chang, 1999).

This study was formulated from the hypothesis that women from historically Black or White sororities who participate in multicultural training and events are more open to having a diverse membership in their organizations. To address this question, participants were chosen from a list of sorority members who participated in at least one multicultural activity on campus. Results suggest although sorority women may support diversity-centered recruitment on an individual basis, the general membership of their organizations may not support this type of recruitment.

Background

The United States population is rapidly becoming more diverse. In 2004, racial minorities represented 33% of the population (U.S. Department of Commerce, 2004). In 2004, Hispanic Americans were the fastest growing minority group with 14% of the ethnic population, while African Americans represented 12% of the population, Asian Americans represented 4% of the population, and American Indians/Alaska Natives represented 1% of the population. Overall, the
number of racial minorities is projected to increase to 39% of the U.S. population by the year 2020 (U.S. Department of Commerce, 2004).

The higher education environment is reflective of the growing diversity of society. By 2020, students from ethnically underrepresented populations will comprise 46% of U.S. college students (Seurkamp, 2007). Many colleges and universities acknowledge the existence of their increasingly diverse student body. However, some higher education institutions fail to either discuss issues of diversity or to develop a holistic approach focused on the academic and social needs of all undergraduate students (Anderson, 2007).

A common goal among institutions of higher education in the U.S. is to continually provide a campus environment that is welcoming of diversity and multiculturalism. There is an increasing emphasis on the importance of creating diversity-centered campus environments (American Council on Education, 1988; Boschini & Thompson, 1998; Rendón and Hope, 1996; Smith, 1989). These diversity-centered campus environments would include student organizations, such as sororities and fraternities. However, research suggests that sorority and fraternity members are not tolerant of diversity or multiculturalism in their organizations or on their campuses (Pascarella, Edison, Nora, Hagedorn, & Terenzini, 1996).

**Theoretical Framework**

A Critical Race Theory (CRT) framework was used in conducting a review of the literature and participant interviews. Matsuda (1991) defines CRT as “a jurisprudence that accounts for the role of racism in American law and that works toward the elimination of racism as part of a larger goal of eliminating all forms of subordination” (p. 1331).

CRT stems from the legal field, but the theory is also used to analyze inequalities in the educational setting (Ladson-Billings, 1995). Solorzano and Yosso (2001, p. 472-473) note CRT has five themes that create the foundational perspectives, research methods, and pedagogy in education. The first theme is the centrality of race and racism and their intersectionality with other forms of subordination. The second and third themes are the challenge to dominant ideology and the commitment to social justice. The fourth and fifth themes are the transdisciplinary perspective and the centrality of experiential knowledge.

CRT in education focuses on analyzing race and racism in education by placing both categories in a historical and contemporary context (Solorzano & Yosso, 2001). The centrality of experiential knowledge is critical to understanding, teaching, and analyzing racial subordination in education (Solorzano & Yosso). Experiential knowledge can be discovered through the use of narratives to understand people’s experiences, the exploration of organizational structures, and the examination of the practices and policies that perpetuate ethnic inequalities (Crenshaw, Gotanda, Peller, & Thomas, 1995; Daniel, 2007; Ladson-Billings, 2000; Solorzano & Villalpando, 1998).

Racial and ethnic integration of social sororities was examined through interviews. Specifically, the demographic structures of the participants’ chapters were examined using interview questions that focused on the members’ perceptions of ethnic and racial integration in their
organizations. Exploring the demographics of the sororities in this study was essential, as
geography plays a role in the racial and ethnic diversity of historically Black and White
sororities. Past studies indicate there may be race-based distinctions (i.e., sororities in the South
may be less diverse than sororities in the North) between sororities and fraternities in the

**Review of the Literature**

Social fraternities and sororities were founded to provide numerous benefits for their members.
These benefits included maintaining an environment to share ideas, building lasting friendships,
and providing support from a continuous set of student peers in a world that is separate from
living with parents (Sirhal, 2000). Ironically, these benefits were not originally targeted towards
all students.

**Racially Based Organizations and Critical Race Theory**

Historically, neither Black nor White social sororities and fraternities have always accepted
members of a different race into their organizations at the same rate as colleges and universities
(Sindanius, Levin, van Laar, & Sears, 2008). Overall, sororities and fraternities have remained
segregated in terms of race and ethnicity (Sindanius et al, 2008; Sirhal, 2000). Segregation in
these organizations may be further explained through CRT. According to CRT, race and racism
exist at the basic level of U.S. history and society (Crenshaw, 1990; Taylor, 1999; Valdes et al.,
2002). Taylor also indicated that race and racism are embedded in the structures and policies that
guide the everyday practices of higher education institutions. If U.S. higher education institutions
use historically racially biased structures and policies, some historically White fraternities and
sororities may be perceived as racist due to their lengthy history on these campuses. However, it
was this perception that led to the creation of other racially based fraternities and sororities
(historically Black, Latino/Latina, Asian, and Native American fraternities and sororities).

**Benefits of Diverse Student Organizations**

Undergraduate students who participate in diverse interactions with their peers experience
significant changes in their values, beliefs, and actions (Pascarella et al., 1996; Pascarella &
Terenzini, 2005). During students’ first three years of college, peer interactions outside of the
college classroom have positive impacts on their cognitive development. Negative impacts on
college students’ cognitive development arise when higher education environments shield
students from diversity-related experiences (Pascarella, et al., 1996). Therefore, as more students
from underrepresented populations enroll in historically White, Black, or Hispanic higher
education institutions, the need for colleges and universities to acknowledge and embrace
diversity increases.

Research indicates undergraduate students who participate in diverse interactions experience
various benefits (Antonio, 2001; Chang, 1996; Gurin, Dey, Hurtado, & Gurin, 2002; Hurtado,
Milem, Clayton-Pederson, & Allen, 1999; Pascarella et al., 1996; Hu & Kuh, 2003; Whitt,
Edison, Pascarella, Terenzini, & Nora, 2001). Academic benefits stem from diverse interactions
and result in increases in critical thinking (Pascarella et al., 2001), problem-solving capacities,
and valuing of diverse perspectives (Gurin et al., 2002). White students who choose to interact
with students from different backgrounds tend to experience positive outcomes (Chang, 1999;
Gurin, 1999; Hurtado et al., 1999; Orfield & Kurlaender, 2001). These positive outcomes range from important cognitive and learning outcomes to satisfaction and openness to others. White students who participate in ethnically or racially homogeneous experiences (e.g., participation in fraternal organizations) and who have limited interactions with students from different backgrounds experience a negative impact on educational outcomes (Smith & Schonfeld, 2000). In addition, students who are members of fraternal organizations (historically Black or White) experience an increase in feelings of victimization (Sindanius et al., 2008). Undergraduate students who participate in ethnically or racially homogeneous fraternal organizations are less likely to become involved in experiences that encourage social and political change (Chang, 1999; Sindanius et al., 2008).

