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A STUDY OF THE ATTITUDES OF SELECTED AFRICAN AMERICAN  
STUDENTS TOWARD LEADERSHIP & BLACK GREEK LETTER  
ORGANIZATIONS

by  
Elora L. Crump

A Thesis

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the  
Masters of Arts in Higher Education Administration  
of  
The Graduate School  
at  
Rowan University  
September 20, 2007

Approved by \_\_\_\_\_  
Dr. Burton R. Sisco

Date Approved September 20, 2007

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## ABSTRACT

Elora L. Crump

### A STUDY OF THE ATTITUDES OF SELECTED AFRICAN AMERICAN STUDENTS TOWARD LEADERSHIP & BLACK GREEK LETTER ORGANIZATIONS

2006/07

Dr. Burton R. Sisco

Master of Arts in Higher Education Administration

The participants in this study consisted of 76 African-American students at Rowan University in the spring 2005 semester. The purpose of the study was to replicate the research of Kimbrough (1995) exploring the attitudes of two groups of selected African American students regarding the impact of Black Greek organizations on the development of personal leadership. Subjects completed a survey indicating their level of leadership skills and activities, attitudes of Black Greek organizations and their leadership, along with demographic information. Members of Black Greek organizations (BGOs) and non-members were compared to determine if there were attitudinal differences. The information collected from the participants was analyzed using descriptive statistics. Findings from the study supported Kimbrough's research. Namely, African American non-members and members of Black Greek organizations shared similar views on the importance of leadership, and leadership status.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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Rita- I do not have any regrets about how our relationship has grown. Thank you for always believing in me even when I could not.

Jimi- The pursuit of God is the only protection from bondage. Be encouraged in knowing that the enemy has already been defeated and the victory is already yours!

Mr. C. - Forgiveness is a powerful thing. Thanks for all of your encouragement and praise.

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER		PAGE
ONE	INTRODUCTION.....	1
	Statement of the Problem.....	4
	Significance of the Study.....	5
	Purpose of the Study.....	6
	Assumptions and Limitations.....	6
	Definition of Important Terms.....	7
	Research Questions.....	8
	Organization of the Study.....	8
TWO	LITERATURE REVIEW.....	9
	History of Black Greek Organizations.....	10
	Alcohol and Other Negative Aspects.....	12
	Positive Perceptions.....	14
	Academics.....	14
	National Pan-Hellenic Council.....	16
	The Divine Nine.....	17
	Leadership and Black Greek Letter Organizations.....	20
	Summary of the Literature Review.....	22
THREE	METHODOLOGY.....	26
	Context of the Study.....	26
	Population and Sample Selection.....	26
	Instrumentation.....	27
	Data Collection.....	27
	Data Analysis.....	28
FOUR	FINDINGS.....	29
	Profile of the Sample.....	29
	Demographic Information.....	30
	Research Questions.....	31
	Research Question 1.....	31
	Research Question 2.....	34
	Research Question 3.....	35
	Research Question 4.....	36
FIVE	SUMMARY, DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....	40
	Summary of the Study.....	40
	Purpose of the Study.....	40

Methodology.....	41
Data Analysis.....	42
Findings and Discussion.....	42
Conclusions.....	45
Recommendations for Further Research.....	46
REFERENCES.....	48
APPENDIX A: Institution Review Board Disposition Form.....	50
APPENDIX B: Consent/Instrumentation.....	52

## LIST OF TABLES

TABLE		PAGE
4.1	Gender of All Participants.....	30
4.2	Classification of Non-Members.....	30
4.3	Classification of BGO Members.....	31
4.4	BGO Members' and Non-Members' Response "Do you consider yourself a leader?".....	31
4.5	BGO Members' and Non-Members' Response "Rate your leadership skills".....	32
4.6	BGO Members' and Non-Members' Response "Are you a member of any campus/community organizations?".....	32
4.7	BGO Members' Response "Has membership in a Black Greek organization improved your leadership skills?".....	33
4.8	Non-members' Response "Would membership in a Black Greek organization improve your leadership skills?".....	33
4.9	BGO Members' Response "Indicate your degree of participation or leadership in campus/community groups.".....	34
4.10	Non-Members' Response "Indicate your degree of participation or leadership in campus/community groups.".....	34
4.11	BGO Members' Response to Likert Statements Regarding the Value of Leadership.....	35
4.12	Non-Members' Response to Likert Statements Regarding the Value of Leadership.....	36
4.13	BGO Members' Response to Likert Statements Regarding the Value of Black Greek Organizations.....	37
4.14	Non-members' Response to Likert Statements Regarding the Value of Black Greek Organizations.....	39



## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

Becoming a member of a Greek-lettered organization was furthest thought from my mind when I started college. Throughout my freshman year, I continued to participate in the service organizations from high school because I cared about volunteer work and community service—not because I wanted to “be Greek.” I did not know about Greek-letter organizations or even the Greek alphabet. I knew little beyond what I learned about in math and the movie *School Daze*. I thought Greek-letter organizations were all about partying. However, in my freshman year of college I learned just how distorted my perceptions and attitudes about Greek life were.

First, I learned that all Greek-letter organizations were not the same. There were social Greek organizations and service Greek organizations. Second, I learned the subtle distinctions between the two. The social Greek-letter organizations, which I thought were all about partying and socializing, conducted mandatory service projects, and the service Greek-lettered organizations had a social life too. It sounds very elementary, but I thought each had a singular purpose. I started going to different functions sponsored by both groups to experience the differences first-hand.

I attended two parties sponsored by predominantly White Greek fraternities during my first semester. What an experience! I was overwhelmed because it was something that I had never experienced before. I had been told the Greeks owned their

own houses, therefore, campus rules did not apply. Needless to say that boosted my excitement even more. The fact that upperclassmen had extended the invitation was a bonus!

Luckily, the upperclassmen who invited me to the party told me not to get dressed up, and to wear old sneakers. I found myself going through a side door that led straight to the basement. The ceiling was low, the stairway tight and winding, and the smell of cigarettes and stale beer was in the air. People were squished like sardines in the tight basement drinking warm beer, smoking cigars and cigarettes, dancing in puddles of sweat and beer, making out in one corner under leaky pipes, while someone vomited. The next party I attended by one of these fraternities was the same experience except that it was a different house. The scene was similar, and I realized this was not my idea of a good time

The next time some upperclassmen asked me if I wanted to go to a Greek party I said no thank you. When asked why, I told them about my experiences and they laughed. They told me I went to the “wrong” Greek parties. It was during a homecoming event that I experienced a party sponsored by a predominantly Black fraternity. I quickly learned that Black Greeks did not have houses because they did not have the membership that predominantly White organizations had to afford the cost of a house.

The party was preceded by a step show where all of the nine Black fraternities and sororities competed. Alumni and current students flooded the gymnasium. There were so many color combinations and symbols that I had never seen before. There were also many strange noises coming from the people who were Greek. When the host of the step show did the “roll call” of the different Black Greek organizations, I learned the

hand gestures and “calls” of each organization. It was utterly and completely different than the party experience I had participated in earlier in the semester.

The week following that weekend I went back to academic business. However, I now knew that some of the upperclassmen were part of Black Greek-letter organizations. I also learned that members of these organizations held service programs and projects. The campus Office of Student Development hosted and co-sponsored many service projects with different Black Greek organizations. My view of Greek life had changed dramatically. By the end of my freshman year of college I was entertaining the idea of becoming Greek.

I started researching all of the different Black sororities during the summer of 2000. I realized that all of them were public service driven. Many members of these organizations had contributed greatly to Black history. I was amazed to find out that Martin Luther King Jr., Aretha Franklin, Ossie Davis, Ruby Dee, Lena Horne, Eleanor Roosevelt, Nikki Giovanni, Dick Gregory, Coretta Scott King, Jesse Jackson, John H. Johnson, Thurgood Marshall, and W.E.B. Dubois were all members of one of the nine Black Greek-letter organizations.

