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**A QUALITATIVE CASE STUDY OF THE CONGRUENCE BETWEEN  
FRATERNAL ORGANIZATIONS' AND MEMBERS' VALUES, PRINCIPLES,  
AND STANDARDS**

by  
Joseph P. Lizza

A Dissertation

Submitted to the  
Department of Educational Services and Leadership  
College of Education  
In partial fulfillment of the requirement  
For the degree of  
Doctor of Education  
at  
Rowan University  
March 27, 2017

Dissertation Chair: Monica R. Kerrigan, Ed.D.

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## **Dedications**

I dedicate my dissertation work to my family, friends, and higher education colleagues. A special feeling of gratitude to my loving wife, Heather whose words of encouragement motivated me to keep my head up and progress however slowly forward.

## **Acknowledgements**

My doctoral education has been an incredible journey of knowledge, understanding, and the strength to persevere. Throughout this time, I have been fortunate to have engaging faculty, and dedicated family and colleagues who have helped me achieve this goal. I wish to thank the members of my dissertation committee. Dr. Kerrigan, thank you for your support, guidance, and encouragement during this process. You have not only made this a meaningful experience, but provided just the right amount of reassurance to keep me on track. Dr. Jordan-Cox and Dr. Gruber, thank you both for finding my study to be worthwhile and agreeing to work with me. Your thoughts, feedback, and suggestions as leaders within the academy have been invaluable.

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Finally, I wish to acknowledge the considerable contributions of the student leaders, student affairs, and higher education professionals, who welcomed me and shared their knowledge and experiences.

## **Abstract**

Joseph P. Lizza

### **A QUALITATIVE CASE STUDY OF THE CONGRUENCE BETWEEN FRATERNAL ORGANIZATIONS' AND MEMBERS' VALUES, PRINCIPLES, AND STANDARDS**

2016-2017

Monica Kerrigan, Ed D

Doctor of Education

Fraternal organizations are unique in how their very existence is routed in their espoused values, principles, and standards. These ideals spotlight what their organization was founded upon, and how those who associate themselves with the organization should conduct themselves. There are few instances where an organization is forced to be as altruistic as a fraternity. However, the point that these particular organizations espouse that their values, principles, and standards are the keystone of what they stand for is often the very reason these groups are permitted to have a presence on college and university campuses. The purpose of this inquiry was to examine the organizational culture of fraternities, seeking to identify the congruency between nationally espoused values, principles, and standards and those in use by organizations at the local level. Using data acquired through semi-structured interviews, observations, and document analysis, in this study a clearer picture was drawn regarding the relationship between organizational culture and the values, principles, and standards espoused by organizations.

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## **Chapter 1**

### **Introduction**

In today's complex system of higher education, it is common for those who are involved as educators to accept the premise that learning extends beyond the boundaries of the classroom. Alexander Astin (1993) contends that for meaningful student learning, growth, and development to occur, students should actively engage in their environments. Within colleges and universities, and specifically within the area of Student Affairs, professionals have worked with students in many ways to promote and encourage this type of learning and development; one of the most common being the formation of student clubs and organizations. Through the co-curricular activities which comprise campus life, students gain leadership skills and experience from their involvement in athletics, fraternity and sorority life, general interest clubs and organizations, living-learning communities, and service and volunteer participation. Each of these activities provides students with opportunities to develop and enhance specific out-of classroom learning and leadership skills.

### **Problem Statement**

Fraternities began their existence in the eighteenth century and since their inception have professed a commitment to high ideals and high moral and ethical teachings (Anson & Marchesani, 1991; Asel, Seifert, & Pascarella, 2009; Heval & Bureau, 2014). This commitment by fraternal organizations as an academy to an often comparable and meaningful set of standards and values allowed for these organizations to develop relationships among college and university students in which leadership and academic development could be cultivated (Ackerman, 1990; Long, 2012).

In the United States, there are more than 800 college and university campuses where fraternity and sorority life is present (Ackerman, 1990); however, over the last several decades, due to numerous internal and external factors, fraternities and sororities have struggled to defend their espoused standards, values, reputations, and missions (Asel et al., 2009; Sasso, 2012; Shonrock, 1998). Greek organizations are routinely challenged by members who demonstrate both privately and publically unethical and/or inappropriate behavior such as hazing, alcohol and drug abuse, inappropriate sexual encounters, and violations of campus codes of conduct (Asel et al., 2009; Bureau, Ryan, Ahren, Shoup & Torres, 2011; Callais, 2005; Dugan, 2008; Dungy, 1999; Earley, 1998; Gose, 1997; Isacco, Warnecke, Ampuero, Donofrio, & Davies, 2013; Kuh & Arnold, 1993; Lord, 1987; Maisel, 1990; Malaney, 1990; Pike, 2000). This behavior often times does not align with the standards, ideals, and ultimately the purpose that their founding members espoused during the formation of their organizations. While mainstream media and general societal understanding of fraternal organizations is traditionally limited, the picture that is frequently painted is unflattering and in some cases unwarranted.

The Greek experience, as it was espoused by its founders, is intended to facilitate significant opportunities for members. There is a substantial amount of research (Callais, 2005; Cory, 2011; CAS, 2015; DeBard & Sacks, 2012; Dugan, 2008; Gallup, 2014; Heval & Bureau, 2014; Long, 2012; Long & Snowden, 2011) that suggests that the fraternity and sorority experience provides its members with opportunities for social and professional development, promotes persistence in academic pursuits, increases students' interactions with peers, and is associated with dramatically greater levels of alumni engagement and philanthropy after graduation (Astin, 1993; Gallup, 2014). Greek

membership assists in the development of mature interpersonal relationships and enhances leadership skills. Membership with these groups could potentially help students gain experiences working as a team and allow them to exchange ideas that foster discussion and learning (Cory, 2011; Gallup, 2014). Further, membership in a fraternity or sorority promotes the importance of values, while facilitating a sense of autonomy, self-governance, and personal identity. With this type of potential, fraternities and sororities have the opportunity to make major contributions to an institution's efforts to develop students in ways congruent with institutional standards, values, and missions.

However, the reputations of these often historically-grounded organizations are being tarnished due to reports of varying degrees of hazing, alcohol abuse, irresponsible behavior, poor academic performance, risky sexual behavior and sexual assaults, which often overshadow the qualitatively and quantitatively measured benefits of membership (Ackerman, 1990; Asel et al., 2009; Malaney, 1990; Shonrock, 1998). Critics of the Greek letter system suggest fraternities and sororities have drifted from the standards and values on which their organizations were founded (Heval & Bureau, 2014; Maisel, 1990). Other researchers and practitioners who are highly regarded in the areas of higher education, student life, and student development theory argue that fraternities and sororities are adversely affecting the collegial educational process (Kuh, Pascarella, & Wechsler, 1996).

“While it is unfair and inaccurate to make these kinds of charges against all Greeks, the incidences are frequent enough to maintain negative stereotypes in the public mind and to raise questions in the minds of academics about whether

fraternities and sororities do in fact promote the ideals of an academic community and a democratic society” (Winston & Saunders, 1987, p.6).

There are a number of factors that may possibly encourage college and university administrators to actively commit to working with these organizations. The simple historical significance of fraternities and sororities on college campuses, and the high level of alumni attachment to the organizations, along with other select organizations serves to represent the past and the future of the academy. Greeks also deserve attention due to the major influence they exert on campus climate and their potential to positively affect the quality of student life (DeBard & Sacks, 2010; Long & Snowden, 2011; Gallup, 2015; Winston, Nettles, & Opper, 1987). Conversely, institutions are highly aware of the glaring negative aspects that sometimes are associated with Greek letter organizations.

Higher education institutions have much to gain from working closely with national organizations and promote the positive aspects of membership which are complimentary to many college and university missions, while striving to minimize the potential problems. This responsibility rests with the institutional administration and Greek leadership at all levels to work collaboratively to ensure the experience is one that is in the best interest of all constituents. Despite the popularity and widespread influence of fraternal organizations, knowledge of an in-depth and structured examination of the nationally promoted espoused standards and those in use by local campus based chapters is lacking in the literature (Dungy, 1999; Molasso, 2005).

The true test for these organizations is to resolve the often conflicting dichotomy between the standards and values they espouse and the inappropriate behavior in which

some chapters and/or members engage. As an example of this behavior, the National Study on Student Hazing found that “more than half of college students involved in clubs, teams, and organizations experience hazing” and seven out of ten students experienced hazing in order to join or maintain membership in a Greek Letter organization (Allan, 2009, p. 15). “Many institutions have standards and expectations for student behavior within their student organizations, including that of fraternities and sororities. These standards most often take the form of student codes of conduct that outline acceptable behaviors for students and policies and procedures for the operation of student organizations (Shonrock, 1998). At the national level, there are professional associations including but not limited to the Association of Fraternity and Sorority Advisors (AFA) and the Northeast Greek Leadership Association (NGLA), trade organizations such as the North American Interfraternity Conference (NIC) and the National Panhellenic Conference (NPC), as well as accrediting bodies such as the Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education, and the Middle States Commission on Higher Education which have developed additional standards to which fraternities and sororities should adhere for recognition and future sustainability and growth.

### **Significance of the Study**

As the system of higher education evolves, “colleges and universities must ensure that fraternity members live up to the standards expected of all students and the standards fraternities themselves espouse. When groups or individuals fail to meet these goals, administration and fraternity leaders must act decisively to stem further abuse and



reaffirm the institution's overarching educational mission" (Kuh, Pascarella, and Wechseler, 1996, P. A68).

This study sought to examine and identify the level of congruency between common values, principles, and standards espoused by fraternal organizations and those which are truly in use by their members at a mid-sized, northeastern, public university. This study hoped to provide a clearer picture of the values which are foundational in an organization, and those which are merely ceremonial. These common principles as defined by the North American Interfraternity Conference (NIC) are shared by all of their member organizations and include "academic success, service and philanthropy, leadership development, and social skill development" (NIC, 2015, np). These four principles form the foundation of the North American Interfraternity Conference (NIC) Standards; standards which serve as the unifying factor of the organizations studied and allowed for the unit of analysis to be identified and isolated. While the divide between the espoused and enacted values, principles, and standards, may have differed greatly among organizations, it was the hope that a clearer picture could be drawn identifying contributing factors and aid in improving a contested public image as well as allow current members to gain perspective on the originating purpose of fraternity life.

### **Context of the Study**

The study was conducted at Sherman University, a pseudonym for a mid-size, northeastern, public university. The host institution focuses on a liberal arts and sciences education, with a growing graduate level curriculum. The campus consists of approximately two-thousand acres and is situated in a small suburban town with 35 percent of the undergraduate population residing in on-campus housing. This location and

its population will ultimately allow me to look at the phenomenon within a real-world context (Yin, 2014). Sherman University has a steadily growing fraternity and sorority population that has been undergoing systematic change, including new professional staff advisors, increased administrative oversight, reorganization of the recruitment process, and the addition of several organizations over the last few years. The population of students involved in fraternity and sorority life is 580 students, which is 7.9% of the overall undergraduate student population. The fraternity numbers total 197 students, which is 6.5% of the undergraduate male population. The mix of a growing Fraternity and Sorority population, new strategic leadership, and the support and accountability of the students provides a rich environment for this study.

### **Research Questions**

To examine the relationship between values, principles, and standards and fraternal organization membership more closely, my study sought to answer the following research questions:

1. How do the values, principles, and standards espoused by individual fraternity members align with those common values, principles, and standards which serve as the foundation for the national standards influencing their organizations?
2. How are espoused national values, principles, and standards reflected through the actions of individual fraternity members?
3. What programs and services are available to organizations to encourage congruency of nationally espoused values, principles and standards? What difficulties do organizations' members perceive exist in successfully contributing towards congruency?

## **Conceptual Framework**

The organizational culture model of Edgar H. Schein (2004) has served as the foundation for understanding and analyzing organizational learning and development. While the research surrounding espoused theory and theory in practice as studied by Chris Argyris and Donald Schon (1974) and George D. Kuh and Elizabeth Whitt (1988), has assisted in specifically looking at espoused and enacted values, principles, and standards of the organizations and its members. My methodology focused on Robert K. Yin's (2014) case study design and methods to structure the overall methodology and guided me as I progressed through the various aspects of the study.

## **Conclusion**

My study sought to provide a better understanding of the relationship among the values, principles and standards which are espoused by fraternity members, and those put into use as they actively engage themselves in an organization. I hoped to determine how an organization's culture can impact these values, principles and standards. In Chapter 2, I reviewed the literature related to the history of Greek letter organizations, outlined and provided background on various nationally espoused standards, values and missions, looked at espoused versus enacted values and standards as a way to better understand the relationship between what is said and what is actually displayed. I also explored values based leadership, as well as provided information on the organization culture model (Schein, 2004) to determine any relationship among how organizations are led and the values, principles and standards which guide them. I concluded with a brief summary of previous related research on values and standards congruency. In Chapter 3, the methodology section, I discuss my rationale for choosing Sherman University as my

research location, for using a case study approach, and will share my data collection techniques. Chapter 4, provides a detailed account of the data collected through semi-structured interviews, observations, and document analysis. Chapter 5, pulls the data and analysis together to answer the research questions identified at the onset of this study.

## **Chapter 2**

### **Literature Review**

Fraternities began their existence in the eighteenth century and since their inception have professed a commitment to high ideals and high moral and ethical teachings (Anson and Marchesani, 1991, pp. 1-13). This commitment by fraternal organizations as an academy to an often comparable set of standards and values allowed for these organizations to develop relationships among college and university students where leadership and academic development could be cultivated (Ackerman, 1990).

The Greek experience, as it was espoused by its founders, is intended to facilitate significant opportunities for members. There is substantial research that suggests the fraternity and sorority experience provides its members with opportunities for social and professional development, promotes persistence in academic pursuits, increases students' interactions with peers, and is associated with dramatically greater levels of alumni engagement and philanthropy after graduation (Astin, 1993; Heval & Bureau, 2014; Long & Snowden, 2011; Bureau et al., 2011; Gallup, 2014).

One true test for these organizations is to resolve the often conflicting dichotomy between the standards and values they espouse and the inappropriate behavior in which some chapters and/or members engage. This chapter hopes to provide a foundation in which the present study can be framed. The chapter will provide the necessary historical foundation of Greek letter organizations while also offering background on the values, principles, and standards which are embraced by national organizations and used as a guide for local chapters. The theories of Argyris and Schon as well as Edgar Schein are

explored to provide context and a conceptual framework which will allow the researcher to obtain and interpret the findings.

## **A Historical Synopsis of Greek Letter Organizations**

### **Establishment**

What today's culture now refers to as a fraternity finds its origins several centuries ago in Williamsburg, Virginia, where a group of male students met in 1750 to form a social group which would debate literature and reflect on current events and the issues of the day (Syrett, 2009; Lord, 1987; Anson & Marchesani, 1991). The structure and culture of early colonial colleges allowed for very few opportunities for students to engage in scholarly discussion and social interaction outside of the confines of the classroom. Academics were the only focus of these institutions; and in many cases the instruction was confined to recitation and lecture with little room for conversations, or student participation and the exchange of ideas. In 1776, Phi Beta Kappa, which is historically considered as the first Greek-letter organization, emerged in response to perceived student concern over shortcomings in their own academic and social journey.

"Phi Beta Kappa had all of the characteristics of the present-day fraternity: The charm and mystery of secrecy, a ritual, oaths of fidelity, a group, a motto, a badge for external display, a background of high idealism, a strong tie of friendship and comradeship, an urge for sharing its values through nation-wide expansion" (Robson, 1977, p. 5). By the end of the 1820s and early decades of the 1830s, the movement of fraternity growth and development continued while serving as opposition to the academy of higher education and as an effort to make up for what was missing in their academic pursuits (Anson & Marchesani, 1991). In a similar manner as the students who formed

Phi Beta Kappa, which was never officially termed a “fraternity”, students from Union College founded the first officially recognized men’s fraternity, Kappa Alpha Society, in 1825 (Robson, 1977). Though much like their predecessor, this organization was not received positively by the faculty and college leadership. However, students eagerly supported this new type of organization (Capps, 1978). With increasing student interest, new organizations, and additional chapters of existing organizations spread quickly throughout the country as fast as colleges and universities were establishing themselves as institutions of higher education. These organizations quickly became one of the most significant and influential factors in the lives of college enrolled males during this time period (Dalglish, 1936).

Fraternities provided opportunities for social interaction, a much needed and welcomed break from the strict academic requirements of early colleges and universities (Anson & Marchesani, 1991). The discontent of students typically stemmed from unhappiness with the traditional approaches to teaching, discipline, and the power in balance between faculty and students (Komives & Woodard, 2003). The campuses strict following of *in loco parentis*, “in the place of a parent”, allowed institutions to provide very little freedoms to their students. Coupled with limited resources for experiential learning, students became very frustrated. These early founders felt strongly that their outside the classroom experiences were as significant as or more significant than the formal education they received in the lecture halls (Thelin, 2004).

These organizations were prohibited in their early years from congregating and organizing outside the confines of the campus and later, under a significant amount of disapproval, the majority of organizations’ developed a culture of secrecy to protect their

members from discipline and allow for the prosperity of their organizations (Dalglish, 1936). Fraternal organizations typically refer to the clandestine aspects within their particular culture as their organizations' ritual. These rituals typically reveal the meaning, standards, values and overall expectations of members of the organization. The next several centuries would bring periods of both success and adversity for fraternities as well as other student organizations. A number of military conflicts, industrialization within the nation, and a shift in the higher education system simultaneously affected college, university, and fraternal organization involvement and enrollment (Syrett, 2009).

### **Systematic Growth and Development**

While growth and prosperity in the fraternal movement occurred, it should be noted that the location and timing of this growth was different in various areas of the country (Anson & Marchesani, 1991). Early growth occurred in the south during the late 1700s, and as the beginning of the 1800s arrived, fraternities were established in the northern area of the United States. As military conflicts such as the Civil War occurred, growth of organizations ceased and many chapters did not survive as college and university enrollment weakened, specifically in the south where collegiate enrollment was significantly impacted by college aged individuals enlisting.

However, after the conclusion of the Civil War, the nation saw a period of immense fraternity expansion, including the establishment of new fraternities and the addition of chapters from established groups. There are close to forty fraternities which document their founding during the period immediately following the Civil War in 1865 (Robson, 1977). The growth of these organizations did not end at the close of the nineteenth century, as historical records indicate that there were more than seventy



national organizations for men and women by the start of World War I. At this point in history, fraternities and sororities had a combined membership of over 350,000 students, with chapters on five-hundred campuses. It was truly a time for significant growth (Robson, 1977).

In 1862, the establishment of the Morrill Act, which created land-grant institutions, created more opportunities for women to enroll in higher education institutions (Solomon, 1985). Women found themselves missing the social, academic, and creative opportunities in a similar manner as their male counterparts quite a few years earlier (Turk, 2004). Women with similar desires to debate and discuss relevant topics outside the classroom were barred from membership in men's fraternities. Phi Beta Phi was founded in 1867. It was the first official women's fraternity, however the term "sorority" was not adopted until late in the nineteenth century. Many of the early groups were founded as "women's fraternities". The first national organization to embrace the word "sorority" was Gamma Phi Beta, which was established in 1874 (Robson, 1977).