Summary

The higher education environment is becoming more diverse. An increase in the number of students from underrepresented populations may result in recruitment problems for ethnically or racially homogeneous fraternal organizations. Using CRT, this study explores six sorority members’ perceptions of ethnic and racial diversity within their organizations.

Research Questions

The research questions that guided this study were:
1. What are sorority members’ (of both historically Black and White sororities) perceptions of inclusive, diversity-centered recruitment of potential new members?
2. What is the difference between historically Black and historically White sorority members’ views of current and future racial diversity within their organizations?

Methodology

For the purposes of this study, a qualitative research design was used to identify and to compare the perceptions of women in historically Black and White sororities regarding racial diversity within their sororities. Using an ethnographic interview approach, the researcher worked to understand how other people saw their experiences, learning from people rather than merely studying people (Spradley, 1979). The sorority women who participated in this study were advised of this approach, which helped to enhance the meaning of the data gathered during the research. The researcher is an alumna member of a historically White sorority. During data collection, efforts were made to minimize potential bias, including physical changes to the interview space and a reminder to the participants that the researcher was not serving in her sorority advisor role during the interview.

Site

At the time of the study, participants attended a mid-sized, public institution in the southern U.S. with an enrollment of slightly more than 15,000 students. For the 2005-2006 academic year, slightly over 13.3% of the students were African American, slightly over .5% were American Indian, slightly over 10% were Hispanic American, 1.06% were Asian/Pacific Islander, and slightly over 1.33% were international students. Approximately 30.4% of the students that attended this mid-sized institution received Federal Pell Grant funds, and the student-related
expenditures/full-time equivalent was $5,089 per student. This University was classified as a Carnegie Master’s Large institution and also had 22 academic programs ranging from architecture and related services to security and protective services (Educational Trust, 2007).

From 2003–2006, most of the potential new members who expressed interest in joining sororities were White. On average each year, out of a pool of 115 interested women there were eight to ten Hispanic Americans, one Asian American, and one African American participant(s) in fall formal or spring informal recruitment. Recruitment methods included individual sororities recruiting women at organization fairs during freshmen orientation, separate National Pan-Hellenic Council (NPHC) and National Panhellenic Conference (NPC) council Web sites featuring general information about recruitment, and the availability of NPC literature pertaining to fall recruitment through the student activities office.

Through these recruitment methods, most of the NPC sororities successfully recruited at least one Hispanic American woman annually. According to the University administration, four of the five NPC sororities had never had an African American member. The sorority that had an African American member was the newest sorority on campus and extended bids to almost all of the minority women who participated in recruitment.

Most NPHC sororities recruited members who were not freshmen. These sororities recruited members by hosting community service events and information sessions during the academic year. A majority of the NPHC sororities did not have a racially diverse membership. However, one of the four sororities had a White member in the past.

**Participants**
The six participants for this study were selected to provide different experiences from their respective sororities. The size of the historically White and historically Black sororities at this institution ranged from 50-60 members and 14-24 members respectively. Overall, slightly over 300 undergraduate women were involved in sororities at this institution during the 2005-2006 academic year.

Participants were selected according to the following criteria: membership in a historically Black or White sorority, race (Black or White), enrollment during the spring 2005 semester, and exposure to at least one multicultural training session or event. This last criterion was important to addressing the central hypothesis that women exposed to such activities would be more perceptive of chapter culture and members’ openness to a racially diverse organization.

In terms of ethnicity, four participants identified themselves as Black (one participant also identified herself as Nigerian), two participants identified themselves as White (one participant also identified herself as Hungarian). Four of the participants were seniors, one was a junior, and one was classified as a freshman. There were an equal number of historically Black and historically White sororities represented. Slightly over 80% of the participants were first-generation college students, and half of the participants earned a multicultural certification through the multicultural office on campus.
Interview Questions
The participant interviews were digitally recorded in a face-to-face session. The instrument was piloted with a doctoral student. This study utilized a series of eight questions designed to answer the research questions:

1. What is your affiliation and when did you become a part of the organization?
2. Why did you decide to become a member of your sorority?
3. Is your organization predominately White, Black, Hispanic, or is it multi-racial? If your organization is not, why do you think your organization primarily consists of one predominate race?
4. Why would people of a different ethnicity or race be attracted to your organization?
5. Do you think that your inter/national organization embraces (actively promotes) a diverse membership and diversity-based (multicultural) recruitment? Why or why not?
6. Do you think that your alumnae would embrace (actively promote) a diverse membership and diversity-based (multicultural) recruitment? Why or why not?
7. Would you like to have members of a different ethnicity or race in your organization? Why or why not?
8. Did you ever consider joining an organization where the majority of the members are a different race than you are?

The first two questions were utilized to gather background information and to discover if the participants were good candidates for the study. Questions three and four addressed the background of the social sororities of which the participants were members and the sororities’ level of diversity. The fifth and sixth questions examined whether or not the participants thought that their organizations actively promoted recruitment of racially diverse members. The final two questions addressed the issues of diversity and multiculturalism on a personal level for the participants.

Data Collection and Analysis
Prior to data collection, the study was approved by the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs at the institution where all research was conducted. Participants were chosen from the multicultural center’s event participation list and were compared to sorority rosters. All participants volunteered without expectation of favor. In addition, every participant signed a consent form, which authorized their participation and utilization of data gathered for the purposes of the study.

Data were gathered from the research subjects through two formal interviews (initial and follow-up interview) with each participant. The interviews for this study were conducted in the Office of Multicultural and International Student Services (Office of M.I.S.S.) and lasted an average of 30 minutes each (one hour per participant). Once the interviews were complete, data were transcribed. Researcher triangulation was utilized to analyze the data and to create common themes. The participants’ responses were preserved on an external drive for six months after completion of the study and were then destroyed.
Results

The following categories emerged from the participants’ responses: reasons for joining a sorority, sorority’s current level of diversity, diversity-based recruitment strategies, and the future of racial integration within the sorority.