By the beginning of my sophomore year I picked two sororities to consider joining. However, I learned from upperclassmen to keep my interest a secret. They shared stories about freshman professing what organizations they wanted to join. These students later changed their minds and decided on another organization, but they were not well received by members. I was also told to attend programs given by all organizations to avoid assumptions that I was interested in a certain organization by both Greek and non-Greek members.

I conducted even more research on the two organizations that I was considering. The more I read the more one organization stood out. I learned that all the professional women I looked up to on campus were members of this organization. All of these women I hoped to emulate as I matured personally and professionally.

In the spring of 2001, I pledged the sorority of my choice. Like anything in life, I endured hardship and optimism. I went through some growing pains during my undergraduate years. Through the leadership, support, and mentoring of some of my older sorority sisters, I grew personally and professionally inside and outside of the organization.

#### Statement of the Problem

When thinking of Greek life, some people have a tendency to group all Greek letter organizations into general stereotypes. These stereotypes may vary depending on different variables such as culture, classification, media, or if the Greek organization has a public service or socially based mission. These stereotypes include but are not limited to: excessive partying and drinking, extreme hazing, and overtly displaying egotistical attitudes towards non-Greek members.

All stereotypes may not necessarily be negative when thinking about Greek-letter organizations. Some people may have family members or close friends who are Greek. Thus some people actually see Greek-letter organizations in a positive manner. They may have heard a family member or role model speaking about Greek life in a favorable way, attended programs or events with them, or witnessed the camaraderie amongst members.

Greek-letter organizations are located on many colleges and universities across the United States. Like other non-Greek organizations, they help to create social activities

and develop leadership skills for college students. They contribute to the growth and development of not only the college community but also the general community. While providing a social outlet on campus through various programs, Greek-letter organizations also sponsor service projects for the benefit of community. These projects often include highway cleanup, blood, food, and clothing drives, reading to children, voter registration, and hosting health fairs.

To date, limited research has been conducted on Greek life at Rowan University and no studies have been conducted investigating the self-assessment of leadership skills, activities, and the value of leadership between Greek and non-Greek members.

#### Significance of the Study

Greek life is the subject of much scorn in the media. On college campuses administrators periodically converse about the significance of Greek-letter organizations. Greek-letter organizations can be seen as an asset or a detriment depending on the climate, the school, and the reputation of the Greeks on a particular campus. Some colleges and universities do not recognize Greek-letter organizations; while others provide much support and encouragement.

This study investigated selected African American students' attitudes toward leadership and Black Greek-letter organizations on the Rowan University campus. Rowan administrators could benefit by being able to gauge students' attitudes regarding leadership and Greek organizations. Moreover, members of the institution can see the impact Greek organizations have on non-Greek students and the campus community in general.

### Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to replicate the research of Dr. Walter M. Kimbrough (1995) at Rowan University. Kimbrough explored the attitudes of selected African American students regarding the impact of Greek-letter organizations on the development of personal leadership skills at a predominantly White institution in the Midwest. This study sought to see if similar patterns existed on a predominantly White institution located in the eastern part of the United States.

### Assumptions and Limitations

It is assumed by the researcher that all subjects in the study were completely honest in their reporting. It is also assumed that all selected students had some knowledge of Black Greek-letter organizations (BGO). In addition, it is assumed that some of the subjects surveyed had family members who are affiliated with BGOs. If selected students had family members who are affiliated with a BGO, this could present potential biases. These participants may have developed views about Greek life based on their relationship with family members. These students may be more apt to view Black Greek-letter organizations in a positive manner.

The researcher of this study is also a member of a BGO. In addition, many of the participants knew the researcher was a member of a BGO. Many of the subjects also attended Rowan University during the same time period as the researcher. The purity of the answers given by the participants could potentially be biased given personal knowledge of the researcher.

It is assumed that strong similarities would be found in both groups regarding their personal views about leadership skills. It is believed participants in both groups viewed their leadership skills in a highly positive manner. Moreover, the researcher assumed that members of BGOs held more leadership positions on campus and in the community than their non-member counterparts. Lastly, it is assumed BGO members would find more value in Black Greek organizations than non-members.

There are a few limitations regarding this study. The sample size was selected to parallel the groups used in Kimbrough's (1995) study. The researcher in this study is a member of a Black Greek organization which may cause some bias. There was a two year lapse between the time the data were collected and reported. Students' attitudes concerning Greek organizations may have changed during the intervening period.

#### Definition of Important Terms

- 1) Black and African-American: Terms used interchangeably to describe all persons of African American descent and persons of African, Haitian and other Caribbean (non Hispanic), and Cape Verde descent.
- 2) Black Greek-letter Organization (BGO): Any of the nine historically Black fraternities or sororities that fall under the National Pan-Hellenic Council at Rowan University ([www.rowan.edu](http://www.rowan.edu)).
- 3) Fraternity: A Greek-letter organization that is exclusively male or co-educational at Rowan University.
- 4) Greek-letter Organization: Any all male, all female, or co-ed organization that is recognized under the umbrellas of Interfraternity Council (IFC), National Pan-Hellenic

Conference (NPC), or National Pan-Hellenic Council (NPHC). All Greek organizations on the campus of Rowan University fall under the Inter Greek Council (IGC).

5) Sorority: A Greek-letter organization that is exclusively female at Rowan University.

### Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

- 1) Do similarities exist between Black Greek members and non-members and their self-assessment of leadership?
- 2) Do Black Greek members hold more leadership positions than non-Greek members?
- 3) What are attitudes of selected Black Greek members and non-Greek members regarding self-reported value of leadership?
- 4) Do selected Black Greek members and non-Greek members find value in BGOs?

### Organization of the Study

Chapter two provides a brief history of Greek-letter organizations, a brief overview of Black Greek organizations, and recent literature related to different aspects of this culture. Chapter three provides a description of the methodology used for the study. It describes the context of the study, population and sample, instrumentation, data collection procedures and how the data were analyzed. An overview of the findings is presented in chapter four. Finally, chapter five includes a summary of the study, a discussion and the interpretation of the findings, along with conclusions and recommendations for further research.



## CHAPTER TWO

### LITERATURE REVIEW

Greek-letter fraternities and sororities have played a major role in American college life since 1776. Phi Beta Kappa was founded on December 5, 1776, by students at the College of William and Mary in Williamsburg, Virginia. The oldest college in the South, William and Mary had educated many of the Virginians who were to distinguish themselves in the Revolutionary War and in the establishment of the government of the United States (<http://www.lssaa.wisc.edu/pbk/faq.shtml>).

Students during this era were educated in Greek, Latin, and Hebrew, which is why organizations adopted Greek lettering, eventually becoming known as “Greek organizations.” The Greek letters selected also had a deeper, more secret meaning to the organization. In addition to secret mottos, there were secret ceremonies and handshakes, membership badges, and oaths. These traditions are apart of all Greek organizations today.

Kappa Alpha Society was the first non-academic fraternity founded at Union College in New York on November 26, 1825. Although very similar to Phi Beta Kappa in practice, Kappa Alpha focused upon building friendships and social activities. Two other organizations, Sigma Phi and Delta Phi followed shortly after in 1827. Sigma Phi became the first organization to expand to another college campus therefore gaining “national”

status. By the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, the same Greek organizations multiplied on college campuses across the United States.

Starting in the 1850s, organizations for women were formed on college campuses. The Adelpian Society was founded at Wesleyan College in Macon, Georgia. However, female organizations did not start to assume Greek names until the 1870s. Alpha Delta Pi and Pi Beta Phi were the first female organizations to use the Greek lettering system. The terms “women’s fraternities” or “fraternities for women” was used until 1882 when Gamma Phi Beta adopted the word “sorority” (<http://www.alphadeltapi.org/contentmanager/page.asp?webpageid=199>).

#### History of Black Greek Organizations

Black college fraternities and sororities emerged in the early 1900s. Unlike their white counterparts, the black organizations have remained very active at the graduate level and have played a major role in the cultural, social, and civic life of their communities.

Kimbrough (2003) provides an account of the Black fraternal movement in the United States. His work also includes a history of those groups that attempted to organize as a Greek organization, but failed.