Students from minority racial, ethnic, and cultural affiliations such as African American and Latin backgrounds found similar exclusionary practices (Kimbrough, 2003, Turk, 2004). In response, each excluded subgroup of students formed its own organizations, with similar ideals as the organizations which came prior, but with the added resolve to support and develop their members in the segregated society which they were living. In 1906, after feeling excluded from traditional organizations within the fraternity structure, several African-American male students established Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc. at Cornell University to provide students who identified as African American with the same support and encouragement as their majority counterparts. This

introduced a new fraternal movement for African-American students, and in 1908, the first historically African-American sorority was formed at Howard University, Alpha Kappa Alpha, Inc. Howard University would later emerge as the founding campus for several other African-American fraternal organizations (Wesley, 1961).

These organizations shared many parallels with their precursor organizations, however, the particular needs of these students made the goals of African-American Greek-letter organizations distinctive from traditionally Caucasian organizations. While the number of minority students attending universities in the early twentieth century was growing, the number of African Americans was still relatively small to the number of white males attending the same institutions. This situation on campus created an important need to form unique bonds with each other that was traditionally a characteristic of Greek-letter societies (Giddings, 1988). While a majority of historically Black fraternities and sororities were founded at historically black colleges and universities, the early growth of these organizations was found on traditional campuses. Students on these campuses felt a stronger need to organize and serve as a refuge and support network against discrimination (Giddings, 1988). While these students were able to attend several predominantly white institutions, they were not permitted to live on-campus in the residence halls, so fraternity and sorority houses also served their need for adequate housing (Giddings, 1988).

The appeal of fraternal organizations was strong and a significant amount of growth and expansion occurred during the turn of the twentieth century, even while campus leadership critically examined their existence and pursued forbidding them from campuses (Gregory, 2003). As an additional desirable feature of fraternal organizations,

the introduction of Greek organization housing provided a safe and reassuring residence for students to live away from the campus leadership that was so critical. With the growth of many colleges and universities, along with towns inability to house the growing student body, many looked to fraternities to provide residential options for their members. Ironically, organizations which were once seen as a destructive force to an institution were being actively sought after on college campuses as long as they agreed to build housing for their members.

The fraternity and sorority movement grew significantly and quickly during the early years of the 20th century and it became evident that there needed to be the creation of national governing bodies which supported these organizations and their systematic growth. While a governing body for women's organizations called the National Panhellenic Conference (NPC) was founded in 1902, it took seven years for the National Interfraternity Conference (NIC) to be established in 1909 in an effort to provide direction and structure to the national fraternity movement (Rudolph, 1990). Today, the NIC consists of sixty-four men's fraternities. The National Pan-Hellenic Council, Inc., (NPHC) was founded in 1929 as the governing body of the historically black fraternities and sororities currently has nine organizations affiliated.

### **Struggles, Misconceptions, and Decline**

After the conclusion of World War II, a significant number of men and women went back to college using the benefits found with the Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1944 also known as the GI bill. Many of these veterans were attracted to fraternity life due in part to its formal structure, comradery, and ability to bring together students with similar interests and desires (Robson, 1977). As a product of this enrollment and interest,

the numbers of affiliated members grew strongly and rapidly during the 1950s and 1960s. While fraternity housing options were popular prior to the War, the post war period ushered more of a desire and need for housing arranged by fraternities. The existing campus housing could not provide for the increased enrollment of students, and fraternity and sorority houses proved to be advantageous for both members and college and university administration. The growth of college enrollment and organization interest increased as well as declined throughout the next several decades with a decline in the 1960s when the Vietnam War occurred. However, a steady increase occurred in the early 1970s as students regained confidence in themselves and interest in the values, principles, and missions of fraternities was rejuvenated (Robson, 1977).

### **An Era of Diversification & Growth**

The Hispanic student population began to increase in the 1970s, and in a similar manner as their contemporaries, these students felt a need to have a community to call their own. Latino fraternities and sororities emerged on college campuses as a result of Hispanic students seeking organizations that understood their roots, traditions, and personal and educational needs. In 1975 at Kean University, a group of Latino students met to discuss the establishment of a unique Latino Greek organization. These men founded Lambda Theta Phi Fraternidad Latina, Inc., and the women of this interest group formed Lambda Theta Alpha Latin Sorority, Inc. In the early 1980s a number of Latino-based fraternities and sororities were founded. While these organizations were founded as Latino-based organizations, membership remained open and continues to be open to all cultures, thus serving as home to students from other ethnic origins (Anson & Marchesani, 1991).

In the 1980s, the college student culture shifted in the country, and interest in fraternities expanded with the largest number of students joining organizations since their inception (Anson & Marchesani, 1991). The student interest and ultimately the generous acceptance rates of these organizations offered a helping hand to the exhausted finances of chapters which resulted in deferred maintenance of residential facilities and fewer programs and services nationally for their members. While growth during this time was significant, this frequently unregulated growth with little supervision by campuses and national governing bodies created largely deregulated student organizations on most college campuses without much support or guidance to ensure the successful growth and development of chapters and students. During the 1980s and 1990s, this deregulation resulted in fraternal organizations lacking the core values, principles, and purpose of their organizations from generations prior. These distinctions were particularly apparent with an increase in alcohol abuse, hazing and the rapport with the host campus.

In 1997, leaders of the various Latino organizations coordinated a series of meetings around the country to pave the way for the National Association of Latino Fraternal Organizations, Inc. (NALFO). Their hope was that this organization would serve as a national support system for Latino organizations and their members. Currently, NALFO includes seventeen organizations from around the United States (NALFO, 2016). Mu Sigma Upsilon was founded in 1981 as the first multicultural sorority in the United States. It, along with 12 other organizations, make up the National Multicultural Greek Council (NMGC), “which is an umbrella council for a coalition of Multicultural Greek-letter organizations established in 1998” (NMGC, 2015, np).

In addition to Black, Latino, and multicultural organizations, there are groups that have been created to serve the needs of other ethnic, racial, and cultural populations (Anson & Marchesani, 1991). The most recent of the umbrella organizations is “The National Asian Pacific Islander American Panhellenic Association (NAPA). “NAPA is an association of collegiate fraternities and sororities with an interest in culture and serving the Asian and Pacific Islander community” (NAPA, 2015).

### **Future Outlook of Fraternal Organizations**

Over the past several decades’ fraternities and sororities have been challenged because they have not enforced modeling behavior that reflects espoused values and missions. The changing legal climate in the United States has proven to be very difficult for fraternal organizations. As the 1980s brought an increase to the drinking age, the idea of risk management became a significant aspect of fraternity and sorority life. The cost of operating fraternal organizations increased considerably with the requirements of increased insurance and increased regulations as it related to anti-hazing laws and social event liability regulations.

In the past decade, social justice organizations, as well as the court system in the country, have challenged fraternal organizations’ freedom to associate and to remain single-gender. This age of increased organizational standards and guidelines, legal regulations and expectations of this new generation of students and their often highly engaged parents have led to changes in the contemporary fraternity and sorority experience. In 2014, the North American Interfraternity Conference reported that there were more than 372,090 undergraduate fraternity members in 6,136 NIC chapters on roughly 800 college and university campuses in the United States. These fraternity men

accumulated 3.8 million hours of community service and raised 20.3 million dollars for philanthropic causes. The all-fraternity GPA was nationally 2.912 versus the all-male GPA of 2.892 (NIC, 2015). These numbers reinforce the idea that fraternity and sorority life is a meaningful piece of the college and university experience. However, it may be noted that fraternal organizations, institutions of higher education, and professional associations must work in unison to ensure their continued successful existence. In order to prepare for a prolonged partnership among higher education institutions and Greek Letter organizations “colleges and universities must ensure that fraternity members live up to the standards expected of all students and the standards that fraternities themselves espouse. When groups of individuals fail to meet these goals, administrators and fraternity leaders must act decisively to stem further abuse and reaffirm the institution’s overarching educational mission” (Kuh, Pascarella, and Wechsler, 1996, pp. 1-13).

### **Nationally Espoused Values, Principles, and Standards**

A significant struggle for national organizations, local chapters, institutions, and individual members is to work to resolve the often times disconnected relationship between the espoused values, standards, and missions and the often questionable behavior in which some organizations, and/or members participate (Callais, 2005; Dugan, 2008; Dungy, 1999; Earley, 1998; Gose, 1997; Kuh & Arnold, 1993; Lord, 1987; Maisel, 1990; Malaney, 1990; Pike, 2000). This section will provide several examples of standards, values, missions, policy statements and general expectations from institutions of higher education, the North American Interfraternity Conference (NIC), Greek organizations, and professional student affairs associations in hopes to provide a better understanding of what is espoused and what is expected of these organizations.

## Higher Education Institutional Standards & Expectations

While many of the questionable acts of fraternal organizations have been around for quite some time, as higher education in the nation was transforming in the latter part of the twentieth century, institutions were now being forced to act efficiently and respond to these infractions. It was seen by institutions that local chapters were not stopping or dealing with internal issues such as hazing, alcohol abuse, and other negative behavior, so institutions were pressured to take an increased active role. One approach which was popular in the 1990s and still has a significant role today was the establishment of commissions on institutions which were “intended to define clearly the institutions relationship with, and expectations of, Greek organizations” (Shonrock, 1998, p.80). These commissions established comprehensive plans and models such as *The Miami Model for Greek Excellence* at Miami University and *Greek Life: A Foundation for the Future* at the University of Maryland at College Park (Shonrock, 1998).

These programs, and others like them worked to develop models that recognized, appreciated, and supported existing standards that were referenced in the charters, constitutions, and bylaws of organizations. An example of this alignment comes from the University of Maryland at College Park where Drury Bagwell, Associate Vice Chancellor for student affairs stated,

Before writing *Greek Life*, we went back to all of our nationals on campus and looked at what they say they exist for. Then we developed a game plan that tries to meet those purposes. At the core of this are two very important features: (1) we’re trying to change the culture without wiping out the system; and (2) we’re trying to change the package so students who would be interested in joining are



the kinds of people who would do community service, focus on scholarship, want to bond with others in a constructive way, and develop lasting ties with the institution. (Pavela, 1995b, p. 493)

The goals of *Greek Life* and other models were to work to develop organizations so that they became complimentary to an institution's greater mission and help Greek organizations identify and align with the ideals expressed in their rituals. "Performance standards of *Greek Life* included membership development, chapter development, chapter outreach, and chapter facility management" (Shonrock, 1998 p. 80). As an example of how the standards related to organization and member success, the standard for membership development addressed academic achievement, the idea of deferred/delayed rush, and the overall education program of new members (Pavela, 1996). In general, *Greek Life* and other models understand and identify "the high ideals of scholarship, friendship, leadership, and service, among other principles, can be realized by the implementation of the standards" (Pavela, 1995a, pp. 506-507). Although models such as these were not the only changes occurring within higher education institutions in terms of aligning espoused standards and those being enacted by fraternities and sororities, they were significant in supporting the development and growth of institutional offices and dedicated staffing to manage and lead these groups on college and university campuses.

**North American Interfraternity Conference (NIC) Standards, Values, & Mission**

The North American Interfraternity Conference (NIC) is considered a trade association, which was founded in 1909 and represents 74 international and national men's fraternities (NIC, 2015). "The NIC serves to advocate the needs of its member fraternities through enrichment of the fraternity experience, advancement and growth of

the fraternity community, and enhancement of the educational mission of the host institutions” (NIC, 2015, np). The organization has a membership of approximately 350,000 undergraduate members which are part of the over 5,500 chapters found on more than 800 campuses in North America (NIC, 2015).

The organization, which is located in Indianapolis, Indiana, has a leadership structure which includes a professional full-time office staff as well as a governing volunteer Board of Directors. In 2012 the NIC Board of Directors approved the establishment of a committee, the Franklin Group to develop essential standards for NIC individual members and their organizations. The Franklin Group was an assembly of college and university presidents, national and international fraternities and sororities and other higher education leaders. The NIC, along with higher educational constituents called for values congruency among the fraternity and sorority community and the implementation of change to better position these organizations for sustainability. The document, which was ultimately produced by the Franklin Group, stressed that both host institutions and organizations need to implement changes so that an organization’s ideals were more in line with what they were living, both as organizations and individual members. “In later meetings, these college presidents indicated that they were preparing to implement Values Congruence with or without NIC participation” (NIC, 2015, np). While the NIC states that their standards were not created as a response to the Values Congruence document, the standards committee with the NIC realized that “despite differences of approach and language, nearly all of the issues addressed in Values Congruence would also be addressed in their organization’s standards proposal. The

Standards document was approved by the NIC House of Delegates in April 2004” (NIC, 2015, np).

“The leadership of the North-American Interfraternity Conferences 74 member fraternities believe that this will propel fraternities to be who we say we are” (NIC, 2015, np). The standards urge organizations and college and university leadership to create changes to the fraternity system and asks members to live to the highest standards of fraternity membership which are aligned with the values and standards they once espoused nationally.

The NIC believes that the creation of these standards is a unique collaborative partnership between the association, member organizations and campuses which will ultimately improve the fraternal experience. While the NIC recognizes that each organization has both similarities and unique differences, the standards developed strive to embrace common principles which are regularly shared by all of their member organizations. The principles include “academic success, service and philanthropy within our community, leadership development, and social skill development” (NIC, 2015, np). These four principles form the foundation of these standards recognized and accepted by all member organizations.

In its current structure, the NIC does not have a system in place to verify compliance of its member organizations to the standards. In order for a sanction to be charged against a member organization, a complaint would need to be filed with the association “for the NIC to become involved in any situation between a member fraternity and a host institution that has not been resolved to the satisfaction of both parties” (NIC, 2015, np). The North-American Interfraternity Conference supports the

implementation and understanding of the standards using the funding and support of various initiatives to challenge fraternity leaders to move their organization in a positive direction. These initiatives include seven unique programs with the goal to educate, challenge, and re-focus organizations including the Undergraduate Interfraternity Institute (UIFI) “which is a values based institute that challenges participants to develop a personal plan of action and to make a commitment to leading their organizations through the change process. Within this institute there is considerable focus on the positive aspects of fraternity and sorority life” (NIC, 2015, np). During this particular institute, the facilitators and attendees celebrate the history of fraternities and sororities in addition to conversing about the issues and challenges that threaten the future of fraternities and sororities. The institute has a primary focus on living an organization’s values and identifying occasions for growth, development, and overall improvements. As a formal take-a-way program, participants are able to develop a personalized action plan for their chapters, councils, and Greek communities (NIC, 2015).

### **National Greek Letter Organizations’ Standards, Values, & Missions**

National organizations have also worked to establish wide-ranging standards and expectations which support their own organizations overarching values, ideals, principles, and organizational mission (Gose, 1997). The standards address many areas within the organization from chapter operations, code of conduct, community involvement, financial management, fraternity education, facilities, rules, membership risk management, ritual, scholarship and even alumni relations (Shonrock, 1998). In reaction to ongoing problems such as alcohol use, hazing and other safety issues, some organizations have adopted a risk management policy from the Fraternity Insurance Purchasing Group (FIPG). This

policy outlines standards and expectations regarding alcohol and drugs, hazing, sexual abuse and harassment, health and fire safety, and general risk management education (Shonrock, 1998).

### **Student Affairs Professional Association Standards**

Higher Education and the area of student affairs have developed their own standards and expectations for working with Greek organizations. While standards and expectations are not unique to these type of organizations, they are helpful in benchmarking how much and to what degree support and guidance are provided to these groups. The Council for the Advancement of Standards (CAS) was formed in 1979 with collaborative efforts from the American College Personnel Association (ACPA) and the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA). The goal of this organization was to establish, publicize, and promote professional standards and guidelines for the area of student affairs (Council for the Advancement of Standards, 2015). The standards that are developed and disseminated apply to a wide range of programs, including the advising and management of Greek organizations. The CAS standards offer a structure and method for institutionalized program and services assessment.

CAS has researched and developed two documents which outline and describe their standards; Fraternity and Sorority Advising: Self-Assessment Guide and Standards and Guidelines for Fraternity and Sorority Advising (Council for the Advancement of Standards, 2015). Both documents are applicable to student affairs staff at all levels interested in working with Greeks to establish standards consistent with their espoused values, standards, and missions.

The Fraternity and Sorority Advising: Self-Assessment Guide is divided into thirteen parts: mission, program, leadership and management, organization and administration, human resources, funding, facilities, legal responsibilities, equal opportunity and affirmative action, campus and community relations, multicultural programs and services, ethics, and evaluation (Shonrock, 1998). The guide works to allow professionals to indicate if an organization is in compliance or noncompliance by utilizing specific and measurable assessment measures.

The National Association of Student Personnel Administrators created the document entitled “Reasonable Expectations” which established a conceptual framework for student affairs staff to establish and evaluate standards and overall organizational standards (Kuh, Lyons, Miller, Trow, J., 1995). The document identifies the need to strike a balance between the expectations that organizations have for the college or university and the expectations the college or university has for the organization. The goal is to encourage all stakeholders to develop safe environments where substantial learning can take place and students grow both personally and academically.

Both the CAS Standards and the Reasonable Expectations document work to identify, develop, and evaluate standards and expectations for Greek letter organizations. While neither document provides every step to develop effective standards and expectations, they do highlight the role of the members as active participants in the learning community, side by side with faculty, staff, and administrators.

R.L. Orians, the Executive Director of Pi Kappa Alpha Fraternity, argued that establishing standards and expectations for Greek letter organizations is made more complex by the acknowledgement that “people today, and college-age students in

particular, are having a very difficult time holding each other accountable. Greek chapters certainly need to do a better job and all of us need to do a better job [in this regard] teaching them how” (as cited in Shonrock, 1998, p. 83).

When trying to study and understand how organizations are following a prescribed set of values, principles, or standards, it is equally important to recognize that what individuals say they are doing could be significantly different from what is actually occurring. This phenomenon is captured by the concept of espoused theories and theories in use designed by Chris Argyris and Donald Schon (1974) and reshaped by George D. Kuh and Elizabeth Whitt (1988).

### **Theories of Action: Espoused Theory & Theory-In-Use**

The work of Argyris and Schon has been influential in the process of examining the conscious and unconscious reasoning processes. Argyris and Schon (1974) assert that people develop and retain maps in their heads about how to plan, implement, and review their actions. They further assert that few people are aware that the maps they use to take action in everyday situations are not the theories they explicitly promote as their own values, morals, and beliefs. It is important to understand that this is not only the discussion of the difference between what people say and actually do. Furthermore, they suggest that there is a theory consistent with what people say and a theory consistent with what they do. This is why Argyris and Schon promote that it is not just a distinction between "theory and action but between two different "theories of action" (Argyris, Putnam & McLain Smith, 1985, p.82). These concepts of espoused theory and theory-in-use created by Argyris and Schon parallels, to some extent, the work of Kuh & Whitt (1988). In this model the behaviors which a person actually exhibits and are visible to an

observer is their theory-in-use, while the behaviors, ideas, values, and principles which they may verbally profess or believe internally are their espoused theory. The difficulty becomes when there is disconnect between the two which negatively affects someone's opinion of them, or their organization. While this is not always the case, many times individuals or organizations may be unaware that their theories-in-use are not the same as their espoused theories. This becomes increasingly important when individual organizations, or fraternity and sorority system as a whole try to portray a noble and academically complimentary existence. With today's technological advances including access to the internet and social media, the court of public opinion plays a large role in the success or failure of these organizations.