Reasons for Joining a Sorority
All interviewees had different reasons for joining their particular sorority. Alicia, Elizabeth, Samantha, and Katie (pseudonyms) joined their sorority because of its morals and values. Some of the morals and values that emerged in most of the interviews were friendship, learning, leadership, academics, community service, and Christianity.

Other participants joined their sororities for other reasons. One woman joined her sorority for the benefits of becoming an alumna. Megan, a Black (Nigerian) member of a historically White sorority, talked about building her résumé and networking with her sorority sisters. She replied, “I wanted the scholarship opportunities and all that [sic]. And [sic]… it is nice to have someone who is always there.” Another participant, Natalie, stated that she joined her sorority because her freshman orientation leader convinced her to go through sorority recruitment and eventually became her big sister in the organization. She also commented, “They were considered the most prestigious [at] the time.” Samantha explained that she joined because “I like the sisterhood and that is my attraction to any sorority.”

Sorority’s Current Level of Diversity
Participants were asked about the predominate race of their organization and why the organization consisted of a predominate race. Megan, a Black (Nigerian) member of a historically White sorority, talked about building her résumé and networking with her sorority sisters. She replied, “I wanted the scholarship opportunities and all that [sic]. And [sic]… it is nice to have someone who is always there.” Another participant, Natalie, stated that she joined her sorority because her freshman orientation leader convinced her to go through sorority recruitment and eventually became her big sister in the organization. She also commented, “They were considered the most prestigious [at] the time.” Samantha explained that she joined because “I like the sisterhood and that is my attraction to any sorority.”

Sorority’s Current Level of Diversity
Participants were asked about the predominate race of their organization and why the organization consisted of a predominate race. Megan seemed proud to be one of the few Black members in her sorority. When asked about the predominate race of her sorority, she stated, “It is predominately White. It would take a very long time [for women of different races] to join my sorority.” Megan was proud to be the second Black member in her sorority and realized that this is not a common occurrence in historically White sororities on her campus. Megan’s sorority was one of the newest NPC sororities on campus and had the highest level of diversity. This level of diversity may be explained by CRT, which contends that race and racism are embedded in the structures and policies of higher education institutions and organizations (Taylor, 1999).

Natalie stated, “They [the past members] were definitely not choosing people [who had] an open mind. The people they were choosing [to become new members] were from their own [racial] group.” Alicia stated, “[My sorority is] predominately White. It was founded in [year] and they did not accept anyone else. I think that they [women in her sorority] are going to stick with what women before them have done in our chapter.” Alicia also produced the results of a survey that the national organization of her sorority conducted with the members in her chapter. One of the survey questions was, “Would you be willing to sit at the lunch table with a member of a different race?” Over 50% of the members stated that they would not be willing to do so. The results affected her deeply, and she asked me to conduct a diversity session with her chapter later that semester.

When the women from predominately Black sororities were interviewed, they offered similar answers. Samantha stated, “We are predominately African American, but [the racial makeup of
the sorority is posted on the Web site. We are a historically African American organization that uplifts African American women. There have been people who were not African American women that were in our organization.” Katie, who is a member of the same chapter as Samantha, offered “Our sorority is predominately Black, well our chapter is Black.”

Diversity-Based Recruitment Strategies
Participants from both historically White and Black sororities believed their organizations employed one or more diversity-based recruitment strategies, though no technique specifically focused on recruiting diverse individuals. Megan, a Black (Nigerian) member in a historically White sorority, added that she was a member of her sorority’s hip-hop dance skit for fall formal recruitment. Natalie stated, “I know that specific alumnae [in charge of formal recruitment] embrace multicultural recruitment.” Another participant, Samantha, stated that her [historically Black] sorority reaches beyond the boundaries of the United States [international chapters]. “I strongly believe that because the organization [seeks to create chapters outside of the United States], the organization will become more diverse. One of our principles is international awareness.”

Other participants commented on the publications that the inter/national organizations disperse to members and to potential new members. Natalie felt that the publications from her organization were centered on only one culture, “I get [my] sorority’s newsletter and it seems [homogeneous].” Alicia commented about the large picture of [a prominent, minority, government official] at her sorority’s headquarters. Members of the historically Black sororities also focused on their sorority’s national publications. Elizabeth explained, “The [name of publication] is geared towards African Americans, Cubans, Haitians, Hispanics, and Caucasians as well as other ethnicities.” Samantha stated that the national magazine of her organization “shows people that [name of organization] is not just about uplifting African Americans. It is about uplifting everyone.”

Future Racial Integration
While the members of the historically White sororities believed their organizations utilized diversity-based recruitment techniques, study participants did not feel their organization was open to having a diverse membership. Natalie concluded:

I think that my organization can racially integrate, and I think that they will, but I don’t think that they will do so from their own efforts. I hope that the organization won’t stick so much to their homogeneous group.

Natalie’s sorority was one of the NPC sororities that did not have any Asian American or Black members.

Alicia also commented, “Diversity always brings other viewpoints and may bring new ideas. Maybe an asset like a new project [i.e., diversity programming].” When asked if she thinks that the women in her sorority would think the same way that she does, she stated. “People have to want to change and [the women in my sorority] are not going to want to.”

Megan offered some insight on the experiences that she had during recruitment. “I sat down with [my sorority sisters] and they [did not focus on my race or ask me questions about my reason to join a White sorority]. They didn’t look at my skin color.” She also offered, “They accepted me
Participants from the historically Black sororities believed their organizations were open to diverse membership and that it would enhance their organizations. Elizabeth commented that diversity may enhance her organization by enabling her sorority members to become more open-minded. Katie also felt that diversity would benefit her organization, stating, “You never know what others could bring to your organization.”

**Discussion**

When using the CRT in an educational context, the researcher must analyze race and racism by placing both categories in a historical and contemporary context (Soloranzo & Yosso, 2001). The literature review provided the historical context and the participants’ interviews/narratives provided a glimpse into the contemporary context. CRT also requires the usage of experiential knowledge, which is critical to understanding, teaching, and analyzing racial subordination in education (Soloranzo & Yosso). In this study, experiential knowledge was attained through an analysis of the participants’ interviews/narratives.