The first attempt by African Americans to organize a fraternity took place in Bloomington, Indiana in 1903 with the forming of Alpha Kappa Nu. The organization only existed for approximately 14 months. Another group, Kappa Alpha Nu was formed in October of 1911. The name was a tribute to the students of 1903. The fraternity changed its name in April of 1915 to Kappa Alpha Psi.

Sigma Pi Phi is technically the oldest Black Greek organization (BGO). Sigma Pi Phi fraternity was formed in 1904 in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania by a group of physicians and dentists, for college and professionally educated African Americans. The organization brought educated African American men together for fellowship, community-service, and leadership. The organization gradually spread across the United States and included as members many prominent men including Martin Luther King, Jr. WEB Dubois, Arthur Ashe, Ron Brown, Earl Graves of *Black Enterprise Magazine*, and John Johnson of *Ebony Magazine*. Today, most prominent African American men are members including college presidents, congressmen, cabinet members, and national figures.

The group continues to be selective in choosing membership because it is important that each member lives up to the highest ideals. The fraternity avoids publicizing itself, being content to keep numbers small. In fact, the number of members nationally is only about 3000. Because the membership is aging, the organization has recently expanded, forming its first chapter outside the United States in Liberia. This chapter or Boule' as it is called, is no longer in existence due to civil unrest in that country.

Sigma Pi Phi has recently started a new chapter in the Bahamas because of the large number of men educated in the United States. The organization continues to be very exclusive and careful about expanding and is therefore, not commonly found on college campuses both nationally and internationally.

## Alcohol and Other Negative Aspects

Pace and McGrath (2002) have conducted research on the excessive use of alcohol in Greek life. Their research was launched in April of 1999 using undergraduate students from a mid-western public institution of higher education. Three hundred and twenty-one students were chosen in the academic year 1998-1999 based on involvement or membership in student organizations with high percentages of Greek and/or student volunteers.

Pace and McGrath (2002) sent requests to participate in the study to all Greek organizations on the campus, the main volunteer office, the student government organization, and a campus affiliated religious organization. The researchers asked the students during the respective regular meetings to complete the *Core Alcohol and Drug Survey*. All organizations, except seven of the twelve Greek organizations, agreed to participate in the study. Eighty-six percent of the total population completed the survey.

The breakdown by gender was 116 males and 190 females. One hundred and five lived on campus and 173 lived off campus. Thirty-eight were first year students, 97 were sophomores, 102 were juniors, 77 were seniors, six were graduate students, and one was other. The results of the survey indicated that Greek students drank more than students who volunteer. However, there was no difference in side effects between Greeks and volunteers.

Eberhardt, Rice, and Smith (2003) conducted similar research comparing Greek and non-Greek men and women. The study was conducted at a church-affiliated, liberal arts college in the southern part of the United States. The total enrollment was approximately 1,000 students with 24% of the students belonging to predominantly

White Greek organizations. There were 247 students who agreed to participate in the study. One hundred and nine participants were Greek, and 138 were non-Greeks. Ninety-three students were male, and 154 were female. There were 62 freshman, 41 sophomores, 79 juniors, and 65 seniors that volunteered for the study ranging in age from 18-24. Two hundred and eleven students were White, 29 were Black, and 7 were Asian/international students. None of the Greeks in the student body at the time the study was conducted belonged to a historically Black Greek organization. There were 159 on-campus participants, and 88 that lived off campus.

The instruments used in the study were *The National College Health Assessment* (NCHA), and *The Academic Integrity Survey* (AIS). The NCHA measures alcohol abuse and sexual behavior. The AIS questions student attitudes concerning cheating and types of cheating behavior. Participants were found through professors, athletic staff members, and Greek-letter organizations, suggesting a convenience sample was employed.

The results of the study indicated that Greeks were more likely to have problems related to alcohol abuse, and were more likely to fabricate sources. However, both Greeks and non-Greeks were similar when it came to negligence in safe-sex practices and cheating on exams. Greek men and Greek women both reported higher alcohol use than non-Greek counterparts. However, Greek men reported higher use and more negative secondary effects of alcohol than Greek women.

Overall, the research on Greek organizations is not very positive. Research suggests that students in Greek organizations drink more alcohol, and have more alcohol-induced problems than non-Greek students. What does this say about Greek organizations? Does joining a Greek organization result in negative experiences and

perceptions? Much of the research excludes the behaviors of Black Greek organizations. Should they be included in these generalizations as well?

### Positive Perceptions

Ayre (2002) conducted research on the attitudes of students toward sorority women and which populations had the most negative attitudes towards them. In the study, Ayre used pictures to capture the perceptions of the 79 participants in the study.

The participants looked at two pictures of different women. The participants were then asked to judge which woman was affiliated with a Greek letter organization. The participants circled adjectives on a survey that best described each of the women.

Ayre hypothesized that older participants, male participants, and non-Greek participants would have stronger negative perceptions of sorority women than Greek affiliated counterparts. Results indicated that those participants who were affiliated with a Greek organization had more positive perceptions and attitudes than non-Greeks. Ayre concluded that Greek membership had a positive affect on the way participants viewed women affiliated with Greek organizations.

### Academics

Jimenez (2001) studied the relationship of self-esteem and membership in Greek letter organizations. The research included a sample of 100 Loyola undergraduate students consisting of 25 men and 25 women who were members of Greek letter organizations and 25 men and 25 women who were non-Greek members.

Jimenez hypothesized that those students who were members of a Greek letter organization would have a higher G.P.A. and higher self-esteem than non-Greek students. An independent samples *t*-test was used by Jimenez to calculate the relationship between

G.P.A. and Greek organizations. However, there was no supportive evidence that membership in Greek organizations had any bearing on self-esteem.

Pike and Askew (1990) also researched the relationship between Greeks and academics. The research probed the negative impact of Greek organizations on the missions of colleges and universities. The subjects for the study were selected from a major public research university in the southeast with an undergraduate population of approximately 20,000 students.

All seniors at the university were required to take the *College Outcome Measures Project (COMP) Objective Test* before they were eligible to graduate. They also completed a survey that gathered information about personal backgrounds, college experiences, and the level of satisfaction related to various aspects of the undergraduate academic career. The scores from *t*-test and survey data along with the student's academic record were used for research and program evaluations.

Data were collected on approximately 15,000 students with 6,646 seniors constituting the sample for the study. Fifteen percent of the sample was composed of fraternity and sorority members, and 53% were male. White students made up 93% of the sample, and the mean age was 22.4 years.

Variables used in the Pike and Askew study included background characteristics, measures of academic involvement, and educational outcomes. Background characteristics included whether students were Greek or non-Greek, gender, high school G.P.A., ACT Assessment scores, parents' income, and parents' level of education. Of particular interest to Pike and Askew were how many students the subjects knew well, and what type of impact the social involvement had on personal and intellectual goals.

Pike and Askew found that Greeks had a higher academic record than non-Greek students. The study also showed that Greeks were more often involved in clubs and professional organizations, and had a higher level of interaction with other students. However, non-Greek students attended more extracurricular cultural events and had more interaction with faculty members. The researchers concluded that Greeks did not undermine the mission of a university as had been hypothesized.

#### National Pan-Hellenic Council

The National Pan-Hellenic Council (NPHC) is currently composed of nine (9) International Greek letter sororities and fraternities: Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc. Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc., Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, Inc., Iota Phi Theta Fraternity, Inc., Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, Inc., Sigma Gamma Rho Sorority, Inc. Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity, Inc. and Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Inc. NPHC promotes interaction through forums, meetings and other mediums for the exchange of information and engages in cooperative programming and initiatives through various activities and functions.

On May 10, 1930, on the campus of Howard University, in Washington DC, the National Pan-Hellenic Council was formed as a permanent organization with the following charter members: Omega Psi Phi and Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternities, and Alpha Kappa Alpha, Delta Sigma Theta and Zeta Phi Beta Sororities. In 1931, Alpha Phi Alpha and Phi Beta Sigma Fraternities joined the council. Sigma Gamma Rho joined in 1937 and Iota Phi Theta completed the list of member organizations in 1997.

The stated purpose and mission of the organization in 1930 was “Unanimity of thought and action as far as possible in the conduct of Greek letter collegiate fraternities



and sororities, and to consider problems of mutual interest to its member organizations.”