### **Espoused & Enacted Values, Principles, & Standards**

A relationship between values, principles, and standards of Greek letter organizations and the theories of action described above are evident when looking at the characteristics which Greek letter organizations traditionally hold very close to their heart. These espoused values are expressed in their rituals, traditions and programs and usually take the shape of "moral advancement, integrity, truth, goodness, social responsibility, sacred trust, and honor" (Earley, 1998, p. 39). While every organization has their own unique values and standards, these previously mentioned ideals are traditionally found in creeds, mottos, and other artifacts which support the presence of fraternities and sororities (Earley, 1998).

Kuh & Whitt (1988) label standards and values as 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 while enacted values are those that guide policy, decision making, and other practices” (Kuh & Whitt, 1988, p. 7). Kuh & Arnold (1993) have argued that these values and beliefs “constitute a world-view shared by the members of the group [and] are so strongly held by group members that any other way of thinking or behaving is practically inconceivable” (p. 331). While espoused and enacted values inform a member’s behavior, espoused values may not be reflected in the actions of everyone in the group (Kuh & Whitt, 1988). This becomes important when evaluating the concept of Greek letter organizations’ espoused values, principles and standards that are actually in use. This distinction between values shows that there are typically inconsistencies between what members say are their organizational values and what they actually do both publically and privately.

Because of this inconsistency, it is important to identify and study the congruency among espoused values and organization’s actions. An organization’s espoused values are often reflected in the tangible and intangible items from historical documents, ceremonies and rituals and public and private mottos, slogans, and marketing. While these values are publicly espoused, they are typically asserted strongest by the national organization; and traditionally may become less prevalent as they reach individual chapters. This disconnect between the espoused and enacted standards and values typically comes in the form of the actions, statements, and teachings of an organization’s local chapters and members from college and university campuses across the nation. This disconnect increases the difficulty for national organizations to assert that their

organization as a whole stand for particular values, and that their members comprehend and put into use these standards and values.

National fraternities and sororities have traditionally preached that their organization's values, principles, and standards are "a duty to shape men and women into responsible adults, model citizens, and ethical leaders" (Earley, 1998, p. 39); however, there are very few studies that truly "identify whether the actions of fraternity and sorority members [are] consistent with their organizations' values" (Matthews et al., 2009, p. 30). Professional associations and scholars have stated that for Greek organizations to be seen as a complimentary and integral part of an institution there must be "congruence between their actions and their stated purpose and mission" (Matthews et al., 2009, p. 30).

When looking at research relating to the challenges facing fraternities such as alcohol and drug abuse, physical violence, academic success, and diversity and inclusiveness, there is a visible divergence among "national Greek organizations' statements upholding personal integrity and scholarship" (Reis & Trockel, 2003, p. 2) and the rowdy, sometimes violent and dangerous behavior of chapter members. This is seen by many, including college and university officials as "an unacceptable paradox" (Reis & Trockel, 2003, p. 2). These discrepancies between what is espoused and actually put into action are "exhibited through socially disruptive, "self-destructive behavior" (Matthews et al., 2009, p. 30). These behaviors, although they do not parallel the espoused values of the organization, continue to occur and hurt the growth and sustainability of the fraternal movement.

A growing body of research illustrates how individual fraternity and sorority members promoted practices and traditions inconsistent with espoused higher educational institutional values which include but are not limited to alcohol abuse, academic dishonesty, sexual harassment and assault, as well as general inappropriate behavior (Kuh et. al, 1996; Pike, 2000; Whipple & Sullivan, 1998), but few studies identified whether the actions of fraternity and sorority members were consistent with their own national organizations' values. For institutions to value these organizations, Callais noted, "fraternities and sororities must have congruence between their actions and their stated purpose and mission" (2005 p. 33). While the concept of personal and organizational values can and should be seen in all members, the idea of Values-Based leadership places the emphasis of espousing and creating congruence among members in the hands of organization leaders (George, 2003).

### **Values-Based Leadership**

The definition and tenants of values-based leadership are not necessarily easy to identify. Unlike many other leadership styles which have more concrete guiding principles or characteristics (George, 2003), the key principle of being a value-based leader is staying true to one's values. It requires that a leader's personal and organizational values are aligned and as a leader they must lead others remaining consistent with not only an organization's beliefs, but their own values. Leadership scholars (Bass & Avolio, 1993; Bass & Steidlmeier, 1999; Brown & Treviño, 2006; Gardner & Avolio, 2005) define values based leadership as those with a core moral, ethical foundation.

Some leadership approaches that align with values-based leadership include the social change model, spiritual, servant, authentic, ethical and transformational leadership. This Values Based Leadership approach to leadership makes the assumption that leaders and those who they lead have principles that are the same; therefore, little time is spent on dealing with conflicting views towards an organizations' goals, visions, or purpose. This also means that an organization will expect its members to behave in a manner that is conducive to integrity, and overall sustainability of the organization since the cohesive organization would not support or condone anything else.

The evolution and development of values based leadership occurred in response to changing times and culture. With significant moral and ethical challenges facing all types of organizations from non-profit civic and educational organizations such as fraternities and sororities to multi-billion dollar corporations, change was needed in how leaders lead organizations. As moral and ethical challenges became more common and ingrained in our cultural landscape, academic scholars and practitioners in all fields began to challenge the qualities needed to be a successful leader. Theorists started to focus more on the importance of ethics, morality, and values in leaders (May, Chan, Hodges, & Avolio, 2003; Luthans & Avolio, 2003; George, 2003; Avolio & Gardner, 2005; Brown & Treviño, 2006).

George (2003) approached values-based leadership from a business perspective arguing that leaders are needed who “lead with purpose, values and integrity; leaders who build enduring organizations, motivate their employees to provide superior customer service, and create long term value for shareholders” (p. 9). This approach is appropriate in looking at fraternities in hopes that there can be more effective leaders, who lead

organizations which have standards, values, and goals that align with their national organization and affiliated institutions. When organizations begin to focus on values above everything else beginning with the way in which they recruit new members, the recruitment process will attract potential members who truly embody the ideals of an organization and help reduce the chances of admitting individuals who may have inconsistent values, goals, and missions as the national organization and local chapter. Incorporating values-based recruitment, and engraining this approach in all aspects of organizational leadership will help empower all members to make the most of their collegiate fraternal experience by making conscious moral, ethical, and responsible decisions about their actions and choices.

### **Organizational Culture Model**

The ability to understand how an organization's culture influences an individual's behavior is an important aspect of accurately studying the values and standards of organizations and its members. Schein's (1993) organizational culture model shows the role of how an organization influences an individual to develop characteristics, traits, behaviors and ultimately make visible the culture of an organization. Schein (1993) describes culture as:

A pattern of shared basic assumptions that the group learned as it solved its problems of external adaptation and internal integration, which has worked well enough to be considered valid and, therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to those problems (p. 12).

In this model Schein describes culture from the standpoint of the observer and not the organization's members. Schein divided the model into three different levels. The

first level focuses on the organization's artifacts and symbols, visible and recognizable attributes that can be seen, felt, and heard by someone on the outside of the organization. Artifacts display what is visible to those internal and external to the organization. Specific to fraternities, Schein includes "physical space, group member mannerisms and dress, awards and recognition, as well as organizational mottos, creeds, and symbolism" (Cory, 2011, p. 16). The second level of Schein's model are the espoused values or professed culture of the organization. These typically take the form of standards, values, and rules concerning conduct. These "are typically made known when studied through interviews and questionnaires, but is not clearly seen by observers" (Cory, 2011, p. 16).

The third level of the model includes an organization's basic underlying assumptions. These assumptions are deeply embedded in the organization's culture, and are not traditionally recognizable to an observer and may only be unconsciously expressed between group members. "Members of the group become enculturated over time and may no longer recognize the elements of the organization's culture that were once apparent to them" (Cory, 2011, p. 16). This level is related to the concept of espoused theory and theory-in-action by showing the potentially negative relationship that extended exposure to an organization may cause as a member navigates the actions and behaviors which they choose to engage and the assumptions and criteria they use to rationalize their decisions.

Schein's (1993) model assists us in looking at fraternal organizations as a culture which influences its members and can ultimately work to create positive or negative cultural change for participants. Schein (1993) provides the following attributes associated with culture:

- 1) Observed behavioral regularities when people interact, which include the language they use, customs, traditions, and rituals,
- 2) Group norms, which are formed by the evolution of standards and values,
- 3) Espoused values, that the organization uses publicly to state their focus,
- 4) Formal philosophy, these are their formal policies and ideological principles that guide actions,
- 5) Rules of the “game” are formed as a way of getting along in the organization,
- 6) Climate; this is how the group members interact with one another,
- 7) Embedded skills or special competencies that are displayed by group members and the ability to pass down skills, knowledge from generation to generation,
- 8) Habits of thinking, mental models, and/or linguistics paradigms form the perceptions, thought, and language used by group members and is taught to new members early in the socialization process,
- 9) Shared meaning through interaction between group members, and
- 10) “Root metaphors” or integrating symbols are developed and shared with the organization that convey ideas and feelings about the group. (pp. 9-10)

The three levels of Schein’s model are often compared to the structure of an onion as it relates to the different layers of an organization’s culture and the ability to influence and produce change. In order for substantial cultural change to occur, an organization’s members must be willing to discover the fundamental characteristics of their organization’s culture. The process, while easily illustrated and described, is a transformation process in which current behavior must be unlearned prior to new behavior taking its place (Schein, 2004).

### **Previous Related Research on Congruency of Values & Standards**

While there is significant amounts of research concerning Greek letter organizations, this research tends to focus around a limited number of broad content areas including (a) ways in which these organizations support or detract from the mission of a college or university; (b) the ways in which these organizations add to a members learning, personal development, or leadership capacity, and (c) how negative stereotypes are identified and perceived by organization's members, campus community members, and the general public. While some of this research does touch upon aspects of standards and values, this is done at a micro-level focusing on particular standards or values and not looking at the larger macro-structure which has been developed by national organizations, accrediting bodies, and trade organizations for the advancement of the fraternal movement.

In 1998, Michael Shonrock published a journal article titled "Standards and Expectations for Greek Letter Organizations". Within this article he outlined the various standards and expectations which were in place for fraternities and sororities at that time. Over the years there has been little change in the standards in place for fraternal organizations, but instead the focus has been to bring congruency between these standards and those in which fraternal organizations are operating. With the introduction and passage of the NIC Standards, it is now possible to uniformly collect data surrounding organization's understanding and support of a single set of standards which are required to be adhered to by the 74 member fraternities which make up the North American Interfraternity Conference. The "standards embrace the common principles shared by all our organizations. Academic success, service and philanthropy within our



community, leadership development, and social skill development are the cornerstones of the standards” (NIC, 2015, np).

### **Conclusion**

While values, principles, and standards are espoused as the foundation of fraternities, the importance of these items are often put into question when members stray from these as they participate in their organization and the fraternity and sorority systems on their campuses. The formation of standards was intended to take the various traditionally intangible, vague, and varied values and principles of organizations and create a type of consistent and measurable structure which can be used to guide, assess, and discipline organizations. By looking at the culture of an organization; a scholar, practitioner, or organization leader is better able to attempt to assess the influence this culture has on how organization members exhibit the values, principles, and standards of the fraternal organization and the college or university. When simultaneously looking at the effects of culture, and the theories of action which are both espoused and in-use, a better understanding of the organization, and its behavior is achieved.

## **Chapter 3**

### **Methodology**

Although there is a growing body of current research on Greek letter organizations (Dugan, 2008; Gragreen, 2012; Mattson, 2006; Sullivan, 2012) there is limited (Matthews, Featherstone, Bluder, Gerling, Loge, & Messenger, 2009; Reuter, Baker, Hernandez, & Burear, 2012) timely research that examines the espoused values, principles and standards of organizations and those actually in use by the individual members who make up these groups. This study endeavored to uncover and understand the values, principles and standards espoused and those which are in use in everyday situations by fraternity members. By providing an in-depth look into the values, principles and standards in use by organization members, the present study has provided a deeper understanding of their experiences and personal development as members of Greek letter organizations.

This methodology chapter provides details about the design and implementation of the research conducted. This study followed a qualitative single case study research design with embedded units (Yin, 2014), using document analysis (Hodder, 1994; Yin, 2014), semi-structured interviews (Creswell, 2013; Rubin & Rubin, 2012; Yin, 2014), and direct observations (Yin, 2014). The organizations which were identified in this study exist as single entities within the boundaries of a college or university. This chapter discusses the rationale for the structure and design of this case study, presents the research questions, the propositions and rival explanations, and the unit of analysis. In addition, the chapter identifies the data sources, data collection strategies and techniques, and the strategies of analysis of the various data sources.

## **Rationale for Design**

A qualitative case study is an approach to research that aids in facilitating the exploration of a phenomenon within its unique context using multiple sources of data (Yin, 2014). By utilizing a case study approach, the method ensures that the issue identified as central to the study is not explored through one lens, but rather a variety of lenses which allows for the phenomenon to be clearly explored. Yin (2014) bases his approach to case study on a constructivist paradigm in which truth is relative and it is dependent on one's perspective. A unique aspect of case study research that is particularly important to this study is the ability for participants to describe their views of reality through stories, which enables the researcher to better understand the participants' actions. Case study research was appropriate for this study for a variety of reasons as described later in this chapter including the structure and context of the research questions and the contextual boundaries of the study as they are relevant to understanding the potential phenomenon.

The selection of the embedded single case study approach occurred for its ability to look at sub-units that are situated within a larger case. Data could be analyzed within the subunits separately, between the different subunits, or across all of the subunits (Yin, 2014). By following the structure and design formulated by Robert Yin (2014), I desired to have a study which encompasses multiple data gathering sources and techniques to explore the breadth of the problem and provide opportunities to generate research to aid various stakeholders. This study followed Yin's (2014) recommendations for case study research. The study was structured to build from theoretical propositions which were identified prior to the study, by engaging in pattern matching, specifically explanation

building. The process of explanation building uses the propositions or assumptions identified prior to starting the data collection, during data analysis to focus the analysis of data to either support or challenge the assumptions originally hypothesized (Yin, 2014). The process of explanation building was used in part to address the concerns over both the internal and external validity of the findings and following a chain of evidence to successfully answer the study's research questions.

### **Purpose of the Study / Purpose Statement**

The study sought to examine and identify the level of congruency among common values, principles, and standards espoused and in use by the members of North American Interfraternity Conference (NIC) fraternities at a mid-sized, northeastern, public university. These common principles as defined by the NIC and are shared by all of their member organizations and include “academic success, service and philanthropy, leadership development, and social skill development” (NIC, 2015, np). These four principles form the foundation of the NIC Standards, values which served as the unifying factor of the organizations studied and allow for the unit of analysis to be identified and isolated. While the divide between the espoused and enacted values, principles, and standards may differ greatly among organizations, it was the hope that a clearer picture can be drawn, identifying contributing factors and aiding the improvement of a contested public image, as well as allowing current members to gain perspective on the originating purpose of fraternity life.

### **Research Questions & Propositions**

In addition to the research questions which guided this study, theoretical propositions were identified, which according to Yin “would have shaped your data collection plan and therefore would have yielded analytic priorities” (2014, p. 30). The

research questions, propositions, and rival explanations which were identified prior to data collection are as follows.

Research Question #1: How do the values, principles, and standards espoused by individual fraternity members align with those common values, principles, and standards which serve as the foundation for the national standards influencing their organizations?

Theoretical Proposition 1: While nationally espoused values, principles and standards may inform an organization member's behavior, those espoused concepts lack integration or patterning (Schein, 1993) necessary for structural stability of an organization and its culture. There will appear to be disconnect between values, principles, and standards which are espoused by local organization members and chapters and those of the national organizations (Argyris & Schon, 1974).

Rival Explanation 1: Local organization members feel that their espoused values and beliefs "constitute a world-view shared by members of the group [and] are so strongly held by the group that any other way of thinking or behaving is practically inconceivable" (Kuh & Arnold, 1993, p. 331).

Research Question #2: How are espoused national values, principles, and standards reflected through the actions of individual fraternity members?

Theoretical Proposition 2: While nationally espoused values, principles, and standards initially affect member's behaviors through their assimilation process (new member education), these values, principles, and standards from which standards are eventually formed may not be reflected in the actions of an entire

organization (Kuh & Whitt, 1988). In organizations where the espoused values, principles, and standards are reasonably congruent with the underlying assumptions of the organization, the articulation of those ideals is evident in a noticeably strong and cohesive organization which holds true to its national values, principles and standards.

Rival Explanation 1: A researcher will not see uniform support of nationally espoused values, principles and standards. A portion of a local organization such as new members or leadership may exhibit these characteristics, while disconnect may be seen in the general membership.

Research Question #3: What programs and services are available to organizations to encourage congruency of nationally espoused values, principles and standards? What difficulties do organizations' members perceive exist in successfully contributing towards congruency?

Theoretical Proposition 3: The national programs and services which exist strive to promote and encourage congruency among national organization's values, principles and standards and those espoused and exhibited by local chapters.

Rival Explanation 1: While national programs and services are present, the culture of the organization is continuously recreated; meaning it is created by its members and not transmitted through traditional teaching and learning strategies. The socialization process allows for new members to develop an understanding and become informally socialized to the goals and objectives of the organization, while allowing the reformulation of one's identity within the organization for members who have a history with the organization (Tierney, 1988).

### **Research Site / Setting**

This study took place at Sherman University which is a mid-size, northeastern, public university with a growing fraternity and sorority population that is currently undergoing systematic change with the addition of new professional staff advisors and increased administrative oversight. The host institution focuses on a liberal arts and sciences education, with a growing graduate level curriculum. The campus consists of approximately two-thousand acres and is situated in a small suburban town with 35% percent of the undergraduate population residing in on-campus housing. The population of students involved in fraternity and sorority life is 580 students, which is 7.9% of the overall undergraduate student population. The fraternity numbers total 197 students, which is 6.5% of the undergraduate male population. With a growing fraternity and sorority population, combined with new strategic leadership, this institution provided a rich environment for the study which allowed members to be supported to learn and grow, but also to be accountable for their actions.

I decided to conduct my study on Sherman University a pseudonym because of the growing fraternity and sorority population, as well as the desire to hold these organizations accountable for their actions. The establishment of a multi-layered advisement structure, dedicated professional staff, as well as a team of professionals and student leaders to deal with policy infractions, provides a strong foundation of support of these organizations. By looking at a university with a supportive network for these organizations, it is the hope that any institutional hurdles which would impact the organization's ability to follow various values, principles, and standards are reduced.

## **Unit of Analysis**

The unit of analysis within a study is the definition of what the “case” is within a case study. In this study, multiple fraternal organizations which are recognized at the local level by both the national organization and the higher education institution will be studied. The organizations selected make-up a portion of the fraternity and sorority life system at the host institution. While these organizations and their members are a substantial portion of Greek Life at the university, the study did not look at the entire fraternity and sorority population. The specific organizations being studied are fraternal organizations which are members of the North American Interfraternity Conference (NIC). This specific population was selected as the case in this study due to their sharing membership in the same umbrella organization and being held accountable to a unifying set of standards which should be universal for all participating organizations. I decided to look at all of the identified organizations as one single case for several reasons, including the ability to focus on the larger picture facing the fraternity system, and not the individual differences among organizations. I also felt that by focusing on all organizations which are affiliated with the NIC, the apprehension among members that their own organization will be singled out or identified is removed, which hopefully provided for richer data collection.