The literature review and the interviews suggest race and racism may be two barriers that interested women encounter when choosing to join a homogenous sorority. Ethnically or racially homogenous sororities (both Black and White) may experience challenges to their dominant ideology when a woman who is not a member of the homogenous group expresses interest in their organization. Social justice may not be achieved when interested women encounter racism when expressing interest in a racially or ethnically homogeneous organization.

**Conclusion**

The purpose of this study was to explore the level of openness towards racial integration among historically Black and historically White sorority members. Four themes emerged from the research participants’ responses to eight interview questions: reasons for joining a sorority, sorority’s current level of diversity, diversity-based recruitment strategies, and the future of racial integration within the sorority. The two stated research questions are addressed below.

**Research Question One**

Nearly all participants were open to having racially diverse members in their organization, but this belief may have been influenced by their participation campus multicultural training and events. Although most of the members of historically Black sororities commented that they would be open to having diverse membership, most of the women from historically White sororities believed that members in their organizations may not support recruitment of racially diverse members.
Research Question Two
All participants indicated that their sorority chapter was either racially or ethnically homogeneous. Overall, all of the participants in the study indicated that they were open to having members of different races and ethnicities in their organization. These responses may be influenced by the fact that three out of the six women in the study gained a multicultural certification and made an effort to learn about different cultures. Two of the women from the historically White sororities indicated that the rest of the women in their sorority may not be open towards diverse recruitment, while none of the historically Black sororities shared this opinion.

Implications
As a result of the increasing level of diversity within the higher education environment, diversity-centered recruitment is essential for the survival of social fraternities and sororities. The inter/national officers of historically Black and historically White sororities should consider dispersing a survey to their undergraduate chapters based on diversity-centered recruitment. Such a survey may help organizations determine their undergraduate members’ openness towards having a more diverse membership. College and university sorority advisors should speak with the organizations they advise about the importance of diversity-centered recruitment. Recruitment chairs from historically Black and White chapters should explore hosting training sessions that are focused on the changing demographics of the college environment and how these changes may impact fraternity and sorority life as a whole. Finally, inter/national staff and campus advisors should encourage members from social sororities to take advantage of diversity-based campus activities and events. The sorority members’ involvement may result in an appreciation or interest in other races, ethnicities, or cultures.

Recommendations for Further Research
This study focused on the perceptions and experiences of three members of historically White sororities and three members of historically Black sororities regarding their level of openness towards racial integration in their organizations. This study was limited to the experiences of these six undergraduate women and employed a qualitative research design. Due to the limited nature of this study, further research should attempt to use a quantitative research design, increase the population size, examine two or more higher education institutions, and/or focus on the experiences of members from both historically Black and historically White fraternities.

Additionally, studies on the impact of diversity training in fraternity and sorority life may provide further insight into the level of openness that individual members have towards diversity-centered recruitment. In this study, members from historically White sororities indicated that while individual members may embrace diversity-centered recruitment, the entire chapter may not have the same level of openness. Another beneficial study would focus on sorority members who are open to diversity-centered recruitment and whether these members voice their opinions of diversity or choose to keep silent during recruitment meetings.
References


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ESTABLISHING BLACK IDENTITY AT A PREDOMINANTLY WHITE INSTITUTION: THE INFLUENCE OF A HYBRID PLEDGE/INTAKE PROCESS UTILIZING NGUZO SABA PRINCIPLES

Katherine D. Lloyd

Racial identity is a critical aspect of individual identity (Chavez & Guido-DiBrito, 1999). Using a case study approach, the author investigated what influence a hybrid pledge/intake program that utilized Nguzo Saba, a set of seven African principles, had on Black identity development. Four Black males\(^1\) who attended a predominantly White institution (PWI) participated in an interview about their new member process. Findings showed that the hybrid pledge/intake process paralleled Nguzo Saba, and that this process may have positively influenced their racial identity (Howard–Hamilton, 1997). Therefore, student affairs professionals could seek to use the Nguzo Saba principles as a framework in their practice with Black students to support their racial identity development.

Predominately White institutions (PWIs) may create a climate where Black male students face serious obstacles to success (Chavous, 2002). The purpose of this case study was to inform policy and practice regarding programming and interactions with Black male students. A review of major theoretical frameworks on Black identity development was paired with an historical overview of the Black fraternity to situate the study. An overview of Nguzo Saba, a set of seven African principles, is used as a framework for discussing the results from interviews with four members of a Black fraternity.

Black Students at Predominately White Institutions

African American students attending PWIs could have difficulty relating to their campus environment (Bruno, 2002). PWIs have a framework that is strongly influenced by English (Anglo-Saxon) culture and values (Cohen, 1998; Perkin, 1997; Thelin, 2004), and this framework could prove to be unsuccessful in supporting Black students (McEwen, Roper, Bryant, & Langa, 1996). Some student affairs professionals have historically relied upon a body of knowledge that supports and reinforces Eurocentric values (McEwen et al., 1996). This framework could lend itself to institutional racism. Institutional racism can be defined as:

\[
\text{[T]he collective failure of an organization to provide an appropriate and professional service to people because of their color, culture or ethnic origin which can be seen or detected in processes; attitudes and behavior which amount to discrimination through unwitting prejudice, ignorance, thoughtlessness and racist stereotyping which disadvantages minority ethnic people. (Macpherson, 1999, Racism section 6.34)}
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\(^1\) The Editors of Oracle recognize the low number of participants as a limiting factor in the validity of this case study. We feel the value in this study is that it explores using alternative theoretical principles in the development of fraternity men. In addition, we recognize the challenges of obtaining larger sample sizes of NPHC new members at PWIs, particularly when there are practices which do not directly parallel the new intake process. We would like this article to facilitate further discussion of methods to aid students in their development within a safe and nurturing environment. We do not encourage nor condone any hazing practices.
The racial climate (the attitudes and behaviors towards African Americans) at PWIs could be influenced by institutional racism (Solorzano, Ceja, & Yosso, 2000).

Some Black students at PWIs struggle with integrating to their campus environment (Chavous, 2002). Factors that contribute to this difficulty are non-inclusive programming, discriminatory policies, and negative perceptions from the White campus community (Gordon, Gordon, & Nembhard, 1994). Solorzano, Cela, and Yosso (2000) found that PWIs have racial microaggressions inside and outside of the classroom, which could be why Black students have difficulty integrating. Among these microaggressions are supervisibility, invisibility, and resentment for affirmative action. Furthermore, some Black students feel pressure to assimilate and are expected to be the Black voice (Fries-Britt & Turner, 2002; Lewis, Chelser, & Forman, 2000; Solorzano et al., 2000; Tatum, 1997). These factors could cause Black students to question their sense of place and identity (Lewis et al., 2000). Phinney and Traver (1988) stated that Black youth in predominately White communities question their racial identity due to the institutional environment. Black students at PWIs may not be receiving racially affirming answers to their identity questions.