Early in 1937, the organization was incorporated under the laws of the State of Illinois and became known as “The National Pan-Hellenic Council, Incorporated”

([www.nphchq.org](http://www.nphchq.org)).

### The Divine Nine

Alpha Phi Alpha, the first intercollegiate Greek-letter fraternity established for African-Americans, was founded at Cornell University in Ithaca, New York by seven college men who recognized the need for a strong bond of brotherhood among African descendants in the United States of America. The visionary founders, known as the "Jewels" of the fraternity, included Henry Arthur Callis, Charles Henry Chapman, Eugene Kinckle Jones, George Biddle Kelley, Nathaniel Allison Murray, Robert Harold Ogle, and Vertner Woodson Tandy.

The fraternity initially served as a study and support group for minority students who faced racial prejudice, educationally and socially, at Cornell. The Jewel founders and early leaders of the fraternity succeeded in laying a firm foundation for Alpha Phi Alpha's principles of scholarship, fellowship, good character, and the uplifting of humanity.

Alpha Phi Alpha chapters were developed at other colleges and universities, many of them historically black institutions, soon after the founding at Cornell. Continuing to stress academic excellence among the membership, Alpha Phi Alpha also recognized the need to help correct the educational, economic, political, and social injustices faced by African-Americans (Wesley, 1991).

In 1908, Alpha Kappa Alpha sorority became America's first Greek-letter organization established by Black college women. This organization's roots date back to Howard University, Washington, D.C., where the idea for formation was conceived by Ethel Hedgeman Lyle of St. Louis, Missouri. She viewed the sorority as an instrument for enriching the social and intellectual aspects of college life by providing mental stimulation through interaction with friends and associates. Through the years, however, Alpha Kappa Alpha's function has become more complex. After being incorporated as a perpetual body in 1913, Alpha Kappa Alpha gradually branched out and became the channel through which selected college-trained women improved the socioeconomic conditions in their city, state, nation, and the world (Ross, 2002).

The founding of Kappa Alpha Psi is somewhat different from the BGO founded before them. Chartered and incorporated originally under the laws of the State of Indiana as Kappa Alpha Nu on May 15, 1911, the name was changed to Kappa Alpha Psi on a resolution offered and adopted at the Grand Chapter in December 1914. This change became effective April 15, 1915, on a proclamation by the then Grand Polemarch, Elder Watson Diggs. Thus, the name acquired a distinctive Greek letter symbol and Kappa Alpha Psi became a Greek letter fraternity (Ross, 2002).

On November 17, 1911, three Howard University undergraduate students, with the assistance of their faculty adviser, gave birth to the Omega Psi Phi Fraternity. From the initials of the Greek phrase meaning "friendship is essential to the soul," the name Omega Psi Phi was derived. The phrase was selected as the motto. Manhood, scholarship, perseverance and uplift were adopted as cardinal principles. A decision was made

regarding the design for the pin and emblem, and thus ended the first meeting of the Omega Psi Phi Fraternity (Ross, 2002).

Delta Sigma Theta Sorority was founded on January 13, 1913 by 22 collegiate women at Howard University. These students wanted to use their collective strength to promote academic excellence and to provide assistance to persons in need. The first public act performed by the Delta Founders involved participation in the Women's Suffrage March in Washington D.C., March 1913. Delta Sigma Theta was incorporated in 1930 (Giddings, 1988).

Phi Beta Sigma fraternity was founded at Howard University in Washington, D.C., January 9, 1914, by three young African-American male students. The founders, A. Langston Taylor, Leonard F. Morse, and Charles I. Brown, desired to organize a Greek-letter fraternity that would truly exemplify the ideals of brotherhood, scholarship, and service. Zeta Phi Beta sorority founded in 1920 with the assistance of Phi Beta Sigma, is the sister organization. No other fraternity and sorority are constitutionally bound as Sigma and Zeta (Ross, 2002).

Sigma Gamma Rho sorority was organized on November 12, 1922 in Indianapolis, Indiana by seven school teachers: Mary Lou Allison Little, Dorothy Hanley Whiteside, Vivian White Marbury, Nannie Mae Gahn Johnson, Hattie Mae Dulin Redford, Bessie M. Downey Martin and Cubena McClure. The group became an incorporated national collegiate sorority on December 30, 1929, when a charter was granted to Alpha chapter at Butler University (Ross, 2002).

On September 19, 1963, at Morgan State College (now Morgan State University), 12 students founded what is now the nation's fifth largest, predominately African-

American social service fraternity: Iota Phi Theta fraternity. The fraternity functioned as a local entity until the first interest groups were established in 1967 at Hampton Institute (Beta Chapter) and Delaware State College (Gamma Chapter). Further expansion took place in 1968 with chapters being formed at Norfolk State College (Delta Chapter) and Jersey City State College (Epsilon Chapter). The fraternity was officially and legally incorporated on November 1, 1968 as a national fraternity under the laws of the State of Maryland (Ross, 2002).

### Leadership and Black Greek Letter Organizations

Little research has been conducted on African American students and their attitudes concerning Black Greek Organizations. As the literature states, Black Greek organizations were created through the leadership of mainly undergraduate students. However, current research has been scarce in finding out how current students view these organizations. Walter M. Kimbrough (1995) has spearheaded research on the topic.

Kimbrough's (1995) study consisted of 61 African American students attending a predominantly White public institution located in a rural Midwestern setting. At the time of the study, the university had an enrollment of approximately 16,000 students. African American students made up 3% of the total student population.

Since leadership was the focal point of the study, Kimbrough (1995) asked for volunteers from the three main organizations that provided leadership experiences for African American students on campus. These campus organizations were the Black Greek Council, the Black Student Association, and the Gospel Choir. Of 61 volunteers, 27 were members of a BGO; 34 were non-Greek members of one of the other selected student groups. Seventeen of the respondents were first-year students (5 Greek & 12 non-

Greek). The remainder of the volunteers consisted of 14 sophomores, 24 juniors, and 5 seniors. Twenty-one participants of the 61 were male, and 40 were female. Due to low participation rates by African American males in extracurricular activities, over 80% of non-Greek members were female. There were only two African American males who were Greek.

A two-part questionnaire developed by Kimbrough (1995) was used in the study. The first four items in section one asked students to assess their personal leadership skills and participation in leadership activities in BGOs, campus, and/or community groups. Part-two of the instrument used a Likert scale. Volunteers were asked about feelings in three areas: (a) value of leadership and leadership experiences; (b) the ability of different organizations, Black and White dominated to provide these opportunities; and (c) their overall attitudes about BGOs and their members.

Greek members and non-Greeks both reported their leadership skills were in the top 10% of their age group. However, non-Greeks placed themselves in the top 10% more often than Greek members. Seventy-four percent of BGO members actively participated in two or more campus/community groups, and held office in at least one of those groups. Only 44.2% of non-Greeks had the same level of participation in the category.

Over half of Greeks reported that membership in a BGO improved their leadership skills. Eighty-two percent of non-Greeks had considered joining a BGO. More than two-thirds of Greeks reported that membership in a BGO improved their leadership skills.

An overwhelming majority of both Greeks and non-Greeks (99%) agreed that leadership is an important skill for African American students. Both Greeks and non-Greeks also reported that predominantly Black organizations were more likely to provide leadership opportunities for Black students than White dominated organizations. All Greek volunteers reported that BGOs provided African American students with leadership experiences and were an asset to the campus. Six percent of non-Greeks disagreed with this statement, while 29% were unsure or had no opinion. Nine percent of non-Greeks reported that BGOs did not provide leadership opportunities and were not an asset to the campus (Kimbrough, 1995).

Kimbrough concluded that Black Greek members and non-members on a predominantly White campus shared similar views on personal leadership status, value of leadership skills and experiences, and although to a lower degree, the value of BGOs (Kimbrough, 1995).

#### Summary of the Literature Review

The culture of Greek organizations varies depending upon a variety of factors. A number of stereotypes surround Greek organizations, and there are negative and positive data concerning the culture. Pace and McGrath (2002) conducted research on the excessive use of alcohol in Greek life. The research was launched in April of 1999 using undergraduate students from a mid-western public institution of higher education. The results of the survey indicated that Greek students drank more than students who volunteer.