Yin (2014) has suggested that placing boundaries on a case can prevent a study from becoming overwhelming or straying from the research questions. The study was bound by both time and location in order to allow for the study to remain reasonable in scope. While the time period of this case study and the general focus of data collection is spring 2016, some information was collected regarding the selected organization’s past decisions as well as historical data and statistics relevant to the study.



## **Participants**

To successfully answer my research questions, it is important that I selected participants who are knowledgeable about the phenomenon being studied and are members of organizations which share similar values, principles and standards (Yin, 2014). Students were identified and selected using the homogenous purposive sampling technique based on their affiliation with a North-American Interfraternity Conference fraternity recognized on the campus of the host institution to obtain an institutional representative sample. The technique of homogeneous sampling is a purposive sampling technique that creates a sample whose participants share the same or similar characteristics. This type of sampling allows for the researchers to ask questions and examine in detail specifically the characteristics which embody the group of interest, in this case NIC member fraternities at Sherman University.

A combination of general member and elected leaders were chosen based on their affiliation with an NIC affiliated organization. These organizations were not identified by their common name in this study in order to provide for subject and organization confidentiality, and instead a pseudonym was provided for each organization for data collection and analysis purposes. Purposive sampling is a highly acceptable sampling procedure for qualitative research, particularly, when it involves selecting participants for special circumstances or rationale (Rossman & Rallis, 2012; Yin, 2014). This sampling procedure uses the judgment of a researcher with a specific purpose in mind. According to Neuman (2009), the process of purposive sampling is useful for case study research in the following situations: (1) when a researcher is interested in identifying unique cases that are highly informative, (2) when the researcher would like to select specialized

populations or individuals who are difficult to normally reach, and (3) when a researcher is interested in identifying certain types of cases for investigation. The goals of this sampling technique are to gain a stronger understanding of a case, and not to generalize the data or the findings.

Of the 12 interview participants from four organizations, four were sophomores, four were juniors and four were seniors. The sample did not include any freshman participants as interviews were conducted early in the fall semester and student are not eligible to join a Greek letter organization until their second full semester. As shown in Table 1, The organization members were selected from larger and smaller sized chapters as well as chapters which were relatively new to the campus and those which have a longer history on campus in relation to the overall Greek community. A combination of elected leaders both those holding executive level and committee chair roles and members with no formal leadership roles were studied.

Table 1

*Participant Information*

Participant #	Participant Pseudonym	Organization Pseudonym	Selection Criteria	Class Standing	Leadership
1	David	A	Small Sized	Senior	President
2	James	A	Small Sized	Junior	President
3	John	A	Small Sized	Senior	Chairperson
4	Henry	B	Older	Junior	None
5	Jason	B	Older	Senior	None
6	Scott	B	Older	Sophomore	Chairperson
7	Kevin	C	Newer	Sophomore	Chairperson
8	Jack	C	Newer	Junior	None
9	Rob	C	Newer	Sophomore	None
10	Dale	D	Large Sized	Sophomore	Vice President
11	Jim	D	Large Sized	Junior	Chairperson
12	Matthew	D	Large Sized	Senior	Chairperson

The rationale for choosing this sampling technique and population was to limit the research to organizations that share the same governing association and to compare one set of standards developed based upon principles which should be universal for all participating organizations. The process of random sampling was not considered for this study as this qualitative case study was not meant to be generalized towards a larger fraternity and sorority community. The data in this study is meant to describe and to explain the experiences of a particular set of participants or case. The sample and site selection is complimentary to the rationale of designing a study which seeks to study

common case, capturing the “circumstances and conditions of an everyday situation” (Yin, 2014, p. 52).

### **Data Collection Procedures**

Utilizing what Rubin and Rubin (2012) identify as a “naturalist-constructionist paradigm” (p. 16) the data collected reflects the participant’s own meanings developed from one’s own context and experiences. By following this guide, it allows for me to investigate the possibility for data to be diverse as it anticipates and encourages more than one reality to occur. Data collection took place in two phases. The initial phase focused on identifying and assessing espoused values, principles, and standards and involved the study of documents including organizational creeds, published principles, standards, and mission statements. The second phase was designed to assess enacted or in-use standards and values and involved semi-structured interviews and observations of fraternity members to gauge the way that espoused standards are in use by individual organization members and chapters. A key aspect of a case study research design is the use of multiple data sources, a technique which also enhances data credibility for a study (Yin, 2014). Yin identified six types of evidence: documentations, archival records, interviews, direct observations, participation-observations, and physical artifacts. This study used three data sources specifically identified by Yin (2014) which included interviews, documents, and direct observations. The data collected was sorted into a case study database to later be interpreted and coded to identify findings and/or identifiable themes. It was a priority to maintain a chain of evidence when storing the data within the database (Yin, 2014).

## **Documents**

There is importance placed in the collection and analysis of empirical materials to aid a researcher during data collection. Ian Hodder stated that these materials are “evidence in providing insight into other components of [the] lived experience” (1994, p. 398). These documents included publically accessible proposals, studies, evaluations, and news clippings (Yin, 2014) as well as brochures, organization websites, electronic and print advertisements and promotional material including the websites for the NIC and individual affiliated organizations. These materials provided background on the espoused values, principles, and standards which based on the literature (Gose, 1997), should be guiding these organizations. This information not only allowed for the creation of informed questions to use during my interviews, but as an added source of data when reviewing and identifying themes, obscurities, or possible shortcomings in the interview transcripts and observation data of the study. Yin states that for “case study research, the most important use of documents is to corroborate and argument evidence from other sources” (2014, p.107). For the purpose of this study, the documents reviewed included national level resources and not individual chapter documents created at the local level.

Table 2

*Documents Reviewed*

Source	Document Type
North American Interfraternity Conference (NIC)	Website
Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (CAS)	Website
National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA)	Website
National Fraternal Organizations (Participating Study Organizations)	Website

### **Semi-Structured Interviews**

“One of the most important sources of case study evidence is the interview” (Yin, 2014, p. 110). The ability to conduct a fluid interview, will allow the researcher to pursue a consistent line of inquiry, while still making the process more like a guided conversation than a rigid interview (Yin, 2014, p. 107).

After obtaining a list of students who affiliated with NIC member fraternities, the participants were recruited by email and casual conversations. The semi-structured one-on-one interviews were chosen as the leading data collection technique because they provided me with the ability to ask participants to reflect deeper than observable through direct observations. To guide my interviews, I developed a protocol of primary questions with additional predetermined follow-up inquiries and probes. Yin (2014) suggests focusing and developing two types of questions for the single case study protocol line of inquiry; Level 1 questions and Level 2 questions. The Level 1 questions will be the specific questions asked of those being interviewed, while the Level 2 questions are the questions which the researcher is asking of themselves in regards to the studies purpose

and goals (Yin, 2014). Prior to conducting each interview, permission was obtained to record the interview on a digital audio recorder that was transcribed at a later date (Creswell, 2013; Rubin & Rubin, 2012, Yin, 2014). Since the interviews were shorter in nature, it was my intention to keep it conversational, but following closely to my protocol for consistency and time management. The number of interviews completed was twelve, and was based on obtaining data saturation, taking into account the interview data as well as other forms of data collected.

### **Direct Observations**

I engaged in direct observations of fraternity members in their natural environment and utilized field notes to accurately and clearly paint a picture of what is observed so that others may develop a clear picture of what occurred (Yin, 2014). In case study research “the observations can range from formal to casual data collection activities” (Yin, 2014, p. 113). For this study, I conducted two observations at fraternity sponsored programs and observed the actions and behaviors of members attending and participating. I made it a point to pay attention and record the following in written notes: what attendees and participants say, participants’ body language, as well as my personal observation notes, and my reflective notes.

The process of Naturalistic observation refers to the immediate recording of behavioral occurrences in a natural setting where the descriptions of these behaviors require minimal interferences beyond what is observed and subsequently recorded (Jones, Reid, & Patterson, 1979). The method of direct observation applied in this study was the A-B-C (Antecedent-Behavior-Consequence) approach to observation and recording (Hintze, Volpe, & Shapiro, 2002). By combining field observations with other types of

case study evidence, such as interviews and documents, the “study’s findings can be based on convergence of information from different sources (Yin, 2014, p.114), and not solely from one data collection technique.

### **Data Analysis**

Yin (2014) states that researchers should use one or more of four strategies for data analysis within their study. The first strategy used was to rely on my original theories of student development, organizational theory, and leadership theory by making connections to prior experiences or interests. The second strategy was to use inductive reasoning to determine the various patterns in the data collected. This process has allowed for me to discover common themes. The third strategy was to include any possible rival explanations which I may have found in the literature review or from my data collection (Yin, 2014). In this study a number of theoretical propositions and rival explanations were developed, these propositions were based on the literature, relevant theories, and personal beliefs concerning the topic. The creation of propositions and rival explanations assisted in improving the creditability of the study by showing that the researcher sought out, considered, and was successful or unsuccessful in finding evidence to support these propositions or rival explanations.

Yin (2014) suggests working with data and determining patterns or ideas that are prevalent and reoccurring, Creswell (2013) supports this suggestion and recommends that all interviews are recorded, transcribed and printed to ensure the accuracy of a researcher’s data. Using the best practices in qualitative research, the first step in data analysis involved transcribing my recorded interviews. Subsequently, I read and reread the transcripts line by line several times to immerse myself in the collected data and utilize formal coding to categorize and contextualize data.



The primary coding technique used was in vivo coding (Saldana, 2009, p. 74) where the transcript and observation data will provide the codes to use in the coding process (p. 74). Since the in vivo codes process allows for codes to develop naturally, it assisted in providing an opportunity to capture the everyday meaning that was presented by the data. A codebook was created which assisted in keeping me organized and accurate. Analysis of participant interviews looked beyond the transcriptions and looked to identify themes during the coding process. A second and third review of data assisted in identifying visible themes. Yin (2014) and Rossman and Rallis (2012) advocate triangulation by using multiple sources of data in order to “build the picture” (p. 65) of what you are investigating. After coding transcripts and observations and initially analyzing the data, analytic memos were created to further inform the study and add to data analysis and theme generation (Saldana, 2009). The observational data was collected and organized using the ABC approach as outlined previously, this allowed for specific observable actions to be recorded which provided additional data to support and expand upon interview data (Hintze et al., 2002).

### **Pilot Case**

A pilot case was conducted at the same institution in preparation for the actual case study data collection. Yin encourages researchers to employ a pilot case study because he believes that it “will help you to refine your data collection plans with respect to both the content of the data and the procedures to be followed” (Yin, 2014, p. 96). The pilot case focused on sorority members and not fraternity members. This group was selected because of their commonalities with the actual case study sample being studied. The pilot case provided the opportunity for the development of relevant lines of

questions, as well as the potential to clarify the research design and conceptual framework (Yin, 2014). The hope of the pilot study was to provide value to myself as the researcher and was contingent upon clear reports which not only described the data collected, but also concerning “the lessons learned about both the research design and the field procedures (Yin, 2014, p. 98). The pilot case “assumed the role of a laboratory” (Yin, 2014, p. 97) and allowed me to modify and enhance the protocol, while observing a different phenomenon from a different perspective.

### **Audience**

The audience for this study is college and university administrators, fraternity and sorority national leadership, volunteer chapter advisors, higher education scholars and educators, and the leadership of professional student affairs and higher education associations.

### **Assumptions & Limitations**

When conceptualizing this study, I made it a point to be aware of my own personal biases and preconceived notions regarding fraternity and sorority life. Yin (2014) identifies that case study researchers are specifically prone to a certain degree of bias due to the stipulation that a researcher “must understand the issues beforehand, and this understanding may undesirably sway them towards supporting evidence and away from contrary evidence” (p. 76). My experiences as an undergraduate member of a fraternity, and my professional experiences working in higher education could have to some degree influenced the study, if not properly managed.

Rossman and Rallis (2012) suggest that one must understand that “inquiry is shaped by our personal interests and interpreted through our values and politics” (p. 117).

By evaluating my own beliefs, background knowledge, and espousals concerning fraternal organizations, I was positioned to examine my research findings in relation to relevant theories, research, literature, and best practices in higher education transition and success, while minimizing bias. Throughout the research process, I worked on identifying and controlling my biases and not allowing them to have influenced my study. In order to limit this potential bias, the use of critical colleagues was used throughout the study specifically during data collection and analysis. I assessed my degree of openness to contrary evidence and explanations by seeking alternative explanations from colleagues which produced documentable rebuttals.

Rossman and Rallis (2012) state that the purpose of an Institutional Review Board (IRB) is to ensure that all rules are followed and that the risk to participants is minimized. As a researcher, I understood the importance of creating and maintaining this standard, and IRB approval was obtained prior to data collection in the field. Since this study was conducted at the higher education institution that I am employed, I worked to separate myself from my professional role and responsibilities and the role of a researcher. Outside of my formal job duties, I voluntarily serve as a staff advisor to one of the organizations studied. I worked to distance myself as an advisor and as a researcher in order to preserve the quality of the study and the relationship I have with the chapter. As outlined by Yin, I strived to maintain a “strong professional competence that includes keeping up with related research, ensuring accuracy, striving for credibility, and understanding and divulging the needed methodological qualifiers and limitations to one’s work” (2014, p. 77).

The data for this study were collected at only one institution of higher education, limiting the studies generalizability. However, the intention was not to form generalizable conclusions; rather, the hope was that the findings are able to provide a perspective into the values, principle, and standards which guide organization members. Additionally, while both fraternities and sororities are considered Greek Letter Organizations, this study focused on a particular cluster of fraternities which are affiliated with the NIC and no sororities, therefore the study cannot make any assumptions regarding the standards, values, and actions of these groups. Many of the standards and values of fraternal organizations are broadly held by the general student population; therefore, this study cannot identify or imply a causal relationship as to the origin of these standards as it applies to individual fraternity members. Additionally, this study did not focus on college and university coordinated and mandated training, only that implemented at the national organization level.

Although this study intended to utilize direct observations to aid in data collection and corroborate findings identified through interviews and document analysis this proved unsuccessful (Creswell, 2013; Rossman and Rallis, 2012). While observations were conducted and recorded using the criteria described in the study's methodology, the specific type of events selected to observe proved to provide limited to no usable data. The events while fraternal in nature, were on-campus social event in which the participants neither showed congruence or incongruence in regards to values, standards, and principles.

It is my suggestion that in future studies significant attention is given to the type of event which is selected to be observed. The researcher must balance the ability to

gather valuable data and the apprehension among participants who are being observed. Being aware of one's presence as a researcher in encounters is important to reduce the potential for social desirability responses (Baxter & Jack, 2007; Krefting, 1991). A governance meeting such as Greek council in which controversial or high level decisions are discussed, debated, and decided upon may be a better representation of the values, principles, and standards which are both espoused and in use by the organizations. It may be necessary and ultimately beneficial to engage in prolonged engagement to capture observations over time. This prolonged engagement could foster a sense of trust to enable the researcher to be privy of conversations and encounters which provide richer data.

### **Reliability & Validity**

Yin (2014) identifies four tests for the quality of research designs; they include construct validity, internal validity, external validity, and reliability. Construct validity is the process of discovering the correct methods for the particular study. Internal validity refers to making inferences as a researcher based upon evidence collected. External validity is accomplished by identifying and incorporating the appropriate theory for the study, and reliability is when the data collection procedures can be repeated, and the same or similar results will be produced. I used these techniques in the study to their fullest extent so that valid conclusions were constructed. While my study did not include all of the above mentioned considerations, several were given additional attention.

Yin (2014) describes construct validity as a process of “identifying correct operational measures for the concepts being studied” (p. 46). In an effort to improve this type of validity, I utilized multiple sources of data and established and maintained a chain of evidence. The ability to successfully use these two processes has improved the

reliability of the case study. By also engaging in member checking, I was able to determine if my own findings and interpretations were comparable to the participants of the study (Merriam, 1998). Finally, the process of triangulation strengthens the validity of the study by cross verifying the data sources, the methodological approaches, and the various theory applied to the case. The case study process supported triangulation by encouraging strategies which corroborate data, and increase confidence, including the collection of data through multiple approaches (Yin, 2014).

Internal validity was supported by utilizing peer reviewers with professional experience in fraternity and higher education communities as well as additional reviewers with relevant and relatable knowledge. External validity is traditionally related to whether the findings of a study are generalizable to other populations (Merriam, 1998), however in the case of qualitative research and specifically case study research, this will be accomplished by focusing on the “development of a theory of the processes operating in the case studied, one that may well operate in other cases, but that may produce different outcomes in different circumstances” (Merriam, 1998, p. 138). The structure and word use of research questions, as well as interview questions were significant when seeking to make generalizations about a qualitative case study. By being intentional when crafting my questions, I was able to increase the level of reliability and validity of the study.

### **Conclusion**

This chapter sought to highlight the use of the single case study as an appropriate research methodology for this study. A detailed description of the study and protocols begins with a review of the decision to investigate the research questions through the use of qualitative research methodology according to the research protocols established by Yin

(2014). The nature of the case study reflecting its boundaries, descriptive nature, and population was also specified.

## **Chapter 4**

### **Findings**

This study sought to examine the organizational culture of North American Interfraternity Conference (NIC) fraternities, seeking to identify the congruency between nationally espoused values, principles, and standards and those in use by organizations at the local level. The common principles defined by the NIC are shared by all of their member organizations and include “academic success, service and philanthropy, leadership development, and social skill development” (NIC, 2015, np). By an analysis of the results acquired during this study, it is the hope that a clearer picture can be drawn, identifying contributing factors and aiding the improvement of a contested public image, as well as allowing current members to gain perspective on the originating purpose of fraternity life.

The questions guiding this study were divided into three broad categories with supplemental theoretical propositions and rival explanations provided to enhance the reliability and validity of the study. The research questions which guided the study were as follows:

Research Question #1: How do the values, principles, and standards espoused by individual fraternity members align with those common values, principles, and standards which serve as the foundation for the national standards influencing their organizations?

Research Question #2: How are espoused national values, principles, and standards reflected through the actions of individual fraternity members?



Research Question #3: What programs and services are available to organizations to encourage congruency of nationally espoused values, principles and standards? What difficulties do organizations' members perceive exist in successfully contributing towards congruency?

Using the case study approach, data was drawn from multiple sources including a review of organizational and institutional documents, direct observations, and twelve semi-structured interviews with members of the fraternity community. Through a detailed analysis of the data, a clearer understanding emerged of the culture of these organizations, and the impact culture has in relationship to the organization's values, principles, and standards. A total of 4 themes were identified after collecting and analyzing the data. These themes are "First Impressions and Enduring Values", "Formal Education or Observing Behavior", "National Intentions and Local Impact", and "Interpersonal and Interorganizational Accountability".

### **First Impressions and Enduring Values**

While values, principles, and standards related to the ways in which members conduct themselves, perform academically, and impact the community are often espoused by fraternal organizations nationally as the keystone to their organizations. These ideals are almost uniformly acknowledged at the chapter level as a guide in the way in which members carry themselves. The data suggest these values, principles, and standards were not identified as pivotal in their determination of which organization a member chose to associate. The semi-structured interviews provided detailed accounts of why members decided to pursue membership in a fraternity, as well as their specific rationale for selecting the organization with which they personally chose to associate. The three most

prominent reasons did not center around the organization's values, principles, and standards, although they did provide some explanation on where members see values, principles, and standards playing a role in their fraternity experience. All of the students interviewed identified at least one or more of the following as the rationale for choosing to join their particular organization.