**Student Development: Establishing Black Identity**

Harris (1995) stated that having a positive racial identity is challenging in an environment that collectively devalues persons of color. Some Black students need to be affirmed racially. An Afrocentric perspective can assist Black students in redefining who they are, thus developing a positive Black identity (Nobles, 1980).

Many college student developmental theories have their foundations in European psychology (Johnson, 2000). These theories work to address the developmental needs of White students, however, they fall short in their application to Black students (Johnson, 2000; McEwen et al., 1996). Chickering and Reisser (1993) stressed the importance of how students need a sense of self in a social, historical, and cultural context. A positive racial identity is enhanced by an awareness of one’s own cultural background, so students need a connection to the social world of their ethnic group. According to Nobles (1980), an Afrocentric perspective represents a self-affirming reawakening and rebirth of personal beliefs and behaviors based on African tenets. Black students should be encouraged to learn about their ancestors and history to aid in developing an Afrocentric identity and perspective.

**Nigrescence**

The theory of Nigrescence (Cross, 1995) is known as “the psychology of becoming Black” (p. 94). Nigrescence is a linear, five-stage, Black identity theory that focuses on an experiential, resocializing process of transforming oneself from a non-Afrocentric identity to an Afrocentric identity (Cross, 1995). It is also a process of “self-actualization under conditions of oppression” (Parham & Helms, 1985, p. 432). In short, Nigrescence is a process of African American self discovery.

The first stage in this process of discovery is Pre-Encounter. A student at the Pre-Encounter stage does not consider race as part of his or her identity (Cross, 1995). Black students at this stage are
more than likely to be in organizations that have few members of underrepresented populations (Mitchell & Dell, 1992; Parham, 1989).

The second stage is Encounter, where a momentous emotional event takes place. For example, this event may occur when a student is first personally confronted with overt racism. This event prompts the student to evaluate his or her cultural beliefs and values.

Immersion-Emersion is the third stage, where a student begins to evolve from a Eurocentric to an Afrocentric value system. In the first part of this stage, Immersion, the student immerses himself or herself into Blackness (e.g., joining a Black fraternal organization). In the latter part, Emersion, the student emerges “from the emotionality…and oversimplified ideological aspects of the immersion experience” (Cross, 1995, p. 110). This stage could encourage autonomous self-review, since one may be experiencing a pro-Black and anti-White perspective (Howard-Hamilton, 1997).

Internalization is the fourth stage in this process. Here the Afrocentric identity is accepted. This identity helps Black students defend and protect themselves from psychological insults, provides a sense of belonging, and provides a foundation on how to interact with other cultures and deal with situations (Cross, 1995). In addition, students at this stage have a sense of compassion for all oppressed people and are more sensitive to individuals at earlier stages.

The final stage is Internalization-Commitment, which is “an introspective phase in which there is a fusion of Afrocentric awareness with a desire to move from belief to action and empower others” (Taylor & Howard-Hamilton, 1995, p. 331). Here the student becomes more involved in creating social change.

Cross (1995) created the theory of Nigrescence to understand the Black experience. This theory can allow student affairs professionals to assess where Black students are developmentally and better understand their personal motivations (Howard-Hamilton, 1997). Student affairs professionals could nurture Black identity development via Nigrescence by incorporating the Nguzo Saba principles into their daily practice with students.

**Nguzo Saba**
The Nguzo Saba is a set of seven principles that are African in origin (Howard-Hamilton, 1997). The first principle, Umoja, refers to unity with African people. This principle is about a commitment to togetherness. Next is Kujichagalia, which means self-determination. This principle encourages one to define him/herself instead of letting others define who he/she is to become. The third principle is Ujima, which means collective work and responsibility (e.g., making one community member’s issue the whole community’s concern). Here, one works for the collective good. The fourth principle is Ujaama, which refers to cooperative economics (e.g., sharing one’s wealth and resources with the community). The fifth principle is Nia, which refers to purpose, which not only benefits oneself, but the entire community. The sixth principle is Kuumba, which means creativity. The last principle is Imani, which means faith. These principles work together to give meaning and direction to one’s life (Howard-Hamilton, 1997).
The Nguzo Saba principles could be used to help facilitate Black students’ progression through the stages of Nigrescence and “to redefine themselves in ways that are culturally congruent” (Robinson & Howard-Hamilton, 1994, p. 327). Put into practice, the Nguzo Saba principles could be incorporated into racially affirming experiences and programs for Black students. For example, men who join a Black fraternity may experience Umoja through brotherhood, because being a member of a Black fraternity creates a support network of men who are bonded by common principles. Similarly, Black students who join a Black fraternity may experience Ujima through community service (Dickinson, 1995).

**The Black Fraternity**

Black peer groups are essential in developing racial identity (Bagley, 1976). According to Taylor and Howard-Hamilton (1995) an Afrocentric identity is enhanced through involvement in a fraternity. Furthermore, those who are part of a fraternity tend to embrace a stronger, more positive racial identity. They “have higher levels of Immersion/Emersion and Internalization attitudes” (Taylor & Howard Hamilton, p. 333). Cross (1995) explained that people in those stages immerse themselves into “the world of Blackness” (p. 107) and accept an Afrocentric identity.

Many students join Black organizations as a way of entering the social world of their ethnic group and to provide a counterculture to the Eurocentric atmosphere of their campus (Cross, 1995). In Guiffrida’s (2003) study, “students who were from predominantly White environments, [found that] it was the [Black] student organizations that provided the important link they needed to connect with the Black community” (p. 314). At the Immersion-Emersion stage, students start to replace their old identity by embracing membership requirements, symbolic dress codes, rites, and rituals, which are a part of the Black fraternity experience (Cross, 1995; Dickinson, 2005). According to McKenzie (1990), Black fraternal organizations were created to provide leadership for the Black race and to be an academic and social support system, while incorporating aspects of racial identity and cultural heritage. The Black fraternity may be the organization that Black men need to connect to their community and culture (Harris, J. & Mitchell, 2008).