Eberhardt, Rice, and Smith (2003) conducted similar research comparing Greeks and non-Greeks, men and women. This study was conducted at a church-affiliated, liberal

arts college in the southern part of the United States. The results of the study indicated that Greeks were more likely to have problems related to alcohol abuse, and were more likely to fabricate sources.

Ayre (2002) conducted research on the way students looked at sorority women and which populations had the most negative attitudes towards them. In the study, Ayre used pictures to capture the perceptions of the 79 participants in the study. Ayre hypothesized that older participants, male participants, and non-Greek participants would have stronger negative perceptions of sorority women than Greek affiliated counterparts. Results indicated that those participants who were affiliated with a Greek organization had more positive perceptions and attitudes than non-Greeks. Ayre concluded that Greek membership had a positive effect on the way participants viewed women affiliated with Greek organizations.

Jimenez (2001) studied the relationship of self-esteem and membership in Greek letter organizations. The research included a sample of 100 Loyola undergraduate students consisting of 25 men and 25 women that were members of Greek letter organizations and 25 men and 25 women that were non-Greek members. Jimenez hypothesized that those students who were members of a Greek letter organization would have a higher G.P.A. and higher self-esteem than non-Greek students. However, there was no supporting evidence that membership in Greek organizations had any bearing on self-esteem.

Pike and Askew (1990) also researched the relationship between Greeks and academics. The research probed the negative impact of Greek organizations on the missions of colleges and universities. The subjects for the study were selected from a

major public research university in the southeast with an undergraduate population of approximately 20,000 students.

Pike and Askew found that Greeks had a higher academic record than non-Greek students. The study also showed that Greeks were more often involved in clubs and professional organizations, and had a higher level of interaction with other students. However, non-Greek students attended more extracurricular cultural events and had more interaction with faculty members. The researchers concluded that Greeks did not undermine the mission of a university as had been hypothesized.

Black Greek organizations were created through the leadership of mainly undergraduate students. Current research has been scarce in finding out how current students view these organizations. Kimbrough (1995) has spearheaded research on the topic.

Kimbrough's (1995) study consisted of 61 African American students attending a predominantly White public institution located in a rural Midwestern setting. Since leadership was the focal point of the study, Kimbrough (1995) asked for volunteers from the three main organizations that provided leadership experiences for African American students on campus. These campus organizations were the Black Greek Council, the Black Student Association, and the Gospel Choir. Of 61 volunteers, 27 were members of a BGO; 34 were non-Greek members of one of the other selected student groups.

Kimbrough concluded that Black Greek members and non-members on a predominantly White campus shared similar views on personal leadership status, value of leadership skills and experiences, and although to a lower degree, the value of BGOs (Kimbrough, 1995).



The purpose of the current study was to closely replicate the work of Kimbrough (1995) at Rowan University. No research has been conducted on the campus of Rowan University pertaining to this topic.

## CHAPTER THREE

### METHODOLOGY

#### Context of the Study

The study was conducted on the campus of Rowan University, a state funded post-secondary institution located in Glassboro, New Jersey. Rowan University, originally called Glassboro Normal School, was founded in 1923. Through the years Glassboro Normal School transformed into Glassboro's Teachers College, Glassboro State College, and Rowan College. After a generous donation of 100 million dollars from Henry and Betty Rowan in 1992, Rowan College was able to achieve university status and in 1997 changed its name to Rowan University ([www.rowan.edu](http://www.rowan.edu)).

Rowan University is divided into a graduate school and six academic colleges: Business, Communication, Education, Engineering, Fine and Performing Arts, and Liberal Arts and Sciences. Rowan's nearly 10,000 students can select from among 36 undergraduate majors, 7 teacher certification programs, 26 master's degree programs and a doctoral program in educational leadership. There are over 75 officially recognized clubs/organizations at Rowan University. The university houses over 25 fraternities and sororities ([www.rowan.edu](http://www.rowan.edu)).

#### Population and Sample Selection

The target population consisted of members of three distinct Black student groups: The Black Cultural League, The Gospel Choir, and The National Pan-Hellenic Council (NPHC). These groups were selected to closely replicate the work of Kimbrough (1995). During the time period of the study there were a total of 12 members in The

Gospel Choir, 40 members in The Black Cultural League, and 33 members in The National Pan-Hellenic Council. There was 100% participation from both The Gospel Choir and The National Pan-Hellenic Council. Thirty-one out of 40 (78%) members of The Black Cultural League participated in the research study. Membership numbers were provided verbally by the presidents of each student organization in the study. The total number of participants in this study consisted of 76 African-American students at Rowan University in the spring 2005 semester. The researcher attended the meetings of each organization to request participation in the current study.

#### Instrumentation

The instrument (Appendix B) used in the study was closely based on the instrument developed by Kimbrough (1995). A pilot was done in the summer of 2004 with a group of over 100 pre-freshman to test the face validity of the instrument.

The first section asked subjects about leadership skills and activities. The next section provided participants with nine statements on the attitudes of Greek organizations and leadership. This section of the instrument used a Likert scale, with choices ranging from "Strongly Agree" to "Strongly Disagree." The last section of the instrument consisted of four questions asking participants to provide demographic information, including information on family members affiliated with Greek organizations.

#### Data Collection

Permission to use human subjects was received on April 4, 2005 by the Rowan University Institutional Review Board (Appendix A). The instrument was distributed the following day. The instrument also included a confidentiality statement. This statement

explained that the information being provided by the subject was collected strictly for academic purposes and would remain confidential (Appendix B).

The researcher attended the meetings of the three groups noted earlier to explain the research and request participation from group members. The instrument was completed during the course of each meeting. However, some subjects were members of more than one target group. Due to the small size of the sample, subjects self-disclosed if they had already completed a survey.

#### Data Analysis

The information collected from the subjects was analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software to obtain frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations. The first part of the instrument contained “yes” or “no” questions along with two statements in which subjects had to give a self-assessment rating. The first statement asked the subjects to rate their leadership skills. The numerical values are in order of the choices that are given. For example, the first choice has a value of “1” and the last choice a value of “4.” The second statement follows the same format. However, because there are 5 answers to choose from the last value is “5.”

The second part of the instrument consists of nine statements regarding BGOs. These statements are listed on a Likert scale ranging from “Strongly Agree” (numerical value “1”) to “Strongly Disagree” (numerical value “5”). For all “yes” answers the numerical value is “1”; “no” has a value of “2”.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### FINDINGS

#### Profile of the Sample

Three organizations were surveyed in the study: The Black Cultural League, The Gospel Choir, and The National Pan-Hellenic Council. The Gospel Choir had a total membership of 12, and The National Pan-Hellenic Council totaled 33. Twelve members (100%) of the Gospel Choir and 33 BGO members (100%) participated in the current study. Thirty-one out of 40 (78%) members of The Black Cultural League participated in the research study. Membership numbers were provided verbally by the presidents of each student organization in the study.

The non-Greek populations consisted of the Black Cultural League and The Gospel Choir. The Greek population was The National Pan-Hellenic Council. However, due to cross-membership, if a subject was in The National Pan-Hellenic Council and was also a member of The Black Cultural League or The Gospel Choir, they were only counted in The National Pan-Hellenic Council group. Participants self-identified if they had already completed a survey if they were a member of another organization in the study.

## Demographic Information

Table 4.1 depicts the majority of all subjects were female (59.2%), and 40.8% were male.

Table 4.1

### *Gender of All Participants (n=76)*

Gender	Frequency	%
Male	31	40.8
Female	45	59.2
Total	76	100

Table 4.2 reports the classification of non-member subjects. Of 43 non-members, there were 17 first year subjects, 6 sophomores, 9 juniors, and 11 seniors.

Table 4.2

### *Classification of Non-Members (n=43)*

Class.	Frequency	%
First	17	39.5
Sophomore.	6	13.9
Junior	9	21
Senior	11	25.6

Table 4.3 displays the classification of BGO members. Of the 33 BGO members there was 1 first year student, 4 sophomores, 7 juniors, and 21 seniors.