### **A Sense of Belonging**

The most predominant rationale for a student joining a particular organization came from the overwhelming feeling of wanting to belong to something larger than themselves, and to associate with individuals whom they saw as individuals with whom they could interact, and feel comfortable calling a brother. Through my interviews I learned that several of the members had meaningful positive interactions with brothers of particular organizations, prior to attending formal rush events, and felt that it was never a question of what group they were going to affiliate themselves, because of the positive informal interactions through clubs and organizations, student employment, athletics, and mutual courses. Scott stated "I never planned on joining a fraternity and the only reason I did was because my friends just pushed me to get involved at college, the members convinced me to join, just by talking to me, I met just really cool people" (August 6, 2016). Henry expressed:

I was friends with some of the brothers through baseball. They encouraged me to come out to a couple of rush events, and I was able to meet other brothers. After meeting them, I just wanted a deeper connection, I thought it was interesting, and then I just moved deeper into the process, until I was a brother of the organization. I just wanted that brotherhood, just seeing the camaraderie and

hanging out with them. I wanted to be part of that. That's kind of what made me want to join. Joining a fraternity gives you a group of people that are always there to hang out with (August 27, 2016).

A majority of participants expressed the importance of this peer-to-peer interaction, and cite this "peer influence" as a driving force in their decision to join a particular fraternity. When the interactions with peers, whether through formal rush events or informal interactions, allowed them to feel like they were already a part of the organization, they were more likely to associate with that particular organization.

The reason I joined wasn't for those values. It wasn't for really the organization. It was for the people who were wearing those letters because I connected with them, not the organization. I'm really lucky that the organization I did choose, or I guess they chose me, I came into, was one of the greatest ones and probably the largest in the country, but it really wasn't the values that drove me to it. It was the people in it (Matthew, August 4, 2016).

Matthew's individual experiences with and decision to associate with a particular chapter was ultimately based on the perceived sense of belonging he experienced which was more based on the culture of the chapter and its current members, then the guiding value, principles, and standards of the national organization.

### **Parental Influences**

Several students indicated that a factor in deciding to join a particular organization was their parent's affiliation with that specific organization, or membership with another fraternal organization. Whereas some members affiliated with specific organizations following in the footsteps of their parents, siblings, or other family

members, these “legacy” affiliations were not the most prominent form of a family’s influence to become part of the Greek community. Most of those interviewed recalled hearing positive things from family involved in fraternities and sororities, those experiences made them want to become involved but did not necessarily influence interest in the specific organization they eventually chose to affiliate themselves with on campus. Rob shared “my father was in a fraternity, not the same fraternity I am in, but he told me about the great experiences he had with his brothers. The guys that are his best friends now, are his fraternity brothers” (August 24, 2016).

### **A Cultural Attraction**

Although none of the students specifically mentioned that the formal values, principles, or standards influenced them in their decision to join a group, several did provide comments that stressed the importance of cultural competency and a desire to associate at the same time with those who are from the same or similar background in order to gain a better understanding of one’s own culture, themselves, and different backgrounds in order to have diverse interactions which would prepare them for their future. These sentiments came from members who belong to organizations which identify themselves as serving an underrepresented population. James stated

I chose my fraternity mainly because of the cultural attractions, but also the attraction to the brothers I saw on campus, to not only know where you come from and who you are, but to get to know the people around you and see some of the similarities, some differences (July 13, 2016).

David expressed that “whatever culture they're bringing in, it's really cool to see how we can all come together, whether it's an event where it's all food related, or cultural history,

we can all learn something from one another, which I really like” (September 20, 2016). Rob stated that “we try to be open in sense of we don't discriminate because of race, creed, or religion. We encourage anyone to come out into our fraternity” (August 24, 2016). Dale felt strongly about how the traditions of the organization, but also those shared by the members, influenced his decision to affiliate by stating “the traditions spoke to me, the people that make up the organization make it a very warm atmosphere” (September 8, 2016). And whereas some were looking for experiences which let them learn more about their culture, others saw it as a necessity to learn about themselves, their struggles, in order to successfully navigate through college. James stated that “if you don't have a close relationship with family at home, you can have that group of people to be able to talk to and figure those things out as you learn about, and experience your culture” (July 13, 2016).

### **Values, Principles, and Standards**

As stated previously, although none of the students specifically mentioned that the formal values, principles, or standards of an organization influenced them in their decision to join an already established group on-campus, they did play a very significant role in the decision of students to bring new organizations to campus. These students, although interested in becoming part of the Greek community, felt that the offerings of groups at the time did not meet their particular needs. Specific values, principles, and standards of an organization were identified as a factor for association from the members of the organizations which were most recently founded on campus, or the interviewee was a founder of a specific chapter on campus. Although they may have had the knowledge of who they wanted to bring together from their peers to start a new fraternity,

they felt strongly that at the time there were not organizations on campus which they felt strongly about joining, and consequently looked for alternatives. Rob stated “I rushed fraternities which were already on campus, I just did not feel that they would be the right fit for me”, “we were just looking to joining something that was different, something that offered not only the whole brotherhood aspect, but went a little bit more in depth in terms of academics, and helping the community, and things like that” (August 24, 2016). Those members who sought out a new organization to bring to campus, specifically looked for organizations which shared similar values and principles.

### **Personal and Organizational Decision Making**

Although the values, principles, and standards of national organizations do not appear to be a strong influence on a member’s decision to join a particular organization, these values and principles as espoused by members through interviews seem to be a guiding force as members make personal and organizational decisions after joining and taking on leadership roles within the organization. John believed,

The values of our organization are very important to us. They keep us on the right path. It's one of the number one things that's always in the back of my mind.

Those letters mean a lot. I might not be wearing them every day but they’re always there and it makes you stop and think. Like how do you want to be seen, how do you want your organization represented. There’s always days that I feel like they are not, but more often than not everybody upholds the values. But, there are days where some people make stupid decisions, but that's just life unfortunately (September 22, 2016).

Matthew held similar beliefs and felt that the guidance he received from his national creed was significant in how he and other members live their lives.

I look at the creed, and I try to live by that. It's just a very good road map how to live your life. I definitely think people are aware of what they're doing. Everyone has those moments when they're not thinking and they do things, but I think for the majority of the time people are aware of their surroundings and the fact that people do see, especially on campus what they're doing to positively or negatively represent our fraternity. Again we put a lot of emphasis on the fact that people know when you're in Greek life, they know when you're in a fraternity and they can see that all the time (August 4, 2016).

Scott felt similarly about the connection between the pillars of his organization and the image members project on campus.

That's one of the biggest things we make sure of, to always be making good decisions on campus because you don't want to get in trouble or dishonor our organization. We live our life every day to our pillars. There have been incidents before, where a brother strayed. We act as a support system and try to make sure they know that this is the way it's supposed to be and it's for the better. We try picking them up before they fall too hard (August 6, 2016).

The values, principles, and standards that members enacted compared to those which they espoused had greater alignment when there was a sense of pressure, or perceived pressure of how to behave or conform to the standards of the organization, either nationally or locally by organization members and university and national leadership.

Although there was a portion of participants who felt that values, principles, and standards were not a critical component of their own fraternal experience, a majority felt that these values, principles, and standards should be the foundation of the experience. These participants did not feel that these values, principles, and standards were embedded into the culture of the organization. A common sentiment among members was that through the education process as a new member you are forced to learn about values and principles, but you don't learn how to truly live them. Those with the strongest espoused connection to their values, principles, and standards, saw them as a guideline to live their life and properly portray the image of a fraternity man, and not as singular words, or phrases which lacks context and meaning.

### **Formal Education or Observing Behavior**

Although most of the organizations studied offer formal educational and leadership programs for its prospective and active members, the structure, frequency, and expectations for these programs vary greatly among the organizations. Those members interviewed all felt very strongly that their new member education program was one of the most challenging, yet beneficial components of their affiliation with their fraternity, with some stating it was their most impactful experience since entering college. However, through the review of organizational documents, and speaking with members, the duration of these programs and curriculum offered varied greatly among organizations. Supplementary regional and national continuing educational and leadership opportunities ranged from small monthly and quarterly gatherings, annual and semi-annual conferences, to no formal programs offered to chapters, officers, or general members. The guidance to reinforce what was taught also varied in formality and consistency



among organizations. Most of those interviewed felt strongly that their lived personal experiences as a member, interacting with fellow members provided them benefits that far outweighed those which were obtained through forced or structured relationships with organizations career and volunteer leadership.

### **New Member Education Program**

The structure of the current new member educational program which is in place for most fraternal organizations is a transformation from previous processes for educating and bringing in new members or “pledges”. These new programs have been designed to develop qualified potential members as they transition from a potential member to a full member of an organization. The curriculum, as made evident through document analysis, though uniquely different among national organizations, should be similar in structure at the chapter level to that of the greater national organization. These programs should strive to teach the fundamentals of being an effective member, along with organization history, principles and ideals so that members are prepared to take on the responsibilities that come from belonging to a fraternity or sorority.

All of those students interviewed spoke very highly of the quality of their education program as well as the impact it made on them as they transitioned to a full member of their organization. The overwhelming feeling as expressed by those interviewed but specifically stated by Dale was

It surpassed all the expectations I had going into the process. It was eye-opening to a point where you were able to understand the entirety of the traditions, and other key aspects of the fraternity. Through the process you

were able to learn more about yourself, the other new members, and pushed you in a positive way to take risks and try new things (September 8, 2016).

The feeling that the process exceeded expectations and placed them in a better position to become campus leaders resonated throughout conversations with other members such as Jack who admitted to the difficulties, but valued the support.

The new member program is what makes fraternities and sororities unique.

It's what makes a fraternity. It's what makes you prepared, and it teaches you how to band together with others in your pledge class to do things that you never thought you would do or were even capable of doing. You do these things together, so its manageable and no matter if you fail or succeed, it ok. It's the most fun you never want to have to do again (September 15, 2016).

Jack also added that "it teaches you trust. You need to trust your brothers like you trust your family" (September 15, 2016). While the ability to get to know brothers, and build a cohesive group appeared to be important, learning about the organization, its values, principles, and history were also cited as key takeaways. James stated that "a lot of the things we spoke about during the new member process were not just learning about history. It was about learning about ourselves, and really digging deep into the culture of the organization, and the members who belong" (July 13, 2016). Henry felt that the process helped him become a "better scholar, leader on campus" (August 27, 2016), and built up his character. The new member process and his membership in a fraternity gives him "more of a drive to be a better man" (August 27, 2016).

## **The Value and Structure of Nationally and Regionally Sponsored Programs**

A benefit of a national organization is the ability for chapters to come together and encounter the shared knowledge and experiences of those from other chapters whether limited to a particular geographic area or interactions with brothers who are located across the country. Through interviews and document analysis it was discovered that similar to the goals of a new member education program, nationally coordinated continuing education and leadership programs hope to provide the skills necessary for a fraternity member to explore the leader which they hope to be and how these leadership skills can enhance the fraternal experiences of the member, chapter, national organization, and campus. Although there is no uniform set of learning outcomes, or universal way to present material, most programs, whether regional or national, focus on encouraging and motivating attendees to see the challenges facing their organization and how to create the change needed to enhance the organization. The curriculum which was for most organizations outlined on their webpages and publications has aspects related to building leadership skills, developing personal awareness, and making members excited to be a member of their organization and create a renewed commitment to their organization. This is accomplished through presentations and workshops from fraternity leadership, and activities which foster values-based critical thinking.

There was inconsistency among those interviewed on whether the coordination of and execution of programs on the national and regional level were successful in accomplishing outcomes and providing meaningful learning experiences. These opinions did not seem to relate to a members age, time in the organization, or leadership role. However, some members felt that the programs were positive in nature, citing only minor

areas for improvement. Others felt there was substantial areas for enhancement. The first area of concern was the frequency of these events. James stated that “we have our national convention and convocation and every six months we try to meet as a national organization, and then every two or three months we try to meet as regions and discuss issues chapters may be facing individually, among chapters in the same region, or with the national organization” (July 13, 2016). Matthew stated “we have our national leadership program annually for officers, as well as other opportunities such as going to our national headquarters, or events that relate to life beyond the fraternity, such as skills development” (August 4, 2016). In some cases, these events were not consistent. Dale shared that “This year the convention did not happen because it was not planned correctly, while we have a national office we are still relatively small. A large well-planned event with all chapters in attendance would be great for our organization” (September 8, 2016).

The perceived value of these programs varied among those interviewed, James stated “I have attended one of our regional conferences, and it was beneficial because there were portions devoted to training, but also to conversations and networking among members from different chapters”. Matthew shared that the programs he attended “helped his fraternity as they progress through leadership roles (August 4, 2016)” but also made “it transferable to members lives outside the fraternity” (August 4, 2016). Jim felt strongly that his organization “excels in programs to support and train members” (September 27, 2016). James wished that the events focused more on “inter-fraternity personal development, one-on-one development of members, digging a bit deeper than surface level interactions and training sessions” (July 13, 2016), and David valued the

regional and local interactions over national programs “We have an annual convention, but we feel more connected to our regional leadership, and those surrounding chapters. We do smaller scale programs within the surrounding states for new officers as well as for chapters” (September 20, 2016).

There also was inconsistency in whether these events are mandatory or voluntary for members. James shared that his “organization attempts to have regional conferences which most of the time are mandatory, but if you can’t make it or your chapter can not send a replacement you just give a reason and they usually accept that as an excuse” (July 13, 2016). Scott shared similar experiences and stated that there were “no mandatory training programs for members” (August 6, 2016), and while they “do have conventions they are not mandatory, but the national office encourages each chapter’s attendance” (August 6, 2016). Whereas Dale had similar thoughts to share, he did stress that his organization wanted to be sure the new member educator was prepared and had special requirements for this position. “All of the training programs and leadership opportunities are coordinated by nationals, they aren’t actually mandatory. The only mandatory training is for the new member educator, to meet with a leader at the regional level prior to beginning the process” (September 8, 2016). He stated that this was so that there were clear expectations around the new member education process and the students running the process at the chapter level were prepared and accountable for their actions.

### **Formal and Informal Mentoring**

There appears to be flaws in the structure as well as the consistency in the way in which organizations provide mentoring to members, either as a new member entering the organization or a veteran member transitioning to a new leadership role or alumni status.

The traditional “Big Brother” terminology is loosely used among all the organizations studied, some formally refer to these “mentors” as their “Big Brothers”, Although others described a similar program but without formal titles for those involved. Of the organizations studied, one used a cultural term to describe the individual who would serve as a mentor, while another organization had a different focus for the mentorship, one which strived to provide background, answer questions, and prepare those considering a particular leadership role in the organization.

Although the use of similar terminology is used to identify mentors in most of the organizations, a formal link to the national organization, or the presence of a standardized expectations varied among organizations. Most organizations described the relationship as something fluid and based exclusively on the particular relationship between an assigned mentor and mentee when systematically assigned by a chapter, or built naturally by connections among brothers. Many shared that while the bones of a mentoring program are present, they do not feel that they are as successful or given the attention that they are by sororities. Jason stated “bigs and littles are not as quite as popular in fraternity life as sorority life, but your big would be your mentor, he's there to help you as much as he can. It's really hit or miss” (September 22, 2016). Because of the lack of standardization among organizations, or chapters of the same organization, the learning objectives, outcomes, and successes were hard to describe by the interviewees. While some had positive relationships, and are still very close to mentors from the organization, others describe the relationship as something which was strong once but lost the momentum needed to sustain the relationship, and were unsure if there was a true impact on their growth and development as a member.

According to James “you get a mentor and they are your mentor forever, but it’s not something on paper. It’s your own person you can talk to through the new member program and beyond. You learn about each other and build a relationship” (July 13, 2016). Scott’s thoughts were similar, but he felt that the system is not perfect.

You normally learn a lot more about your big brother, and he learns a lot more about you than the other new members or active members in the fraternity. You build the foundation for this during the new member program, but it grows throughout your time associated with the chapter. It is truly up to the members to make the most out of the relationship; there are successful and unsuccessful big/little relationships” (August 6, 2016).

Matthew reaffirmed that although the program typically works, the lack of structure and the different personalities; and qualifications of brothers make some matches work while others struggle.

All the new members get their big brothers, and that’s the mentorship program we have in place. It’s not perfect, those members that really don’t deserve a little brother to mentor sometimes slip through the cracks. When you put someone who is new to an organization, impressionable and still does not know the proper way to act and represent the organization in the hands of somebody who is a bad influence it is bound to breed another generation of that same negative behavior (August 4, 2016).

Even though most organizations had an informal process for mentoring members, some had a more structured approach either for all members from the time they start the new member process:

We actually have a formal mentoring process. What we do is that during a new member education process we assign career guides to our new members, the guides are from the same or similar major to those new members. These members work closely with each other through the new member process and beyond. They help them navigate the new member process, as well as with academics, and goal and career planning. (Dale, September 8, 2016)

Others pointed out the lack of mentoring or training for members wishing to take on leadership roles. David stated that “no position has any type of mentorship program to prepare a member to take on a leadership role, it really puts members at a disadvantage, some do well without it and others struggle” (September 20, 2016). Those members who are part of a newer chapter on campus valued the support they received from other surrounding chapters, however they felt they were the exception and not the rule.

While it’s not a formal process, the chapters who were already established sent brothers to campus to help us out during our colonization process. They were very welcoming and accepting, if we needed help learning something, or figuring something out they were there to assist. It worked for us, but I am not sure if other new chapters have the same support system (Henry, August 27, 2016).

### **Alumni Engagement**

The perceived level of support from alumni members of an organization varied among those interviewed. Though all of those interviewed expressed that they valued the involvement of the chapter’s alumni, not all felt that their alumni were engaged. It did not seem to matter the organization which a member was affiliated, the most active alumni as expressed by all those interviewed were those members who most recently graduated and



entered alumni status, groups that were relevantly new to campus, or larger chapters that were well established having the most active number of alumni. Matthew stated that “A small group of alumni do come back frequently, we still do talk and teach about the members who made this organization what it was, so everybody knows about those people, but to get them actually there and involved with the chapter, it's become a little bit more tough” (August 4, 2016).

The newer chapters' credit alumni involvement to the closeness of age between active and alumni brothers, as well as the limited time some brothers were able to experience “fraternity life” as the chapters may have formed while they were later in their college experience. David stated,

Because they're all recent alumni, they still feel like they have to help the organization, like they have to come down and help. So they are very active, they are very active in terms of helping influence the events we host, things like that, not much in the new member education program, but more in helping influence the programs we run and keeping us organized. They are very appreciated by the active brothers (September 20, 2016).

Jason described the steps they as a chapter take to keep their alumni engaged.

We still send them the minutes. They still have access to them, so that they can see what happens at every meeting, if they are interested. They're as involved as they want to be. If they want to be involved, the interaction is there, and it's relatively available. They just have to reach out and do it, and the same goes for us. I'd say on average it's pretty informal contact between our active brothers and alumni (September 22, 2016).