**Pledging and Intake**

In 1990, the Council of Presidents of the National Pan-Hellenic Council, Inc. (NPHC) created a Joint Position Statement against Hazing. The statement announced the elimination of pledging and instituted a revised membership development and intake process. Pledging was officially abolished as a nationally recognized process for membership in Black fraternal organizations. To be nationally recognized as a member of an organization, one must go through membership intake. Those who do not participate in membership intake may be referred to as “ghost members,” since they are not recognized by a national organization (Crenshaw, 2004). Although chapters have been mandated to use the intake process, some chapters continue to utilize the pledge process either during or after the intake process (Crenshaw, 2004; Kimbrough, 2003).

Both the abolished pledge process and the current membership intake process of Black fraternities have similarities to the rites of passage of West African tribes (Dickinson, 2005). In the rites of passage, initiates are separated from their parents and community. They share this journey to manhood with peers. The older men of the village teach the younger initiates, and the
initiates are given new names. Furthermore, they learn a new and secret language. This initiation process is to symbolize a rebirth. They go through physical training and learn songs, dances, and how to utilize sacred things. Throughout initiation, they undergo pressured situations (e.g., completing assigned tasks).

Those who experience the abolished pledge process and/or the membership intake process may go through similar experiences (Dickinson, 2005). They form a pledge line, where they receive pledge names and line numbers (Kimbrough, 2003). Pledges are separated from their community (e.g., social probation). Pledges are put into pressured situations (e.g., completing assigned projects on time) designed to facilitate their self-reflection and intellect. They learn about their national and local history. They work together and support each another in every task. They attend meetings where they learn rituals, songs, poems, and organization history. Pledges utilize their individual and group creativity, in conjunction with their resourcefulness, to successfully complete the assigned tasks. After completing their process, they become neophytes of their organization. They state an allegiance to the principles of the organization and are given the passwords, handshakes, signs, and secret signals of the organization (Dickinson, 2005).

The abolished practice of pledging has endured for many, because it is viewed as a necessary rite of passage (Kimbrough, 2003). The author posits that a Black student experiencing a hybrid of the abolished pledge process, without hazing practices, paired with the current membership intake process will gain a sense of self in a social, historical, and cultural context, since the processes are connected to African culture and traditions (Dickinson, 2005). A positive Black identity is enhanced by an awareness of one’s cultural background (Chickering & Reisser, 1993). Therefore, pledging a Black fraternity may aid in building a student’s cultural awareness.

Joining a Black Fraternity and Black Identity Development

Parks and Brown (2005) stated pledging may serve as a way to reconstruct identity. Further, the authors explain, “numerous psychological processes are put in place throughout the pledge process, which can alter the way individuals look at themselves” (p. 454). Joining a Black fraternity allows Black males to experience their African culture. A positive racial identity is enhanced by an awareness of one’s own cultural background (Chickering & Reisser, 1993). Taylor & Howard-Hamilton (1995) stated that “individuals who are affiliated with Greek letter organizations will...have higher levels of Immersion/Emersion and Internalization attitudes” (p. 333).

Method

The purpose of this study was to answer the question: what influence does joining a Black fraternity have on Black identity development? To answer this question, a qualitative case study was conducted. This study was an intensive, holistic description and analysis of joining (Merriam, 1998). The perspective of the students who pledged/went through intake is the foundation to understanding a process to membership (Elliott, Fischer, & Rennie, 1999). The purpose of this study was to positively inform policy and practice regarding programming and interactions with Black students. The author’s hope was that insights gleaned from this study can
directly influence policy and practice regarding programming and interactions with Black students.

**Participants**
Participants in this study were four undergraduate Black men. Three of the participants were 20-year-old juniors, and the other was a 21-year-old senior. Each participant grew up in an urban area and was involved in a number of student organizations and programs on campus (e.g., intramural sports, Black student groups, mentoring programs). They attended a large, urban, public, research-oriented PWI in the Northeast. The university had about 26,000 students, with 48% of them being males and about 9% of African-American heritage (National Center for Education Statistics, 2004). All participants were members of the same NPHC fraternity, chapter, and pledge/intake line.

This sample was chosen because the chapter combined aspects of the abolished pledging process in addition to the national membership intake process as a means to gain membership. Furthermore, the chapter dean (an older member in the chapter who mentors the pledges through the process) was mindful of incorporating aspects of African rites of passage into their process and educating them on their African heritage. The four men are members of one of the oldest NPHC chapters at this PWI. Many of the members of this campus-based chapter have been forerunners in their respective fields (e.g., medicine, science, public service, and civil/human rights) in their community. This chapter also has a long history of financially supporting the campus and community.

**Procedure**
A letter requesting volunteers was sent to the chapter that stated the purpose of the present study and the qualitative methods to be used. Those who were willing to participate contacted the author, a woman of color who is a member of a National Panhellenic Conference (NPC) sorority. Four members of the chapter volunteered. Participants took part in a demographic survey and a semi-structured interview about their college experience as a Black man and their hybrid pledge/intake process. The questions asked were designed to determine specifically how this process influenced their Black identity development. The interview questions were reviewed by an older member of the fraternity and a colleague who is an alumna member of a NPHC sorority to ensure clarity. The answers to the interview questions informed the understanding of how pledging/intake influences Black identity development.

According to Glaser & Strauss (1967), listening to students tell their story is important. Conducting interviews allowed the students to speak in private about the sensitive topic of pledging. To protect their privacy, pseudonyms were used for the names of the four participants (Elizworth, John Smith, FirstGen, and Solomon) and chapter (Beta Chi Mu). NPHC chapters at PWIs tend to have smaller new member groups, which presents a risk not inherent with other studies of fraternal organizations, where the number of members offers more anonymity. Therefore, to protect privacy, the total number of pledges on line was not stated. Interviews took place in a private, agreed upon location. Interviews were recorded and transcribed using escriptionist.com, then placed in a locked file.
Analysis
Content analysis of the interview transcripts yielded lists of common codes. A second reading of the transcripts produced more specific codes in the grounded theory tradition (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Examples of codes used were pledging activities and examples of Nigrescence. Segments of the text relating to each theme were then compiled. For each transcript excerpt, a textual analysis was used as a vehicle for uncovering broader themes and recurring patterns of meaning (Merriam, 1994). The themes developed from the study were the value of the hybrid pledge/intake process’s connection to West African tribal rites of passage, the importance of Nguzo Saba as a framework for this process, and its influence on Black identity development. Verification of themes was done by checking the analytic steps that lead to the themes and results (Berg, 2004). This analysis was appropriate for the present study, because it enabled an understanding of this particular process’s influence on Black identity development (Berg, 2004).