Table 4.3

*Classification of BGO Members (n=33)*

Class.	Frequency	%
First	1	.03
Sophomore	4	12.1
Junior	7	21.2
Senior	21	63.6

Research Questions

Research Question 1: Do similarities exist between Black Greek members and non-members and their self-assessment of leadership?

Table 4.4 reflects the responses of non-members and BGO members when asked if they considered themselves to be a leader. More than 90% of non-members affirmed this question ( $M=1.09$ ,  $SD=.29$ ).

Table 4.4

*BGO Members' and Non-Members' Response "Do you consider yourself a leader?"*

Group	Yes		No	
	Freq	%	Freq	%
Non-members $n=43$ , $SD=.29390$ , $M=1.0930$	39	90.7	4	9.3
BGO Members $n=33$ , $SD=.00000$ , $M=1$	33	100		

Table 4.5 represents BGO members and non-members self-assessments of leadership skills according to age group. More than half of BGO members ranked themselves in the highest 10% of their age group ( $M=2.0303$ ,  $SD=.68396$ ).

Table 4.5

*BGO Members' and Non-Members' Response "Rate your leadership skills?"*

Group	Highest 1%		Highest 10%		Average	
	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%
Non-members $n=43$ , $SD=.67383$ , $M=2.3023$	5	11.6	20	46.5	18	41.9
BGO Members $n=33$ , $SD=.68396$ , $M=2.0303$	7	21.2	18	54.5	8	24.2

Table 4.6 depicts BGO members and non-members involvement in campus/community organizations. Eight non-members reported not being apart of any organizations ( $M=1.1860$ ,  $SD=.39375$ ).

Table 4.6

*BGO Members' and Non-Members' Response "Are you a member of any campus/community organizations?"*

Group	Yes		No	
	Freq	%	Freq	%
Non-members $n=43$ , $SD=.39375$ , $M=1.1860$	35	81.4	8	18.6
BGO Members $n=33$ , $SD=.00000$ , $M=1$	33	100		

Table 4.7 reflects the impact that Black Greek organizations had on the leadership skills of its members. Over half of Greek members reported that membership in a BGO improved their leadership skills. Only three BGO members said they had not been a



member long enough to see if Greek life had made a positive impact on their leadership skills ( $M=1.1818$ ,  $SD=.58387$ ).

Table 4.7

*BGO Members' Response "Has membership in a Black Greek organization improved your leadership skills?"*

Group	Yes		No		Not Long Enough	
	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%
BGO Members $n=33$ , $SD=.58387$ , $M=1.1818$	30	90.9	0	0	3	9.1

Table 4.8 represents the attitudes of non-members about the impact membership in a Black Greek organization would have on personal leadership skills. More than half of non-members stated that membership in a BGO would not improve personal leadership skills ( $M=1.5116$ ,  $SD=.50578$ ).

Table 4.8

*Non-Members' Response "Would membership in a Black Greek organization improve your leadership skills?"*

Group	Yes		No	
	Freq	%	Freq	%
Non-members $n=43$ , $SD=.50578$ , $M=1.5116$	21	48.8	22	51.2

Research Question 2: Do Black Greek members hold more leadership positions than non-Greek members?

Table 4.9 highlights the level of activity and leadership of BGO members in campus/community organizations. More than half of BGO members reported to be in two or more organizations and holding office in at least one.

Table 4.9

*BGO Members' Response "Indicate your degree of participation or leadership in campus/community groups."*

Group	1+ Not Active		1-2 No Office		2+ 1 Office	
	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%
BGO Members <i>n</i> =33, <i>SD</i> =1.08275, <i>M</i> =4.2121	2	6.1	10	30.3	21	63.6

Table 4.10 describes the level of activity and leadership of non-members in campus/community activities. Less than half of non-members reported to be part of two or more organizations and holding office in at least one group.

Table 4.10

*Non-Members' Response "Indicate your degree of participation or leadership in campus/community groups."*

Group	None		1+ Not Active		1-2 No Off.		2+No Off.		2+ 1Off.	
	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%
Non-members <i>n</i> =43, <i>SD</i> =1.37249 <i>M</i> =3.7907	4	9.3	4	9.3	9	20.9	6	14	20	46.5

Research Question 3: What are attitudes of selected Black Greek members and non-Greek members regarding self-reported value of leadership?

Tables 4.11 (BGO Members) and 4.12 (Non-members) depicts various statements about the value of leadership. An overwhelming majority of both Greeks and non-Greeks (99%) either agreed or strongly agreed that leadership was an important skill for African American students. Both Greeks and non-Greeks (92.1%) also agreed or strongly agreed that predominantly Black organizations were more likely to provide leadership opportunities for Black students than White dominated organizations.

Table 4.11

*BGO Members' Response to Likert Statements Regarding the Value of Leadership*

Statement	Level of Agreement									
	Strongly Agree		Agree		Neutral		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%
Leadership is an important skill for African American students <i>n</i> =33, <i>SD</i> =.48461, <i>M</i> =1.2121	27	81.8	5	15.2	1	3.0				
Predominantly White campus organizations provide leadership opportunities for African American students <i>n</i> =33, <i>SD</i> =.1.10010, <i>M</i> =2.9091	4	12.1	8	24.2	9	27.3	11	33.3	1	3.0
Predominantly Black campus organizations provide leadership opportunities for African American students <i>n</i> =33, <i>SD</i> =.61392, <i>M</i> =1.5758	16	48.5	15	45.5	2	6.1				

Table 4.12

*Non-Members' Response to Likert Statements Regarding the Value of Leadership*

Statement	Level of Agreement									
	Strongly Agree		Agree		Neutral		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%
Leadership is an important skill for African American students $n=43, SD=.35060, M=1.1395$	37	86	6	14						
Predominantly White campus organizations provide leadership opportunities for African American students $n=43, SD=.88359, M=2.9302$	2	11.7	11	25.6	19	44.2	10	23.3	1	2.3
Predominantly Black campus organizations provide leadership opportunities for African American students $n=43, SD=.66389, M=1.8140$	13	30.2	26	60.5	3	7.0	1	2.3		

Research Question 4: Do selected Black Greek members and non-Greek members find value in BGOs?

Table 4.13 provides the data of BGO members regarding the value of Black Greek organizations. Most (93.9%) BGO subjects agreed or strongly agreed that BGOs provided African American students with leadership opportunities ( $M=1.7273, SD=.57406$ ). More than 87% of BGO members agreed or strongly agreed that BGOs were an asset to the campus and to all students ( $M=1.6970, SD=.68396$ ). Over 90% of BGO members felt BGO members were leaders ( $M=1.6364, SD=.65279$ ); 84.8% felt BGO members were scholarly ( $M=1.7879, SD=.69631$ ); 93.9% felt BGO members were

service-oriented ( $M= 1.3636$ ,  $SD=.60302$ ); and 72.7% felt BGO members were friendly ( $M=2.0909$ ,  $SD=.76500$ ).

Table 4.13

*BGO Members' Response to Likert Statements Regarding the Value of Black Greek Organizations*

Statement	Level of Agreement							
	Strongly Agree		Neutral		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%
Black Greek organizations provide leadership opportunities for African American students $n=33$ , $SD=.57406$ , $M=1.7273$	11	33.3	20	60.6	2	6.1		
Black Greek organizations are an asset to the campus and to all students $n=33$ , $SD=.68396$ , $M=1.6970$	14	42.4	15	45.5	4	12.1		
Members of Black Greek organizations are leaders $n=33$ , $SD=.65279$ , $M= 1.6364$	15	45.5	15	45.5	3	9.1		
Members of Black Greek organizations are scholarly $n=33$ , $SD=.69631$ , $M=1.7879$	12	36.4	16	48.5	5	15.2		
Members of Black Greek organizations are service oriented $n=33$ , $SD=.60302$ , $M=1.3636$	23	69.7	8	24.2	2	6.1		
Members of Black Greek organizations are friendly $n=33$ , $SD=.76500$ , $M=2.0909$	7	21.2	17	51.5	8	24.2	1	3.0

Table 4.14 reports the data set of non-members' responses. Over 83% of non-members agreed or strongly agreed that BGOs provided leadership opportunities for African American students ( $M=1.8605$ ,  $SD=.91499$ ); 51% agreed or strongly agreed that BGOs were an asset to the campus and to all students ( $M=2.3488$ ,  $SD=.85493$ ); 48.8% were neutral about BGO members being leaders ( $M=2.5349$ ,  $SD=.85493$ ); 46.5% were also neutral about BGO members being scholarly ( $M=2.5814$ ,  $SD=.85168$ ); 55.8% either agreed or strongly agreed that BGO members were service-oriented ( $M=2.3953$ ,  $SD=1.00332$ ); and 51.1% ( $M=2.4651$ ,  $SD=.98437$ ).