The newer chapters described their chapter level alumni programs as limited or nonexistent, while some were able to identify some nationally sponsored programs or leadership opportunities to try to engage and retain brothers after graduation. Those larger organizations, and organizations with a larger alumni base, describe alumni involvement as dependent upon a member's desire to stay connected. Those brothers who want to be involved, make an effort and those who choose not to or cannot due to professional, personal, and family obligations do not connect. These organizations with larger alumni populations described the difficulty in engaging the broad spectrum of alumni, with different priorities, ages, and geographic locations. Although some say their alumni involvement is strong, they state its strongest among brothers who attended college together, and built connections while active. The success and utilization of alumni associations, alumni chapters, and similar sub-groups is mixed among undergraduate members interviewed, and while they do not have a complete understanding of all the offerings for alumni of their organizations, they don't see it as strongly affecting their chapter.

I definitely think they're very involved. A lot of the alumni if they're around, they're in the area, they come to functions. They are at initiation and other events. It's good to see the people who you were close with when they were active, and now to see them again. We just had a retreat recently and several of our alumni were there. It was great to hear from them and how they described the way the chapter was in the past, and the programs we held before I became affiliated. Their knowledge really struck with our newer executive committee. (Henry, August 27, 2016)

Overall the involvement of alumni is seen as positive from those interviewed, “We definitely like our alumni being involved, it gives another viewpoint regarding a topic we may be discussing. Often times they have more experience than what we have, so they really help” (John, September 22, 2016). However, it was clear that while the active brothers enjoyed alumni involvement, they are cautious about encouraging too much control from alumni and keeping their involvement strictly in an advisory capacity.

We invite our alumni back mostly to social programs and membership selection, not new member education, but social programs and events where they could potentially speak to new members. For about 95% of the time we're asking our alumni how they feel about the group, our progress. We just take their opinion; they are not a deciding factor (James, July 13, 2016).

### **National Intentions and Local Impact**

It appears that as altruistic as fraternal organizations espouse to be based on the formulation of national values, principles, standards and ideals, there is a significant disconnect in the enculturation of these aspects of an organization as they are shared through top down approach. While some organizations in the study spend a significant time working to ensure members are living their values, and are acting in a way consistent with national standards it was shown through the data collected that this was not consistent among all organizations. James stated that “It's been fantastic. I will say this, there is power in the fraternal movement. I will say that it takes the right organization and right chapter to show you that, but there is a lot of power in the fraternal movement” (July 13, 2016). This illustrates the potential value expressed by those interviewed when it comes to choosing the right organization, but at the same time

identifying the importance of choosing the right organization with values, principles, and standards that align with the potential member. Jack felt that while the national organization was accessible, they did not understand the struggles of the chapter “You just can’t tell them anything, they don’t always understand or relate to what’s occurring with the chapters” (September 15, 2016). He continued to express that the national organization is “not thought of as being able to assist with a chapter’s decision making, nor to provide guidance. They’re not very involved at all unless we reach out” (September 15, 2016). Although some identified national initiatives which positively impact members identifying with specific ideals, or processes such as consistent quality educational programs, retreats and conferences, publications, and recognition programs, others however stated that while they are aware of national expectations they see their interactions locally as more beneficial, and sometimes see a disconnected relationship with the national organization.

Whereas this disconnect could be seen by some as insignificant, as long as the group is supporting its members, contributing to the campus community, and conducting themselves responsibly, there is something to be concerned about. The potential concerns are that when a chapter represents itself as part of a larger national organization through formal ties, the displaying of symbols, or wearing of specific Greek letters, there is some level of expectation that the chapter would share the national values, principles, standards, policies, procedures, and expectations for members. Matthew shared his thoughts,

I guess at the end of the day. We all basically have the same functions. We just do it for different organizations. We all raise money for charities and we all

do community service, just all for different organizations. I like that about Greek life, is that I guess we just differentiate ourselves by our creed and our colors and all those sorts of things, but at the end of the day, I think Greek life should be about bettering the community and building yourself into a better person (August 4, 2016).

This relates to the strong cultures formed by individual chapters. These cultures, while not necessarily negative to a student's experience, highlight the favoring of

The people that are in the fraternity. It doesn't necessarily matter who may be your line brothers or who your big is or what a fraternity's specific values are. It's all about the people and the relationships and interactions among brothers. They might have values but I know fraternities that don't take their values as seriously as others and that all comes down to people. (Scott, August 6, 2016)

And whereas nationally there are specific guidelines on what should be covered regarding the teachings of the organization, Jim stressed that "information and values gets instilled down from brother to brother each year, and through each pledge class and there is always a uniqueness in what information get shared and how its shared" (September 27, 2016). And David stated that "on a daily basis, our principles often come into play, but I think the most important factor which keeps me on track, successful and satisfied is just being in a brotherhood, that has really helped me get on top of my academics and personal commitments" (September 20, 2016).

### **Cultural Disconnect**

The strength of the fraternal community comes from the national organizations providing a clear structure for individual chapters to operate, as well as clear expectations

and processes for disciplining underperforming chapters and/or individual members (Shonrock, 1998). Many universities limit recognized fraternities to those with national ties. This helps ensure accountability, which is undermined when chapters see themselves more as individual entities and not part of the larger national organization and/or national fraternity community. The participants noted that the role of the fraternity headquarters as seen by a majority of members is to provide rules, guidance, and assistance in how the local chapter operates. Unfortunately, from the participant's perspective, the national organizations seem to be limiting a chapter's role in defining themselves as a chapter, and being an active participant in conversations which shape the culture of the larger organization. Because of this disconnect, individual chapters do not always see eye to eye with the national organization. "I feel like before thinking of the national organization, members would think of the chapter, the brothers from their own chapter, and what will help us" (Jim, September 27, 2016). The data suggest that while the national organizations provide resources which they feel will allow their chapters to be successful, chapters do not see things the same way and create their own path to success for their own chapter and campus. Consequently, local chapters begin to define themselves and creates culture which while potentially positive in nature, does not align with the national organization. James shared that "I'll say that most of our brothers are looking out for the chapter on a daily basis, they make sure that brothers on-campus and in their own chapter they're acting correctly, but nationally, some people just feel as though they can do whatever they please. You have to take those people with the others. Mesh them all together and hope for the best" (July 13, 2016).

### **Interpersonal and Interorganizational Accountability**

Some of what may hurt the fraternity and sorority community the most are the challenges its members have holding one another accountable. While the belief among those interviewed shows a sense of accountability to serve as their brother's keeper, most interviewees reported that they struggled with this when faced with being the voice of reason in a culture that is unwilling to listen. Many do not feel that they have the full support of their organization to confront their own brothers, which makes it almost unimaginable to confront other organizations or their members.

This dichotomy is shared by the comments of those interviewed. Jack shared "Yeah there's a huge sense of accountability in every aspect of being a brother. The people who give me the hardest time in my life are my brothers. We make sure we get what we need to get done, meet or exceed expectations, and keep each other humble" (September 15, 2016). Whereas at the same time Jack shared that he felt his organization is made up of a variety of members, each with a varied level of commitment to the organization, and each other as brothers. "There's a top third that does everything. The ones in the middle who just sit by and participate when asked, and then the ones at the bottom who would rather just do absolutely nothing (September 12, 2016). This mirrors the writing of T.J. Sullivan who describes organization as being split into thirds. He stated that the "top-third member are student leaders. They make your organization a cornerstone of their campus identities. (Sullivan, 2012, p. 3). He then describes that,

Middle-third members care about your organization or team. Unlike bottom-third members, they have a positive attitude and they want to contribute. They simply want to do it in a way that fits with their lives and other demands. Unlike top-third

members, involvement in your organization is not the defining element of their personal identities (Sullivan, 2012, p. 14).

### **Interpersonal Accountability and Confrontation**

All of those members who were interviewed expressed that they are empowered and prepared to confront members of their own organization when behaviors or actions are taken which go against their organizations values, principles, and standards. They felt a strong sense of connectedness and responsibility to look out for their chapter and in some cases national organization's reputation, their fellow brothers, and ultimately living the shared values and principles of their organization. Some of those interviewed shared the following thoughts "If I see something, I'm going to call you out on it, because I want you to be a better person tomorrow, or not make that same mistake unknowingly or knowingly the next time around" (James, July 13, 2016). "I have absolutely no problem, none of us have any problem whatsoever calling each other out. We have a great sense of accountability" (Jack, September 15, 2016). "I would have absolutely no problem going up to someone in my own organization and be like, what are you thinking, come on, be smarter than that" (Jim, September 27, 2016). "If there's something a brother is doing that is either going to make them look like a fool, my chapter, or myself, I am going to call them out on it and I'm going to speak to them about it" (Matthew, August 4, 2016).

### **Interorganizational Accountability and Confrontation**

. Although they felt like they had an obligation to act when a situation was internal to their organization, members overwhelmingly shared that they were unprepared, uncertain, or unwilling to confront members of another organization for similar behaviors or actions. While numerous reasons were given, most centered around the lack of comfort



in approaching their own brothers, and feeling like they had no support system in place to back them up when they “call out” a brother for his actions or behaviors. Some thoughts shared were “I wouldn't want to step on anybody's toes or anything or cause any conflict” (Jim, September 27, 2016). “It will be hard because you feel like their own brothers or sisters should be stepping up and telling them to change their behavior or stop doing something that would hurt their organization, or Greek Life instead of another organization having to tell them to do it” (John, September 22, 2016).

I would never, ever confront the member of another organization in person I would just say something to their President. I have before as President of my organization. We all have good open lines of communication if something were ever to happen, but I would never confront them in person because it's just not my place (Jack, September 15, 2016).

### **A Guiding Coalition**

It was also noted that the way in which someone is approached is just as important as the message that is shared regarding the inconsistency of one's actions and behavior to those shared expectations of all members of an organization. When it comes to members of other organizations, “I feel I would be comfortable saying something but of course, I'm not going to be as vocal as if it was my own chapter” (Dale, September 8, 2016).

Some thoughts shared by those interviewed concerning approaching members of other organizations include the following:

I have no problem doing it within my fraternity. Within the Greek system, I would look to find a coalition or at least approval from others from my chapter

because I don't want to be going in blind or without someone watching my back (Scott, August 4, 2016).

I think as far as other members of Greek organizations; it would depend on my relationship with that person. If it was someone that I didn't necessarily know or know well then it might be a conversation if needed. But if it was something that wasn't specifically urgent, maybe I would talk to someone else and see if someone knew them and could have a conversation easier than I could (Henry, August 27, 2016).

When it came to confronting those from another organization, most felt unprepared to do so even if the behavior went beyond impacting that particular organization, such as impacting the image of the campuses Greek community. “I don't know exactly everything about other organizations and what they do and what they don't do. If I see they're doing something so heinous it gives all of Greek life a bad name, I'll definitely do something, but what that something is may take some thought” (Dale, September 8, 2016).

### **The Weakening of the Community**

One of the most startling statements came from a singular organization member who felt it was not advantageous to his own chapter to have members confront another chapter's members whose actions or behaviors are negatively impacting their own group, since there is a level of competition among organizations. This singular interviewee went as far as to say that if it impacted the greater campus Greek community, the benefits to his own organization could outweigh the risks of weakening the overall campus community.

It's a tough call because as sad as it is there is competition between fraternities. Naturally we all want the best students, and appeal to the most potential members, so there is competition between fraternities. If someone from another fraternity is negatively impacting Greek life, in a way which causes their organization to look less desirable, and sheds positive light on my chapter, it could be seen as a positive. It's sad in some sense, but it's not my fault, it is what it is. That's just how things are, and that's just the way the cookie crumbles (Jason, September 22, 2016).

Although this was startling, and was definitely not the sentiments of the others interviewed, it was powerful enough to be shared, not in hope to define the mindsets of the majority that make up the members of these organization, but to show the potential for those with inconsistent values to make their way into an organization. Matthew described this thought perfectly “I would say there's always a split in every organization where everybody doesn't join for the right reasons. While many people are on board with what we're doing and are very good people and good brothers, there's always a group that is in this for the wrong reason and aren't going to pull their weight” (Matthew, August 4, 2016).

### **Quality Membership**

The other commonality among those interviewed was that their brothers were fundamentally good people, and in the organization for the right reasons. They felt that while some “rotten eggs” may make their way into organizations, the brothers they have had interactions with both internal to their own chapter, their organization nationally, and other chapters they have interacted with were principle driven. “There's a split, but I

would say that most of our members, I'm proud to call them brothers, and they seem proud to be a part of this organization” (Matthew, August 4, 2016). James felt that the values, principles, and standards of his organization were very important to his chapter, while understanding people make mistakes.

I think we all take them very seriously. Obviously some people make mistakes, and if we run into an issue where a brother kind of made a bad move or something was taken incorrectly, you'll often find us pull that brother aside, not only one-on-one, but I mean if the issue is big, we usually try to bring in some alumni, some people that maybe they are closest within the organization (July 13, 2016).

There was also a smaller group of those interviewed that expressed that they would feel comfortable confronting someone from another organization who was hurting the reputation of their own organization or Greek life in general on campus. “I am comfortable doing it, because the last thing I want is people to tear each other down, we're supposed to have a Greek unity, or a brotherhood, and if someone's trying to hurt that, then that's something that we need to take care of as soon as possible, before it gets too bad” (David, September 20, 2016). James valued his relationship with the university, and the advisor to fraternities and sororities and shared “I don't feel as if I have an issue because I know I have the support from administration and others in the Greek community as I confront someone” (July 13, 2016).

In conclusion, the findings of this study focused on four themes related to organizations’ values, principles and standards and how they were impacted by the cultural development of an organization. “First Impressions and Enduring Values”, “Formal Education or Observing Behavior”, “National Intentions and Local Impact”, and

“Interpersonal and Interorganizational Accountability”. The following section will provide discussion on the findings of this inquiry through the framework proposed in Chapter 3 to detail how these identified themes answer the study’s research questions, and address theoretical propositions and rival explanations. There will also be discussion on the limitations of this study and suggestions for future research and implications for practice.

## **Chapter 5**

### **Conclusions and Implications**

The purpose of this study was to better understand the level of understanding and alignment among values, principles, and standards espoused by national fraternal organizations at the chapter level, as well as the influence an organizations' culture has on these values, principles, and standards. For this study, a set of common principles were used to bound the study and create a standard from which to view each interview both individually and collectively. These common principles as defined by the North American Interfraternity Conference (NIC) and shared by all of their member organizations and include "academic success, service and philanthropy, leadership development, and social skill development" (NIC, 2015, np). To obtain an institutional representative sample, students were selected using the homogenous purposive sampling technique based on their affiliation with a North-American Interfraternity Conference fraternity recognized on the campus of the host institution. This particular selection technique was used as it was important that participants were selected who were knowledgeable about the phenomenon being studied and are members of organizations which share similar standards influenced with a similar set of guiding principles (Yin, 2014). A combination of general member and elected leaders were chosen based on their affiliation with an NIC organization.

The selection of the embedded single case study approach occurred for its ability to look at sub units that are situated within a larger case. Data were able to be analyzed within the subunits separately, between the different subunits, or across all of the subunits (Yin, 2014). By following the structure and design formulated by Yin (2014), I had a

study which encompasses multiple data gathering sources and techniques to explore the breadth of the problem and provide opportunities to generate research to aid various stakeholders. This study followed Yin's (2014) recommendations for case study research. The study was structured to build from theoretical propositions, and rival explanations through engagement in pattern matching, specifically explanation building. The process of explanation building used the propositions or assumptions identified prior to starting the data collection and during data analysis to focus the analysis of data to either support or challenge the assumptions originally hypothesized (Yin, 2014). The process of explanation building was used in part to address the concerns over both the internal and external validity of the findings and following a chain of evidence to successfully answer the study's three research questions. The three questions and corresponding theoretical propositions and rival explanations were as follows:

Research Question #1: How do the values, principles, and standards espoused by individual fraternity members align with those common values, principles, and standards which serve as the foundation for the national standards influencing their organizations?

Theoretical Proposition 1: While nationally espoused values, principles and standards may inform an organization member's behavior, those espoused concepts lack integration or patterning (Schein, 1993) necessary for structural stability of an organization and its culture. There will appear to be disconnect between values, principles, and standards which are espoused by local organization members and chapters and those of the national organizations (Argyris & Schon, 1974).

Rival Explanation 1: Local organization members feel that their espoused values and beliefs “constitute a world-view shared by members of the group [and] are so strongly held by the group that any other way of thinking or behaving is practically inconceivable” (Kuh & Arnold, 1993, p. 331).

Research Question #2: How are espoused national values, principles, and standards reflected through the actions of individual fraternity members?

Theoretical Proposition 2: While nationally espoused values, principles, and standards initially affect member’s behaviors through their assimilation process (new member education), these values, principles, and standards from which standards are eventually formed may not be reflected in the actions of an entire organization (Kuh & Whitt, 1988). In organizations where the espoused values, principles, and standards are reasonably congruent with the underlying assumptions of the organization, the articulation of those ideals is evident in a noticeably strong and cohesive organization which holds true to its national values, principles and standards.

Rival Explanation 1: A researcher will not see uniform support of nationally espoused values, principles and standards. A portion of a local organization such as new members or leadership may exhibit these characteristics, while disconnect may be seen in the general membership.

Research Question #3: What programs and services are available to organizations to encourage congruency of nationally espoused values, principles and standards? What difficulties do organizations’ members perceive exist in successfully contributing towards congruency?



Theoretical Proposition 3: The national programs and services which exist strive to promote and encourage congruency among national organization's values, principles and standards and those espoused and exhibited by local chapters.

Rival Explanation 1: While national programs and services are present, the culture of the organization is continuously recreated; meaning it is created by its members and not transmitted through traditional teaching and learning strategies.

The socialization process allows for new members to develop an understanding and become informally socialized to the goals and objectives of the organization, while allowing the reformulation of one's identity within the organization for members who have a history with the organization (Tierney, 1988).

The questions, propositions, and rival explanations were best discussed by looking at them in relation to the four themes generated through the data analysis stage of the study. By looking at things in this manner, the findings are more efficiently and clearly shared and greater connections made between what the study sought to discover and what was ultimately found in the data.

## **Summary of Findings**

### **First Impressions and Enduring Values**

As identified through the review of relevant literature and expressed by the data in the previous chapter, values, principles, standards were almost uniformly identified as a key feature to Greek organizations which separate them from other clubs and organizations on campus (Callais, 2005, Dugan, 2008). While this was identified as something members find important now and identify as a component of their organization which allows them to stand out from other organizations, it was not a factor in their

decision to associate with a particular organization. Fraternities were founded upon the commitment to high ideals and moral and ethical teachings (Anson and Marchesani, 1991, pp. 1-13). It was thought that these comparable set of values, principles, and standards were the key to fostering relationships between students, and cultivating academic achievement (Ackerman, 1990). The data however, illustrate that potential members relied on the first impressions and subsequent interactions with members of a particular organization to influence their decision to join an organization. A fraternity espouses to be an organization in which once you join you are a member for life, while on the surface this way of selecting an organization may not be detrimental to someone seeking brotherhood, it could allow for the culture of a chapter and its current brothers to overshadow what is truly the foundation of the organization at the national level.

The interactions members had with brothers while they were seeking out what fraternity they were going to associate was identified as the most influential reason why they chose a particular group. This positive or negative interactions among those seeking membership and current members of organizations, undoubtedly were the primary reason students selected or did not select a certain chapter on campus. It should also be noted that these interactions were not just those experienced at formal recruitment events, it was from interactions with members in classes, athletics, intramurals, and through other clubs and organizations on campus. This supports the claims that students seek fraternity life due in part to its formal structure and ability to bring together students with similar interests (Robson, 1977).