To ensure validity, member checks and peer debriefing were used. According to Guba and Lincoln (1991), it is reasonable that the researcher check the results with those who participate in the study. The students who participated in the study reviewed the data and found the results plausible. Peer debriefing aids in confirming the trustworthiness of the results (Spall, 1998). A colleague, who is an alumna of a NPHC sorority, served as a peer debriefer.

The theory of Nigrescence, coupled with the Nguzo Saba, was the theoretical framework used to make interpretations from the participant interviews. The objective was to determine if the Nguzo Saba principles could be used to help facilitate Black students’ progression through Nigrescence by creating programming and interactions, in the hybrid pledge/intake process, based on the Nguzo Saba principles.

Results and Discussion
Utilizing the abolished pledging process along with membership intake seems to have positively influenced the Black identity development of the four student participants. Recounted experiences revealed similarities to Nguzo Saba, which seems to have been used as a developmental framework within this chapter. The following results and discussion demonstrate these observations.

The Hybrid Pledge/Intake Process

African Rites of Passage
The hybrid pledge/intake process was the primary rite of passage. The men described the hybrid process as “intensive” and “arduous.” An older member in the chapter served as their dean or teacher throughout their process. The pledge line participated in many activities and tasks similar to the rites of passage (e.g., experiencing pressured situations like getting assigned tasks done on time). Pledges spent a number of hours learning information, which consisted of fraternal history, Black history, and poetry. They held each other accountable for studying the information. Elizworth stated they had to “make sure everyone knew all of the information.” Each volunteered community service hours through mentoring young boys at a local school. At the end, they participated in leadership training workshops as part of their national membership intake process.
Nguzo Saba: A Hybrid Framework for Pledging/Intake

The four men’s stories illustrated how their new member experiences paralleled Nguzo Saba. There were a number of African principles expressed in their process. Those principles were Umoja, Ujima, Kujichagalia, Nia, and Kuumba.

John Smith shared how he felt “a higher sense of brotherhood built on an understanding of where we’ve come from as...Black men, living as Black men on this campus.” Elizworth stated that, “one huge aspect of pledging is that there is no individual. There’s only a unit.” This is interpreted as an example of Umoja (unity). Another example of Umoja was how FirstGen stated that through pledging [intake]:

You’re realizing that whatever you do, impacts someone else. That’s when you really realize that I gotta depend on this person next to me, this person in front of me or whatever is the situation. I think that’s what I really – that’s what I got from [pledging]. This sense of accountability is also an example of collective work and responsibility (Ujima).

Nia (a purpose that not only benefits self, but the collective community) is a high value that was stressed in their hybrid pledge/intake process. Solomon stated, “it’s love for all mankind and so we would stress giving back to our community, so that was one aspect of it, the community service.” This is why they spent many hours mentoring Black youth in their community.

Solomon also illustrated the principle of Kujichagalia (self-determination). He stated that:

If anything the process gave me a new look on how, when we get into situations, how we – a lot of the times we have the capacity, and we have the ability to really get through it and a lot of us don’t know that, but we really have it deep down and it’s engrained in us.

We just have to be able to pull it out.

FirstGen shared, “but it’s – a lot of times it was all mind over matter - just pushing yourself...But ultimately, I think I am a better man from it today...I mean I’m proud of who I am and what I’ve come from.” FirstGen understood that at times there are going to be tasks (e.g., studying for an exam) that he may not want to do. He realized that he might need to push himself to get tasks done. Furthermore, he attributed a positive definition of who he is as a Black man to the hybrid pledge/intake process. With regard to the group, he believed the process helped give each member a heightened sense of self-confidence. John Smith added that:

Well, understanding rather that as a Black male there are certain things in my life that I’m gonna have to deal with, and I can either make them work for me or I can have them not work for me and then learning to choose the better of the two.

Solomon shared how the end of their journey to membership concluded with their probate show, where they publicly celebrated the completion of their process, which is an example of Kuumba (creativity). Solomon said that, “probating out the public display of showing how we were down, and we gotten through it and we were at the end, I think that was very memorable.”

The Developmental Influence of the Hybrid Pledge/Intake Process

The pledge/intake process these four men experienced seemed to have positively influenced their Black identity development. The process gave them a sense, or a stronger sense in some cases, of their cultural background. Chickering and Reisser (1993) noted this is important, because a positive Black identity is enhanced by a connection and knowledge of Black/African culture. John Smith stated that “[the process] gives you a far better sense of the African Diaspora and my
lineage as it pertains to that.” FirstGen stated that he “think[s] in some ways I can say it made me more aware of my history and just more confident, and just prouder.” A positive Black identity incorporates pride in one’s ancestors and history (Chickering & Reisser, 1993). Their process enhanced the pride they had in their history and culture. Furthermore, the excerpts from the transcripts illustrated how their process possibly influenced them at three stages of Nigrescence (Immersion-Emersion, Internalization, and Internalization-Commitment).

John Smith and Elizworth illustrated the third stage of Nigrescence, Immersion-Emersion. A student at this stage begins to immerse himself into a “world of Blackness” (Cross, 1995, p. 107). He joins organizations in which membership is comprised of Black students and/or organizations that support the Black community. John Smith stated he:

Joined my fraternity…for my community, because some of the most organized men that I’ve ever met in my entire life were men in this organization. These are men that I’ve seen out in my community working for the betterment of my community. And then as I researched the organization, I learned that…it’s about the betterment of [Black] men.

Elizworth and FirstGen shared that they joined Beta Chi Mu for a support network. Elizworth said he, “didn’t really have that support network, and I looked for it in a fraternity, especially a fraternity full of Black males.” FirstGen shared that he joined, “simply for the brotherhood…And just the support and love that I get from every brother…[that] is what made me wanna join.” The Black fraternity was created as a support system for Black men (Kimbrough, 2003) and these four young men received that support.

FirstGen and Elizworth also gave voice to an illustration of Internalization. At this stage, one accepts an Afrocentric identity. FirstGen shared that the pledging [intake] process had, “made me more confident about being Black. It made me more confident about being Black on this campus. It just made me more secure in who I am as a person.” In addition, a student at this stage has compassion for all oppressed people. Elizworth’s reflected this compassion when he stated that he wants to “align Black people with Vietnamese people that are being subjected to…[the same] oppression”.