Table 4.14

*Non-Members' Response to Likert Statements Regarding the Value of Black Greek Organizations*

Statement	Level of Agreement									
	Strongly Agree		Agree		Neutral		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%
Black Greek organizations provide leadership opportunities for African American students <i>n</i> =43, <i>SD</i> =.91499, <i>M</i> =1.8605	17	39.5	19	44.2	3	7	4	9.3		
Black Greek organizations are an asset to the campus and to all students <i>n</i> =43, <i>SD</i> =1.02082, <i>M</i> =2.3488	11	25.6	11	25.6	17	39.5	3	7	1	2.3
Members of Black Greek organizations are leaders <i>n</i> =43, <i>SD</i> =.85493, <i>M</i> =2.5349	6	4	12	27.9	21	48.8	4	9.3		
Members of Black Greek organizations are scholarly <i>n</i> =43, <i>SD</i> =.85168, <i>M</i> =2.5814	5	11.6	13	30.2	20	46.5	5	11.6		
Members of Black Greek organizations are service oriented <i>n</i> =43, <i>SD</i> =1.00332, <i>M</i> =2.3953	9	20.9	15	34.9	12	27.9	7	16.3		
Members of Black Greek organizations are friendly <i>n</i> =43, <i>SD</i> =.98437, <i>M</i> =2.4651	7	16.3	15	34.9	17	39.5	2	4.7	2	4

## CHAPTER FIVE

### SUMMARY, DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### Summary of the Study

This study is based on the work of Kimbrough (1995) and reports on the attitudes of selected African American students about Black Greek Organizations (BGOs) and the role they play in leadership development. Seventy-six students attending a predominantly White public northeastern university participated in a survey to assess their leadership skills, the value of leadership and leadership experiences, and the ability of various organizations to provide leadership opportunities. Student attitudes about the value of BGOs in providing leadership opportunities and whether they are an asset to the campus and all students were sought.

#### Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to replicate the research of Kimbrough (1995) at Rowan University. Kimbrough explored the attitudes of selected African American students regarding the impact of Greek letter organizations on the development of personal leadership development at a predominantly White institution in the Midwest. This study sought to see if similar patterns existed in a predominantly White institution located in the eastern part of the United States.

The subjects in this study consisted of 76 African-American students attending Rowan University in the spring 2005 semester. In the attempt to replicate Kimbrough's (1995) study, subjects for this research project consisted of selected African-American



students from Rowan University's Black Cultural League, National Pan-Hellenic Council, and the Gospel Choir.

### Methodology

The subjects were asked questions about their leadership skills and activities along with attitude statements concerning Black Greek Letter Organizations (BGOs). In order to protect the rights and well being of the subjects, an Institutional Review Board (IRB) application was submitted March 9, 2005. Permission to use human subjects was received on April 4, 2005 by the Rowan University Institutional Review Board (Appendix A). A consent statement was included on the instrument given to all participants (Appendix B). The statement was read by the researcher prior to administering the instrument to the participants. The instrument used was based on the work of Kimbrough (1995).

The first section of the instrument asked subjects four questions on their leadership skills and activities. The next section of the instrument provided participants with nine statements about their attitudes of Greek organizations and leadership. This section of the instrument used a Likert scale, with choices ranging from "Strongly Agree" to "Strongly Disagree." The last section of the instrument consisted of four questions asking the subjects to provide demographic information, including information on family members affiliation with Greek organizations.

The researcher attended the meetings of the three groups to explain the research and request participation. The instrument was completed by all subjects during the course of each meeting. The researcher received 100% participation from each selected group. However, some participants were members of more than one target group. Due to the

small size of the sample, participants self-disclosed if they had already completed a survey.

### Data Analysis

The data were analyzed using descriptive statistics (frequency, percentage, standard deviation, and mean). SPSS software was used to perform the data analysis. Each section of the instrument compared the responses of BGO members and non-members.

### Findings and Discussion

Black Greek members and non-Greeks both reported their leadership skills were in the top 10% of their age group. However, 54.5% of BGO members chose this category compared to 46.5% of non-members. Seventy-four percent of BGO members and 52.9% of non-members in Kimbrough's (1995) study also chose this category. Over 63% percent of BGO members actively participated in two or more campus/community groups, and held office in at least one of those groups. Only 46.5% of non-Greeks had the same level of participation in the category. Over 74% of BGO members and 44% of non-members in Kimbrough's study also had this level of activity in campus/community organizations. In the current study, over 90% of BGO members reported that membership in a BGO improved their leadership skills as compared to only 63% of BGO members in Kimbrough's study. Just over half (51.2%) of non-members in the current study said that membership in a BGO would not improve their leadership skills while over 54% of non-members in Kimbrough's also chose this answer.

An overwhelming majority of both Greeks and non-Greeks (99%) agreed that leadership is an important skill for African American students. Both Greeks and non-

Greeks also reported that predominantly Black organizations were more likely to provide leadership opportunities for Black students than White dominated organizations. All Greek volunteers reported that BGOs provided African American students with leadership experiences and were an asset to the campus.

Research Question 1: Do similarities exist between Black Greek members and non-members and their self-assessment of leadership?

There were a total of 76 students that participated in this study, 43 of which were non-members while the remaining 33 were members of a BGO. All (100%) of BGO members believed themselves to be a leader. Approximately 90% of non-members classified themselves as leaders. There were four non-members that did not consider themselves to be a leader. In Kimbrough's (1995) study 92.6% of BGO members and 94.2% of non-members considered themselves to be a leader.

Research Question 2: Do Black Greek members hold more leadership positions than non-Greek members?

More than half (63.6%) of BGO members reported to be active in two or more organizations and held office in at least one of them while less than half (46.5%) of non-Greek members fell into this category. In Kimbrough's (1995) study 74% of BGO members actively participated in two or more campus/community groups, and held office in at least one of those groups.

Research Question 3: What are attitudes of selected Black Greek members and non-Greek members regarding self-reported value of leadership?

An overwhelming majority (98.5%) of both BGO members and non-members strongly agreed or agreed that leadership is an important skill for African American

students. These findings are similar to those of Kimbrough (1995) in which an overwhelming majority of both Greeks and non-Greeks (99%) agreed that leadership is an important skill for African American students.

Research Question 4: Do selected Black Greek members and non-members find value in BGOs?

Most (93.9%) BGO subjects agreed or strongly agreed that BGOs provided African American students with leadership opportunities. More than 87% of BGO members agreed or strongly agreed that BGOs were an asset to the campus and to all students. Over 90% of BGO members felt BGO members were leaders; 46.5% were also neutral about BGO members being scholarly; and 55.8% either agreed or strongly agreed that BGO members were service-oriented.

Over 83% of non-members agreed or strongly agreed that BGOs provide leadership opportunities for African American students; 51% agreed or strongly agreed that BGOs were an asset to the campus and to all students; 48.8% were neutral about BGO members being leaders; 46.5% were also neutral about BGO members being scholarly; 55.8% either agreed or strongly agreed that BGO members were service-oriented; and 51.2% either agreed or strongly agreed that members of BGOs were friendly.