While the shared culture at the organization level may have unintentionally influenced some to join a particular chapter of an organization, those who chose to

affiliate themselves with a multicultural fraternity were seeking a different type of cultural experience, one which strengthened pride among specific underrepresented populations. Since the founding of these organizations, it was the hope that minority populations which were relatively small on campuses, could form unique bonds with others in similar situations (Giddings, 1988). These potential members envisioned that the organizations they selected would not only allow them to embrace their own culture, but celebrate the similarities and differences of others. Members felt less of a need to identify with specific values, principles, and standards and more of a need to belong to an organization which understood their roots, traditions, and personal and educational needs (Anson & Marchesani, 1991).

Although specific values as espoused by a national organization were not identified as pivotal in the way a member lives their life, the broader sense of doing what is right, supporting others, and making their chapter and in some cases their national organization be seen in a positive light was apparent. The values, principles, and standards of their respective organizations were ultimately learned through the new member education programs, generalized to be more manageable, and ultimately manifested in the positive actions of members. Through the support network of their chapter, they expressed how a sense of “peer pressure” influenced how they would behave or ultimately conform to the standards of the organization. In organizations that had more robust leadership and education programs, greater connections to the national headquarters, and strong volunteer or alumni leadership had a more substantial perceived pressure.

## **Formal Education or Observing Behavior**

The new member period in a fraternity can be one of the most significant and enjoyable experiences in a member's time at a college or university. Not only do members learn about the organization with which they choose to associate, but they also get to learn more about themselves as individuals, their brothers, and developing the skills necessary to eventually lead their organization. A common concern raised by participants was that programs must have intentional objectives and a curriculum which has been tested for its success, otherwise the time could be wasted or worse allow for the introduction of material not endorsed or condoned by the national organization or the institution which the chapter is recognized.

The interview data along with document reviewed strongly suggest that the training programs while overall well developed, lack the components that make it become embedded. This feeling did not only apply towards the new member education programs, but to the overall support provided to chapters through local, regional, national, and virtual training and leadership programs. In addition to lacking the qualities which successfully accomplish the desired outcomes, these programs lacked consistency, quality, and had varying degrees of who actually were intended or required to attend. The regional leadership and training offerings received higher marks among members in regards to the content that they learned, as well as the take-a-ways which came back with them to their own chapters. Most of this centered around the perceived increase in face-to-face connections made with presenters, alumni, regional and national volunteer leadership, and national headquarters staff. Those interviewed shared that they were better equipped to bring back the message of a particular training when they could place a

face, name, and personal interaction with the content. They truly valued the interactions with those who not only were seen as successful leaders within the organization, but also as true brothers of the same organization with a mutual respect for each other.

Unfortunately, when there are deficiencies with the education and leadership offerings by an organization, members are often faced with obtaining the skills, knowledge, process of leading their organization through informal observations and internal chapter based trainings. These educational opportunities may lack the vetting necessary to ensure that quality and accurate information is shared which closely aligns with that of the national organizations.

### **National Intentions and Local Impact**

Though none of the members indicated that they see no relationship among their local chapter, and their umbrella national organization, the lines of these relationships are often blurred. The role of the fraternity headquarters was described by members to provide rules, guidance, and assistance in how their local chapter operates. However, through the discussion with members the national organizations seem to be limiting a chapter's role in defining themselves as a chapter, and being an active participant in conversations which shape the culture of the larger organization. Because of this disconnect, chapters are creating their own perceived path to carry out the day-to-day business of the organization. The North American Interfraternity Conference (NIC) espouses that it "serves to advocate the needs of its member fraternities through enrichment of the fraternity experiences, advancement and growth of the fraternity community, and enhancement of the educational mission of the host institution" (NIC, 2015, np).

By allowing this to occur, chapters are defining themselves by their own local chapter-level culture and not by the ideals of the larger national organization. As stated previously, while many of the chapters have strong organizations, the lack of congruency with the national organization can cause challenges for a national organization which espouses that their strength is in their membership, and their individual chapters. Conversely, organizations are frequently permitted to be brought onto a campus, and recognized because of this perceived link between the chapter and a national organization which has been thoroughly vetted and has standards; expectations which are complimentary with the institution the organization is being recognized.

### **Interpersonal and Interorganizational Accountability**

There are many benefits to creating a culture in an organization which espouses shared responsibility and engaged and accountable members. However, this is not something that automatically comes naturally to organizations, members, or the leaders of these organizations. When an organization through its shared values, principles, and standards can motivate members to take ownership of their own actions, as well as empower them to ensure others within an organization share and exhibit similar characteristics, this allows for accountability. When there is a disconnect between an organizations' values, principles and standards and the action of member's often times questionable behavior occurs among members. Unless there is a strong sense of accountability this can severely impact the success of an organization and its members (Callais, 2005; Dugan, 2008; Dungy, 1999; Earley, 1998; Gose, 1997; Kuh & Arnold, 1993; Lord, 1987; Maisel, 1990; Malaney, 1990; Pike, 2000).

This empowerment does not necessarily come in the form of a position or formal authority. Instead is the idea that while you may not have the authority to take specific action to remedy a situation, you can be empowered to act within your own limitations or ability to generate a changed behavior. When members of an organization feel accountable for their own actions and the actions of an organization, there is greater buy-in, and a desire to answer for their own actions or behaviors and be better prepared to confront others (Schein, 1993).

This ability can extend beyond one's own organization, and potentially impact the larger fraternity community which ultimately can encourage greater responsibility, accountability, and shared experiences among national organizations. As expressed by those interviewed, there is a sense that the support for accountability and holding members to a particular set of standards needs improvement and attention. While those associated with the same organizations do a better job at holding each other accountable; it's not perfect and dependent on the individual. When it comes to holding other organizations accountable for their own well-being, or the well-being of the Greek community, most feel unprepared or that it is not in their best interest to confront the organization. New members are continuously brought into these organizations each semester at a disadvantage, without the skills and support needed to create change, which just sustains this negative behavior and lack of accountability. Beyond this challenge, as described by one of the students interviewed and written about by T.J. Sullivan, organizations must deal with a membership which figuratively split themselves into thirds with 2/3 of the membership being or on the verge of being apathetic to what occurs within their organization (2012). When an organization can align itself with their values,

their core moral, ethical foundation will be strengthened (Bass & Avolio, 1993; Bass & Steidlmeier, 1999; Brown & Treviño, 2006; Gardner & Avolio, 2005).

Research Question #1: How do the values, principles, and standards espoused by individual fraternity members align with those common values, principles, standards which serve as the foundation for the national standards influencing their organization?

The simple answer to this question as seen through the data would be that those values, principles, and standards espoused by the local chapter members do align with the values, principles, and standards at the national level; however, the more significant and beneficial explanation is that while the members do identify with these values, principles, and standards the amount that they actually publically espouse them, and make them part of their daily routine as organization is limited. While members were aware of their organizations values, principles, and standards, they did not find importance in the specifics, and preferred to generalize them to make them useful as a guide to being a better individual, creating a better chapter, or recruiting better members. So while on the surface the answer is that alignment is present, it is not to the extent that national organizations would envision and ultimately cause little if any impact at the local level.

In Proposition 1, I stated that while nationally espoused values, principles and standards may inform an organization member's behavior, those espoused concepts lack integration or patterning (Schein, 1993). There will appear to be disconnect between values, principles, and standards which are espoused by local organization members and chapters and those of the national organizations (Argyris & Schon, 1974). The evidence to support this proposition was seen significantly when analyzing the data. Organization members almost uniformly identified that while members are aware of the values,



principles, and standards of their organization, they are not effectively shared with members to make it a part of their organization's culture. While national organizations have established wide-ranging standards and expectations to support their own organization's overarching values, principles, and mission (Gose, 1997). These standards include standards that address many areas within the organization from chapter operations, code of conduct, community involvement, financial management, fraternity education, facilities, rules, membership risk management, ritual, scholarship and even alumni relations (Shonrock, 1998). Members cited that the most significant reason for incongruence was the ineffectiveness of creating connections between the intangible ideals of their organizations, and the day-to-day operation of their chapter. However, additional concerns were raised about the perceived disconnect between the national organizations, their educational curriculum, and the chapter. Members felt that the quality and frequency of leadership programs, conferences, and meetings were lacking and caused them to rely on creating a culture through their local interactions, and not through national ideals. The NIC believes that the creation of standards is a unique collaborative partnership between the association, member organizations, and campuses which will ultimately improve the fraternity experience (NIC, 2015); however, without determining an effective way to embed these standards it will prove to be unsuccessful. Furthermore, data indicates that in its current structure, the NIC does not have a system in place to verify compliance of its member organizations to the standards (NIC, 2015).

There was very little evidence to support the rival explanation for Theoretical Proposition 1. In Rival Explanation 1, which asserted that local organization members feel that their espoused values and beliefs constitute a world-view shared by members.

Through the results of my data collection, there was limited data to suggest that any of the members felt that the values of the organization constituted a world view, or were uniformly valued by the members.

Research Question #2: How are espoused national values, principles, and standards reflected through the actions of individual fraternity members?

The espoused national values, principles, and standards which serve as the foundation of these organizations at the national level are reflected through the actions of the members who took part in this study. However, while on the surface it appears that members are following their organization's values, principles, and standards, most indicated through conversation that they were less focused with their organizations specific values, principles, and standards and more concerned on acting in a manner consistent with the image of a "fraternity man", embodying high ideals, ethical reasoning and campus pride.

This was evident through the programs they sponsor and support, the value they place on diversity and inclusion, the focus on academic achievement, and overall responsibility to bring pride to their chapter, organization, university and themselves. These action show whether intentional or unintentional commitment to values, principles, and standards which are complementary to their own organizations. The data suggest that while each organization has their own set of values, principles, or standards many are connected through common themes. The common themes are academic success, service and philanthropy within our community, leadership development, and social skill development (NIC, 2015, np). These are seen as interchangeable, and focus less on the specifics and more on being a good representative of the organization.

This however, brings us back to the concept of being a national organization, with values, principles, and standards which are shared uniformly among all recognized chapters and members. By generalizing these values, principles, and standards the uniqueness which once served as the foundation for the establishment of these organizations is diluted. The rich histories of these organizations, rituals, and ultimately the purpose of their founding begin to disappear, ultimately leaving us with a shell of an organization which could be interchangeable among a variety of recognized organizations found on campus; lacking any consistency from one chapter to another. Members of an individual chapter retain maps in their heads about how to plan, implement, and review their actions, ultimately forgetting about the national organization (Argyris and Schon, 1974).

Although, members may feel engaged with the current culture of their chapter, this engagement is only surface level. It has been the hope of national organizations, and college and universities that involvement within fraternity and sorority life will be associated with greater levels of alumni engagement and philanthropy after graduation (Astin, 1993; Heval & Bureau, 2014; Long & Snowden, 2011; Bureau et al., 2011; Gallup, 2014). The data from this study suggest that this engagement is contingent upon building strong connections to the national organization, or the institution through involvement in the Greek community. These deeper connections are grounded in the values, principles, and standards of the organizations and are more sustainable through the constant evolution of the individual chapter, and members who are associated. One participant who worked closely with alumni espoused that when recent graduates look at their chapter, they see themselves as a part of the organization; however, as time moves

forward if the chapter continues to evolve without using the values, principles, and standards of the organization as a guide, that same member has difficulty feeling that they are a part of a chapter that looks very much like a different organization then when they belonged.

In Proposition 2, I stated that while nationally espoused values, principles, and standards initially affect member's behaviors through their assimilation process, these values and principles from which standards are eventually formed may not be reflected in the actions of an entire organization (Kuh & Whitt, 1988). The members interviewed stated that they were taught the principles through the new member education process of their organization; however, this is where the instilling of these principles concluded for a majority of members. While some members expressed that learning related to values, principles, and standards continued, it was sporadic, lacked organization, or was insufficient in creating meaning from these singular words, statements, or phrases. The cohesiveness of an organization discussed in this proposition, at least at the chapter level, seemed to rely more on the interactions among brothers, and less on the formal structured values, principles, and standards of the organization. There was little data found relating the strength and cohesiveness of a chapter to member's understanding and application of their national values, principles, and standards. However, members who expressed similar internally formed priorities, standards, and perceived responsibilities as their brothers espoused a more positive and enjoyable fraternity experience. The key to being a value based leader is staying true to one's values. It requires that the leader's personal and organizational values are aligned. As a leader they must lead others remaining consistent with not only organizations beliefs, but their own values (George, 2003).

What must occur in order to sustain these organizations is to weave the culture of the chapter, with the culture of the national organization. Uniqueness is inevitable among chapters, however losing site of the roots of the organization will leave its continued success to chance.

Rival Explanation 1, which I proposed in opposition to Theoretical Proposition 2 is also supported by findings in my study. I asserted, a researcher will not see uniform support of nationally espoused values, principles and standards. A portion of a local organization such as new members or leadership may exhibit these characteristics, while disconnect may be seen in the general membership. The data suggests that members do not espouse or exhibit uniform support or understanding of the national values, principles, and standards of their respective organizations. This divide does not appear to be influenced by the member's leadership role within the organization, and instead a member's relationship towards the national values, principles, and standards is influenced by time elapsed between entering the organization and going through the new member program. While the language used in crafting the rival explanation included the "support" and "disconnect", it was found to be less about supporting or not supporting the value, principles, and standards and more about the disconnect that members feel between these values, principles, and standards which are perceived to be forced upon the chapters and the members in a top down approach.

Research Question #3: What programs and services are available to organizations to encourage congruency of nationally espoused values, principles, and standards? What difficulties do organizations' members perceive exist in successfully contributing towards congruency?

The interview data along with the limited documents available suggest that there is a spectrum as it relates to the quality and frequency of nationally sponsored education, training, and leadership programs. The requirements of who is required to attend these nationally sponsored programs either varied greatly among organizations or those interviewed had little understanding of the expectations or requirements of attendance. Additionally, some organizations stated that there are either very few or no programs offered at the national level, and their education and development as a chapter occurs at the regional level. This proved through conversations as both beneficial and challenging for members since as some members stated the content of these trainings were left to the regional volunteer leadership to make a determination of what was relevant or timely for the chapters.

While education and leadership programs are offered in some context by all of the organizations which were represented by those students interviewed, their success in the eyes of the members was rated based on several factors. These included their ability to build connections between the chapters and the national organization, foster and encourage relationship building among chapters and members, and create meaningful learning experiences. All of these experiences should embrace the values, principles, standards, policies, procedures, and overall expectations of the organization and be taught in ways which connect these ideas to the membership both in their present role as fraternity men, leaders of an organization and students and their future professional and personal lives. Without these perceived connections, members felt that the programs were ineffective in producing significant and measurable results.

In Proposition 3, I stated that the national programs and services which exist strive to promote and encourage congruency among national organizations' values, principles and standards and those espoused and exhibited by local chapters. There was very little evidence to support this proposition as those interviewed did not believe that their organizations nationally had effective program offerings in place to create congruency of the values, principles, and standards. It was not that the offerings were complete failures, but they did not feel that the curriculum or objectives adequately helped them feel more connected to the values, principles, and standards of the organization. The programs offered other important opportunities for valuable learning which included but not limited to financial accountability, risk management, public speaking and effective communication. They also frequently were ranked as enjoyable by members and aided them in building connections among other members and chapters.

Rival Explanation 1, which I proposed in opposition to Theoretical Proposition 1 is supported by findings in my study. I asserted while national programs and services are present, the culture of the organization is continuously recreated; meaning it is created by its members and not transmitted through traditional teaching and learning strategies. The socialization process allows for new members to develop an understanding and become informally socialized to the goals and objectives of the organization (Tierney, 1988). This was a significant finding which ultimately supported the development of the study's themes related to the nationally endorsed training programs, and the recommendations regarding training and education discussed later in the chapter.

The members expressed that while the new member education program initially informs them of the expectations of being a member, the history of the national

organization, and the values, principles and standards that are the foundation of the origination. The true culture of the organization at the chapter level is transmitted through socialization, and informal observations, conversations, and the everyday actions of the members. Members did not express a lack of support in regards to the national curriculum, but instead felt it was not properly reinforced to members beyond the new member education program, while the chapter level values, policies, procedures, are embedded over time.

An example of this was the feeling of pride in the fraternity and sorority community on campus. With the exception of one interview, the members expressed a strong sense of pride in the Greek community to which they belong. They expressed that they felt this pride by being an active participant in their community, not only contributing to the community itself, but seeing firsthand through interactions with their peers the accomplishments of other organizations which they felt shed a positive light on the entire community. This active participation, caused them to buy into the programs, policies, and procedures in order to make something they felt a part of more successful.

Through the process of answering these research questions, propositions, and looking at the data through the lens of the Rival Explanation, I was able to draw together not only a better understanding of the data, but also generate answers as well as suggestions to move from theory to practice by identifying strategies to enhance fraternity life. It is important to constantly assess the organizations and systems we are associated to identify misalignment. Unfortunately, even a small misalignment can cause big consequences. Leaders must be vigilant in taking the steps necessary to continuously review, evaluate, and adjust to make sure their organization is effective and living by



their values, principles, and standards. We must also be sure the right people are involved in these conversations. Most organizations assume if someone can do the work necessary, they can also lead those who are doing the work. The act of supervision requires a unique skill set, and those who are potential student leaders of these organizations must be sure they have those skills to move their members and the organization forward.

### **Limitations**

This study has several limitations. First, this study was limited to a mid-size, northeastern, public university with a growing fraternity and sorority population that is currently undergoing systematic change with the addition of new professional staff and intentional enhancements to the fraternity and sorority experience. Where the institution, as well as the region it is located may, or may not be reflective of other areas of the country, where fraternity and sorority life may have a different role on a campus or within the lives of its student population. There is also no formal Greek housing, while this is not inherently a limitation, it is unknown if experiences of members who live in organizational owned housing experience the organization differently.

In addition, this study focused on North American Interfraternity Conference (NIC) affiliated organizations, all of whom are fraternities. This requirement excluded members of sororities, and only looked at male participants. While the organizations represented by those interviewed included culturally based and historically African American organizations, the majority of those interviewed were Caucasian with only three members of Hispanic background. In addition, of those interviewed a majority are or had previously served in a leadership role within their organization or the Greek community.

The final limitation, was while it appeared that participants were upfront when providing answers to questions, it is unknown if any information that may have been helpful to the study was held back. Due to my professional role on campus within the Division of Student Affairs, information related to “risky-behavior” or behavior which may potentially go against the universities code of conduct may have been withheld.

### **Implications for The Enhancement of Fraternity Life**

Based on the findings outlined in this chapter, I propose the following implications for practice to help enhance the fraternal experience and create a system built on values, principles, and standards which not only provides a positive experience for a student, and brings pride to the institutions which recognize these organizations.