The last stage in this process of “becoming Black,” is Internalization-Commitment (Cross, 1995). At this stage, one uses his Afrocentric beliefs and moves into action to empower others. John Smith shared how the pledging [intake] process had:

Helped me to really – and when I say helped, not necessarily in a mental sense, but in a more active sense, a more proactive sense, it’s helped me to really understand the need for getting more African-American males involved, and then creating such a firm support system that they wanna stay here and then graduate. And then after that, graduate on time and then after that, graduate with honors.

In addition, according to Howard-Hamilton (1997) these principles can “help people gain direction and meaning in their lives” (p. 22). This was illustrated when John Smith stated that the pledging [intake] process “really helped me recognize the need in my community and it’s also helped me to better understand my place in the community and my role”. John Smith attributed his passion to getting involved with Black college males to the pledging [intake] process.

The hybrid pledge/intake process is naturally Afrocentric. National Pan-Hellenic Council organizations’ choices regarding…pledge practices…have direct links to African religious
practices, secret societies…, aesthetics, philosophy, values, and educational norms” (Dickinson, 2005, p. 11). Furthermore, Dickinson (2005) goes on to state that, “there are African antecedents of many of the [National Pan-Hellenic Council] pledge rituals” (p. 15). Dickinson references Dr. Asa Hilliard’s (1986) work on ancient African educational systems. “The components of the now-[abolished] pledge rituals mirror the categories, and quite possibly the purposes, of the “Mystery Schools” of Egypt and the initiation systems of West Africa. (Dickenson, 2005, p. 15). Elizworth stated how the pledge [intake] “process that I had was…charged with emotion…it was an awakening on a lot of levels.” This awakening is consistent with an Afrocentric worldview. An Afrocentric worldview represents a reawakening of personal beliefs and behaviors (Nobles, 1980).

Summary
According to Taylor and Howard-Hamilton (1995) an Afrocentric identity is enhanced through involvement in a fraternity, and those who are part of a fraternity tend to embrace a stronger, more positive racial identity. Furthermore, they observed, individuals who are affiliated with fraternities and sororities “have higher levels of Immersion/Emersion and Internalization attitudes” (Taylor & Howard Hamilton, p. 333). Parks & Brown (2005) stated the pledging process may serve as a way to reconstruct identity noting that “numerous psychological processes are put in place throughout the pledge process, which can alter the way individuals look at themselves” (p. 454).

The hybrid process aided these four students toward a healthier sense of self-identity within a social, historical, and cultural context. The intentional addition of the Nguzo Saba principles certainly facilitated this process. Overall, the six to seven week hybrid pledge/intake process the four participants in this case study underwent appeared to connect them with both a better sense of Black identity and with Afrocentric values.

Limitations
Using a qualitative case study and a convenience sample did not allow for generalizations beyond the four participants (Berg, 2004). Conclusions drawn from this study only speak to the experiences of the four student participants. The instrument used to check for validity (member checks) is also a limitation of the present study. Hamersley & Atkinson (1995) stated “we can not assume that anyone is a privileged commentator on his or her own actions, in the sense that truth of their account is guaranteed” (p. 229). Other methods (e.g., triangulation) should have been used to check for validity.

The students’ level of Nigrescence was not measured before they started the hybrid pledge/intake process. In the future, a measurement such as the Cross Racial Identity Scale (Vandiver, Cross, Worrell, & Fhagen-Smith, 2002) should be carried out prior to beginning the hybrid pledge/intake process.

Future Studies
Future studies comparing the influence of the pledging process versus the intake process in promoting Nigrescence among Black students could be conducted and would benefit from inclusion of both fraternity and sorority members, of members from different NPHC organizations and chapters, and of pledge lines from numerous PWIs.

**Recommendations for Student Affairs Professionals**

PWIs may not be providing the social support needed for Black students required for them to succeed (Davis, 1995). The author posits that student affairs professionals using Eurocentric (focused on European culture and beliefs) developmental theories when working with Black students may hinder racial identity development.

This study indicates that using the Nguzo Saba principles in a hybrid pledge/intake process may have positively influenced the participants’ Black identity development. According to Chavez and Guido-DiBrito (1999), “identity development consists of an individual’s movement toward a highly conscious identification with their own cultural values, behaviors, beliefs, and traditions” (p. 41). Beta Chi Mu’s hybrid pledge/intake process provided the four students a greater sense of self. In addition, according to Elizworth, the hybrid process created an “awakening on a lot of levels” for them, which is congruent with an Afrocentric worldview (Nobles, 1980).

Student affairs professionals should be concerned with the application of European psychology and Eurocentric-based student development theories to their work with Black students. Using those theories could stifle Black students’ racial identity development (McEwen et al., 1996). Black identity development is “an important factor for [student] affairs practitioners to recognize when they are considering ways to enhance the educational environment for African American males” (Taylor & Howard-Hamilton, 1995, p. 331).

The Nguzo Saba principles can be a framework for programming and interacting with students. Student affairs professionals could nurture Black students’ racial identity development by using the Nguzo Saba in everyday practice. This practice can be accomplished by encouraging students’ interest in joining Black student organizations or by volunteering in the Black community. Additional recommendations specifically related to each principle are outlined in Table 1.
Table 1
Programs & Interactions Based in the Nguzo Saba

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Program &amp; Interaction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Umoja</td>
<td>Unity with African people</td>
<td>Promote joining Black student organizations (e.g., Black fraternity)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kujichagalia</td>
<td>Self-determination: To define oneself</td>
<td>Encourage students to not let society define who they should be (e.g., not letting a professor discourage him/her from becoming an engineer)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ujima</td>
<td>Collective work and responsibility</td>
<td>Create projects that require teamwork (e.g., have students work in committees)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ujaama</td>
<td>Cooperative economics</td>
<td>Encourage students to financially support their community (e.g., shopping at Black-owned businesses.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nia</td>
<td>Purpose that benefits not just the self but the collective community as well</td>
<td>Promote causes that impact the Black community (e.g., equality in education)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kuumba</td>
<td>Creativity</td>
<td>Provide students programs to express their creativity (i.e., coffee houses, poetry jams, etc.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Imani</td>
<td>Faith</td>
<td>Support their spiritual development (i.e., attending church with them)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

References


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