Kimbrough's (1995) study reported that 100% of BGO members and 64.6% non-members agreed or strongly agreed that BGOs provide leadership opportunities for African American students. All (100%) of BGO members and 76.5% of non-members agreed or strongly agreed that BGOs were an asset to the campus and to all students. Over 92.6% of BGO members and 52.9% of non-members agreed or strongly agreed that

members of BGOs were leaders; 81.5% of BGO members and only 41.9% of non-members agreed or strongly agreed that BGO members were scholarly; 77.8% of BGO members and 67.7% of non-members agreed or strongly agreed that BGO members are service-oriented; 85.2% of BGO members and 54.8% of non-members agreed or strongly agreed that BGO members were friendly.

### Conclusions

The current study revealed that selected African Americans at a predominantly White institution shared similar attitudes on leadership status, the value of leadership skills, and generally speaking, the value of BGOs. Non-members did not value BGOs as much as members of these organizations. Although there were slight differences between the studies, the current study revealed overall similarities of BGO members and non-members at Rowan University with those in Kimbrough's (1995) study.

All (100%) of BGO members in the current study and 92.6% of BGO members in Kimbrough's (1995) study considered themselves to be leaders. In Kimbrough's (1995) study non-members affirmed this more than BGO members. BGO members in the current study, however, considered themselves to rank in the top 1% of their age group more often than non-members. Kimbrough's research revealed that 17.6% of non-members believed themselves to be in the top 1% of their age group compared to only 7.4% of BGO members. The current study supported Kimbrough's findings that BGO members were more involved in campus/community activities and held at least one leadership position than non-members. However, Kimbrough's (1995) study showed that 74.1% of BGO members fell into this category compared to 63.6% of BGO members in the current study. The majority of BGO members in both studies reported that membership in a BGO

had improved their leadership skills. More than half of non-members in both studies said that membership in a BGO would not improve their leadership skills. However, 83.7% of non-members in the current study, and 64.6% of non-members in Kimbrough's (1995) study agreed or strongly agreed that BGOs provide leadership opportunities for African American students. The biggest disparity between the current study and that of Kimbrough's were the response of non-members when given the statement that BGOs were an asset to the campus and to all students. The response from non-members in the current study was 51.2% compared to 76.5% in Kimbrough's (1995) study. It appears that non-members feel that BGOs have more value among African American students than for the campus as a whole. However, more research needs to be conducted to gauge if African American students at other predominantly White institutions share similar attitudes.

#### Recommendations for Further Research

1. Conduct the same study at multiple predominantly White institutions across the United States.
2. Conduct a study combining the work and populations of Kimbrough (1995), Jimenez (2001), and Pike and Askew (1990) to compare the G.P.A., self-esteem, and leadership of BGO members and non-members at a predominantly White institution.
3. Conduct a study combining the work and populations of Kimbrough (1995), Jimenez (2001), and Pike and Askew (1990) to compare the G.P.A., self-esteem, and leadership of BGO members and non-members at a historically Black college/university.

4. Compare BGOs at white institutions and historically black institutions
5. Take the current study and compare BGO members, and those of the predominantly White organizations at Rowan University.

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APPENDIX A

Institutional Review Board  
Disposition Form

RECEIVED MAR 09 2005

Rowan University  
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD  
HUMAN RESEARCH REVIEW APPLICATION

INSTRUCTIONS: Check all appropriate boxes, answer all questions completely, include attachments, and obtain appropriate signatures. Submit an original and two copies of the completed application to the Office of the Associate Provost for Research Expediter(s). Be sure to make a copy for your files.

FOR IRB USE ONLY:

Protocol Number: IRB- 2005-86

Received: \_\_\_\_\_ Reviewed: \_\_\_\_\_

Exemption: ☐ Yes ☐ No

Category(ies): \_\_\_\_\_

Approved [Signature] (date) 4/4/05

Step 1: Is the proposed research subject to IRB review?

All research involving human participants conducted by Rowan University faculty and staff is subject to IRB review. Some, but not all, student-conducted studies that involve human participants are considered research and are subject to IRB review. Check the accompanying instructions for more information. Then check with your class instructor for guidance as to whether you must submit your research protocol for IRB review. If you determine that your research meets the above criteria and is not subject to IRB review, STOP. You do not need to apply. If you or your instructor have any doubts, apply for an IRB review.

Step 2: If you have determined that the proposed research is subject to IRB review, complete the identifying information below.

Project Title:

A STUDY OF THE ATTITUDES OF SELECTED AFRICAN AMERICAN STUDENTS TOWARDS LEADERSHIP AND BLACK GREEK LETTER ORGANIZATIONS

Researcher: Elora L. Crump

Department: Educational Leadership

Location: Robinson

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Co-Investigator/s:

Faculty Sponsor (if student)\* Dr. Burton Sisco

Department Educational Leadership Location: Robinson

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Approved For Use by Rowan IRB: 7/04

APPENDIX B  
Consent/Instrumentation

## ATTITUDE TOWARD LEADERSHIP AND BLACK GREEK LETTER ORGANIZATIONS

*This survey is being administered as part of a Master's degree Thesis project. While your participation is voluntary and you are not required to answer any of the questions herein, your cooperation and participation are important to the success of the project and are greatly appreciated. If you choose to participate, please understand that all responses are strictly confidential and no personally identifiable information is being requested.*

This study investigates African American students' attitudes toward leadership and Black Greek Letter organizations. Specifically, you will be asked about personal leadership skills and activities, membership in campus and community organizations, and level of activity. You will also be asked whether or not joining a Black Greek letter organization would increase your leadership abilities, and general opinion questions about these organizations. For purposes of this study BGO stands for Black Greek Letter- Organizations

*Please answer the following questions about your leadership skills and activities by checking the appropriate line:*

- 1) Do you consider yourself a leader? ☐ Y ☐ N
- 2) Rate your leadership skills:  
☐ Highest 1% of age group  
☐ Highest 10% of age group  
☐ Average for age group  
☐ Below average for age group
- 3) Are you a member of any campus or community organizations? ☐ Y ☐ N
- 4) Indicate your degree of participation or leadership in campus/community groups:  
☐ No participation  
☐ Member of 1 or more groups, but not active  
☐ Active in 1-2 groups, but hold (held) no office  
☐ Active in 2 or more groups, but hold (held) no office  
☐ Participate actively in 2 or more organizations and hold office in at least 1 group
- 5) Would membership in a Black Greek letter organization improve your leadership skills? ☐ Y ☐ N
- 6) Have you considered joining a Black Greek letter organization? ☐ Y ☐ N
- 7) Are you an official recognized member of a Black Greek Letter-Organization?
- 8) Has membership in a Black Greek organization improved your leadership skills?  
☐ Y ☐ N ☐ Have not been a member long enough to evaluate.

*Please answer the following questions about leadership and Greek letter organizations by circling whether you Strongly Agree, Agree, Neutral, Disagree, or Strongly Disagree with the statement:*  
(SA) (A) (N) (D) (SD)

- |                                                                                                              |                     |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------|
| 9) Leadership is an important skill for African American students:                                           | SA   A   N   D   SD |
| 10) Predominantly White campus organizations provide leadership opportunities for African American students: | SA   A   N   D   SD |
| 11) Predominantly Black campus organizations provide leadership opportunities for African American students: | SA   A   N   D   SD |
| 12) Black Greek organizations provide leadership opportunities for African American students:                | SA   A   N   D   SD |
| 13) Black Greek organizations are an asset to the campus and to all students:                                | SA   A   N   D   SD |
| 14) Members of Black Greek organizations are leaders:                                                        | SA   A   N   D   SD |
| 15) Members of Black Greek organizations are scholarly:                                                      | SA   A   N   D   SD |
| 16) Members of Black Greek organizations are service oriented:                                               | SA   A   N   D   SD |
| 17) Members of Black Greek organizations are friendly:                                                       | SA   A   N   D   SD |

PLEASE PROVIDE THE FOLLOWING DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

18) Age \_\_\_\_\_

19) Sex \_\_\_\_\_

20) Classification: \_\_\_\_ 1<sup>st</sup> Year \_\_\_\_ Sophomore \_\_\_\_ Junior \_\_\_\_ Senior

21) Is there anyone in your family that is affiliated with a Greek letter organization?

Y \_\_\_\_ N \_\_\_\_

THANK-YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION!!!