### **Reinforce Values and Celebrate Uniqueness**

Kotter offers a useful rule of thumb: "If you cannot describe your vision to someone in five minutes and get their interest, you have more work to do in this phase of a transformation process" (1996, p. 78). This same thinking can be applied to the applicability of values, principles, and standards within a fraternal organization. Based upon the data and answer to the studies questions, it can be implied that participants felt a strong sense of disconnect between those values, principles, and standards of the national organization, and the generalized or watered down versions they enact in their daily lives. It was also evident that these values, principles, and standards were not highlighted at the forefront of the organization’s recruitment process, and was often seen as an afterthought. When combined with the varied and often limited educational and leadership program offerings across organizations, it can be inferred that there must be a focus on realignment between the way national organizations are presenting the shared values,

principles, and standards, in order to help students, relate to them on a personal and organizational level. Greenleaf & Spears (2002) suggest that the act of leading is ultimately made easier for the designated leaders when everybody sits ideally by and agrees with everything the leader is doing; the real challenge is when those you lead take ownership of the organization and challenge the status quo. While most organizations call for this fundamental material to be presented during the new member period, it is not instilled within the culture of the groups. It is my belief that if national organizations encourage greater participation by current undergraduate members in the process of developing, refining, and sharing these values, principles, and standards congruency among individual chapters may increase, and chapter-to-chapter interpretation may decrease. In order for this to be successful, national organizations must find ways to make meaningful connections between the values, principles, and standards of an organization. The individual members, through personal discovery, learning and reflection, may develop meaning which can be applied to their own lives.

Because there were strong local cultures exhibited by chapters, national organizations should work to ensure all chapters are aligning themselves with the national organization, but encourage the uniqueness which manifests itself on particular campuses or regions. This can be aided by forming coalitions among leaders at all levels of the organization. This will allow a greater ability for buy-in among members (Kotter, 1996). By providing this guidance, there may be less of the “us” versus “them” mentality which will mutually benefit the local chapter, its members and the strength of the national organization.

## **Reimagine and Refocus Chapter Advising**

At the national level, the advisement provided to chapters must become more personal, and tailored to fit the specific needs of a chapter. Those interviewed shared that their advisement from national staff and volunteers is infrequent and irregular and those who do come to visit, bring with them a cookie cutter approach to advisement, leadership, and chapter improvement.

National office staff and regional volunteers need to make their connections with chapters more frequent, and more intentional. These can be through face-to-face personal meetings, phone calls, or video calling applications. Greenleaf and Spears state that “there is very little sustained performance at the level of excellence-of any kind, anywhere – without continuous coaching” (2002, p. 139). By making these touch points more frequent, the advisor will learn about a chapter, its campus, the members, and the challenges they face.

## **Enhance Training and Leadership Offerings**

The curriculum and training approach for organizations varied, and while some were regarded as more beneficial than other, none were given stellar reviews. While the new member training curriculums varied on what was covered, most included the introduction to the organizations history, values, principles, symbols, songs, and procedures. While there was a lot of information provided to the new members, it lacked the component of embedding these aspects into the members beyond the new member period. Even the senior members and chapter leadership who were sharing the content, were not fully committed to it, or had full buy-in and understanding.

It is important to remember that organizational transformation is a process, not an event and a commitment of time is necessary for members to buy into a program or idea (Kotter, 1996). There was little to relate the level of importance of the content which was shared during the new member period, to the success or failure of the chapter or national organization. While they were learning the symbolic meanings of aspects of the organization, they were not making personal connections to these organizational artifacts, and embedding them into their own experience. National organizations, as well as the leadership on college and university campuses, need to determine how to take the relevant information which needs to be shared, and share it with members in a way which takes something intangible and makes it a tangible part of their fraternity experience. These educational programs should not only influence the way they act within the confines of their organization but also as a student and a member of society. In an approach similar to that of which was recommended for advising; personal connections need to be made in all areas of fraternity education from principles, values, and history to recruitment, risk management, and leadership.

### **Strengthen and Encourage Community**

The data suggest that the pride in the fraternity community is strong. This pride must be refocused to include the expectation of holding those who go against the ideals of the community accountable for their actions. Kotter (1996) suggests that when the best and brightest in an organization avoid confronting obstacles, they disempower those in an organization and undermine any potential for change. This concept of accountability appears to be present among individual organizations and their members, however even this may be lacking due to the challenge of organization members being able to discern

right from wrong when they are at the same time so immersed within the culture of their organization. The true test will be when those organizations that make up a campuses Greek community begin to hold each other accountable, and individual members feel that they have the skills and support necessary to call out others in a constructive way to create a more unified and sustainable community. Greenleaf and Spears (2002) argue that there are often concerns raised that only a few leaders emerge in every organization. They contend that there are two few because most organizations are structured in a way which only allows a few at a time. Until we are able to empower all members of an organization, or community to consider themselves leaders and caretakers of their own groups, the ability for members to feel empowered to hold each other accountable will be limited. It was shown that there is a lot of work necessary to make this a reality, but this could be a pivotal part of the success of fraternities, and while it could mean some organizations ceasing to exist, those who are truly rooted with solid values, principles, and standards should survive.

### **Implications for Further Research**

While the primary goal of case study research is not generalizability, Yin argues that through proper case study design, data can be generalized analytically, in which the study is not just looked at in relation to the population being studied, but to a theory, providing for much wider applicability. The data collected and the themes generated bring to light the need for additional research in a number of areas related to fraternity and sorority life and higher education. The findings in this study indicate that there has been limited success for national fraternal organizations in effectively embedding their values, principles, and standards which are espoused as the foundation of their

organization into the culture of the local chapters and their members. The reasons provided by those interviewed include limited opportunities for members to be exposed to these values, principles, and standards as well as the applicability members felt between what the national organization espouses and what impacts their own local chapter. A study focusing on the experiences of female sorority members may add to this research in hopes that by looking at the other half of the fraternity and sorority community on campuses, one may learn if the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats seen in fraternities also manifest themselves in sororities. This may shed some insight on whether the approaches used by these organizations to embed their values, principles, and standards are more effective. In a similar way in which this study looked at North American Interfraternity Conference member organizations, future studies could look at the National Panhellenic Conference who have their own set of guiding values, principles and standards for sororities.

Further research could also be conducted looking specifically at the ability for members of organizations to hold each other accountable for their actions, and calling out members of both their own groups, and other groups on campus for the betterment of the individual but also the greater fraternity and sorority community. The lessons learned from this study show members not only feel uncomfortable confronting others but, they do not receive the appropriate or any training or guidance to enable them to act. The appropriate training, along with the shared pressure to confront actions which could hurt the organization, the Greek community, or individuals will allow greater alignment with the espoused values, principles, and standards of these organizations and build a stronger fraternity and sorority community on campuses across the country.

Finally, further research could be conducted to look at multicultural and historically African American organizations. While all the groups represented by the members interviewed showed signs of a strong organizational culture, these members identified their own cultures (African America, Hispanic, etc.) as the foundation and roots of their organizations. The values, principles, and standards that they followed as a chapter, and organization, directly relate to their culture as a marginalized group in society. Historically, students from these groups sought out fraternities to be a refuge and support network against discrimination (Giddings, 1988). These organizations were also significantly smaller in terms of members, and relied greatly on the support they receive through chapters in a close geographic vicinity.

## **Conclusion**

While participation in a Greek Letter organization is often seen as a social endeavor, it is important to understand that their existence can create an environment for excellence and transformation. While the existence of these organizations on a college or university campus is a privilege, the data suggest that the organizations can contribute positively to a campus community. The prerogative of those invested in the success of these organizations are that the positive contributions significantly outweigh the negative. It is important to “define clearly the institutions relationship with, and expectations of, Greek organizations (Shonrock, 1998, p.80).

Fraternities need to have the support of colleges and universities for their continued success and overall survival. Those national organizations which hold their members accountable, and take pro-active steps to improve congruency among what is espoused and what is exhibited by members are more likely to position themselves for



future growth and success. By creating partnerships which foster meaningful relationships among national headquarters staff, campus administration and undergraduate members, the challenges of today can more effectively be met with the same tenacity which many of these organizations were originally founded upon decades earlier. We must work to “change the culture without wiping out the system; and change the package so students who would be interested in joining are the kinds of people who would do community service, focus on scholarship, want to bond with others in a constructive way, and develop lasting ties the institution” (Shonrock, 1998, p. 80).

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## Appendix A

### Invitation for Participation

Dear (insert participant's name),

This letter is an invitation to participate in a study I am conducting for my dissertation in the Educational Leadership doctoral program at Rowan University. You have been identified as a potential participant in this study based on your membership with an NIC affiliated fraternity at Stockton University. Below is more information about this project and what your involvement would entail if you decide to take part. The project will help me learn more about the influence of values, principles and standards as they relate to a member's participation in a Greek letter organization. As an alumnus member of my own fraternity, and veteran to fraternity and sorority advising, I am excited to engage in this exciting study.

Your involvement in this study is voluntary. It will involve participating in an interview of approximately 30 minutes in length to take place at a mutually agreed upon location and time. You may decline to answer any of the interview questions if you so choose. Further, you may decide to withdraw from this study at any time by informing me. With your permission, the interview will be audio-recorded to facilitate collection of information, and later transcribed for analysis. All information you provide is considered completely confidential. Your name or any other personal identifying information will not appear in the final dissertation resulting from this study; however, with your permission anonymous quotations may be used. Even though I may present the study findings to colleagues for their feedback, only my committee chair and I will have access to the data. There are no known or anticipated risks to you as a participant in this study.

If you have any questions regarding this study, or would like additional information to assist you in reaching a decision about participation, please contact me at lizzaj51@students.rowan.edu. You can also contact my dissertation chair, Dr. Monica Reid Kerrigan at kerriganm@rowan.edu. I would like to assure you that this study has been reviewed and received ethics clearance through the Institutional Review Board at Stockton University. However, the final decision about participation is yours. If you have any comments or concerns resulting from your participation in this study, please contact me at 609-626-3410 or lizzaj51@students.rowan.edu.

I very much look forward to speaking with you and thank you in advance for your assistance in this project.

Sincerely Yours,  
Joseph Lizza  
Doctoral Candidate  
Rowan University

## **Appendix B**

### **Research Study Informed Consent Form**

**Study Title:** A Qualitative Case Study of the Congruence Between Fraternal Organizations' and Members' Values, Principles, and Standards.

**Researcher:** Joseph Lizza, Doctoral Candidate, Rowan University Educational Leadership, lizzaj51@students.rowan.edu or 609-626-3410

You are being asked to take part in a research study carried out by Joseph Lizza. This form explains the research study and your part in it if you decide to join the study. Please read the form carefully, taking as much time as you need and ask me to explain anything you do not understand. You can decide not to join the study. If you join the study, you can change your mind later or quit at any time. There will be no consequences if you decide to not take part in the study or quit later. This study has been approved for human subject participation by the Stockton University Institutional Review Board.

#### **What is this study about?**

This research study is being conducted to develop an understanding of the principles, standards and values which influence and guide the actions of Greek-affiliated students, specifically members of NIC associated fraternities. This study's intent is to better understand the relationship between those principles which are espoused by both organization members and their organizations and those which are characterized by the daily actions of members. A special focus will be on the way in which an organization's culture and socialization process affects member's principles and values.

#### **What will I be asked to do if I am in this study?**

If you take part in the study, you will be asked to:

- Arrange a mutually convenient interview time.
- Engage in an audio recorded interview for approximately 30 minutes regarding your experiences as member of the Greek Community. The questions will pertain only to my primary research questions;
  - How do the principles espoused by individual fraternity members align with those common principles which serve as the foundation for the national standards influencing their organization?
  - How are espoused national principles reflected through the actions of individual fraternity members?
  - What programs and services are available to organizations to encourage congruency of nationally espoused principles and standards? What difficulties do organizations members perceive exist in successfully contributing towards congruency?
- You will not be required to answer any question that you so choose.
- Review the transcription of the interviews which may take up to 30 minutes.

**Are there any benefits to me if I am in this study?**

The potential benefits to you for taking part in this study will include sharing your story and providing useful information for fraternity and sorority life professionals in mentoring and advising future student leaders.

**Are there any risks to me if I am in this study?**

The potential risks from taking part in this study are quite limited. The nature of the questions pertains only to your perceptions of factors leading to your success as a student leader. Questions about personal (social, legal, physical) matters will not be a part of this study.

**Will my information be kept private?**

The data for this study will be kept confidential to the extent allowed by federal and state law. No published results will identify you, and your name will not be associated with the findings. Under certain circumstances, information that identifies you may be released for internal and external reviews of this project.

- We will engage in a private dialogue at a mutually pre-determined location (such as an office or small conference room).
- Only I and hired transcriptionists (who have signed a confidentiality agreement) will have access to the actual interview data. All other data will be coded and pseudonyms assigned to protect your identity.
- Our dialogue/interviews will be recorded, as a transcript of the data is necessary for this project.
- The results of this study may be published or presented at professional meetings, but the identities of all research participants will remain anonymous.

**Are there any costs or payments for being in this study?**

There will be no costs to you for taking part in this study. You will not receive money or any other form of compensation for taking part in this study.

**Who can I talk to if I have questions?**

If you have questions about this study or the information in this form, please contact me Joseph Lizza, doctoral student, Educational Leadership, 609-626-3410 and at lizzaj51@students.rowan.edu or my dissertation chair, Dr. Monica Reid Kerrigan at kerriganm@rowan.edu. If you have questions about your rights as a research participant, or would like to report a concern or complaint about this study, please contact the Stockton University Institutional Review Board at 856-256-515.

**What are my rights as a research study volunteer?**

Your participation in this research study is completely voluntary. You may choose not to be a part of this study. There will be no penalty to you if you choose not to take part. You may choose not to answer specific questions or to stop participating at any time.

## **What does my signature on this consent form mean?**

Your signature on this form means that:

- You understand the information given to you in this form.
- You have been able to ask the researcher questions and state any concerns.
- The researcher has responded to your questions and concerns.
- You believe you understand the research study and the potential benefits and risks that are involved.

---

## **Statement of Consent**

I give my voluntary consent to take part in this study. I will be given a copy of this consent document for my records.

---

Signature of Participant

---

Printed Name of Participant

## **Statement of Person Obtaining Informed Consent**

I have carefully explained to the person taking part in the study what he or she can expect.

I certify that when this person signs this form, to the best of my knowledge, he or she understands the purpose, procedures, potential benefits, and potential risks of participation.

I also certify that he or she:

- Speaks the language used to explain this research.
- Reads well enough to understand this form or, if not, this person is able to hear and understand when the form is read to him or her.
- Does not have any problems that could make it hard to understand what it means to take part in this research.

---

Signature of Person Obtaining Consent

---

Date

---

Printed Name of Person Obtaining Consent Role in the Research Study

## Appendix C

### Interview Cover Sheet

A Qualitative Case Study of the Congruence Between Fraternal Organizations' and Members' Values, Principles, and Standards.

Thank you very much for agreeing to participate in this interview. We have gone over the consent form. Are there any other questions you would like to ask before we begin?

*Thank you for taking the time to speak with me, as I believe your honest insights will be very helpful. I will be audio recording the interview, so that it may be transcribed verbatim. The interview may last from 45 minutes to one hour. There's no right or wrong answers. I will be using pseudonyms (a made up name) within my research report so all participants and organizations involved will remain completely anonymous. All work associated with this study will be kept in a secure location and will be destroyed after three years, Are there any questions?*

Date/Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Location: \_\_\_\_\_

#### Demographics

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Pseudonym: \_\_\_\_\_

Age: \_\_\_\_\_ Gender: \_\_\_\_\_

Chapter: \_\_\_\_\_ Class: \_\_\_\_\_

Semesters Affiliated: \_\_\_\_\_

Leadership Roles Held:

N/A: \_\_\_\_\_

---

## **Appendix D**

### **Semi-Structured Interview Protocol**

#### Background

1. When and why did you decide to join a fraternity/sorority? What influenced these decisions?
  - Why did you choose to join your particular fraternity in which you are affiliated?

### **Organizational Level Development**

#### Organization Association / New Member Education

2. Describe the structure of your chapter's new member education program?
3. How helpful was your new member education program in teaching you about the organization, its values, and expectations as a member?

#### Involvement in Organizations:

4. Tell me about your leadership roles on campus/in the community.
  - Do you hold any chapter leadership roles?
5. In your own opinion, how does your fraternity differentiate itself from other fraternities on this campus?
6. As a member, do you feel your organization is fulfilling its promise to you?
  - Explain?
7. Think back to a time when you had a challenging experience in your sorority/fraternity. What happened?
  - How did you handle it?

#### Support Systems:

8. What nationally coordinated training programs does your organization provide? Are they mandatory?
  - Prompt - General member education (risk management, academic success)
  - Prompt - Officer specific training (president's academy, officer retreats)
9. If programs were provided have you attended any of them? If so were they beneficial to your personal growth, and/or success as a member or officer?
  - Explain why they were beneficial or why you were dissatisfied?

10. Through your interactions locally, how do you feel connected to the larger national fraternity?

- Do you feel your chapter as a collective group feels similar?

11. How often and to what extent are alumni involved in chapter activities?

- Prompt - New member education/membership program?
- Prompt - Influencing decision making?

### **Individual Development**

#### **Principles & Values:**

12. What are the shared values of your fraternity?

- How did you learn about them?
- How do new members learn about them?
- Do you feel everyone agrees with them?

13. How important do you think these values are to the members of your chapter?

- What happens if someone does not follow them?

14. How does the decision get made on who gets selected as a potential new member?

- What are you looking for in new members?
  - Dedicated and committed leaders, social change, GPA, legacy?

15. Does your organization have a formal or information mentoring process?

- If yes, explain

16. How do the values of your fraternity guide your everyday decision making as a member, a student, and a citizen?

17. Do you feel that members of your organization as a whole consider the larger organization and/or fraternity system when making personal decisions which could potentially affect these groups?

- Explain?

18. How comfortable are you to confront your own organizations members about behaviors incongruent with the organizations shared values?

- Members of other Greek letter organizations?

19. Do you agree with this statement? “My chapter upholds our organizational values and principles on a daily basis”

- If yes, explain
- If no, explain

## **Wrap up**

20. Who is someone in your fraternity that you admire? Why?
21. What would you like / have liked your fraternity to do that would have made it a better experience for you?
22. Is there anything else you would like to tell me about your experiences as a fraternity member?
23. Is there anything that you would like me to explain about the purpose of this interview or my research study?

Thank you very much for your participation.



## Appendix E

### Direct Observation Protocol

For each direct observation the practitioner will make careful note of those environmental arrangements, behaviors, or events occurring just before the behavior of concern is observed as well as what behaviors or events are observed as a result of the behavior (Hintze, Volpe, & Shapiro, 2002). To record these data a chart will be constructed by dividing a table into three columns, each of which corresponds to one of the three conditions (i.e., antecedents, behaviors, and consequences). Once constructed, the researcher will provide a brief description of each condition as they are observed (Hintze et al., 2002)

A variety of different activities and programs will be observed; as different environments may produce different behaviors from participants.

“Although listed as A-B-C, the behavior column is generally completed first and then followed by the antecedents, and consequences. The reason behind this rests on the understanding that without the presences of some salient recordable behavior, there is little use in recording antecedents and consequences” (Hintze et al., 2002, p. 995)

While numerous behaviors will understandably occur during the observation period, only those of study specific importance will be recorded. As a way to guide the observation and ensure the appropriate data is gathered and recorded the behaviors that are believed to be valuable for the study will be specified prior to conducting the observation.

The behaviors are as follows:

- Observed Behavioral Regularities
  - Language
  - Customs
  - Rituals
- Observed Display of NIC Organization Principles
  - Academic Success
  - Service & Philanthropy
  - Leadership Development
  - Social Skill Development

A-B-C Observation and Recording Form			
Date:	Time:	Event:	Location:
Antecedent (2 <sup>nd</sup> )		Behavior (1 <sup>st</sup> )	Consequence (3 <sup>rd</sup> )