

DISSERTATION

LEADERSHIP IDENTITY: AN INTERPRETIVE PHENOMENOLOGICAL ANALYSIS OF  
HOW UNDERGRADUATE FRATERNITY NEW MEMBER EDUCATORS UNDERSTAND  
AND EXPERIENCE LEADERSHIP

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## ABSTRACT

### LEADERSHIP IDENTITY: AN INTERPRETIVE PHENOMENOLOGICAL ANALYSIS OF HOW UNDERGRADUATE FRATERNITY NEW MEMBER EDUCATORS UNDERSTAND AND EXPERIENCE LEADERSHIP

The purpose of this study was to focus on how New Member Educators understand and experience their role as a leader within their organization as well as how they perceive their role in leading their organization into the future. Overall, the overarching question of this study is the following: What is the experience of undergraduate fraternity New Member Educators concerning their leadership identity in relation to their organization? Additionally, research questions focused on how these men experience and identify themselves as leaders, how they understand their leadership as it relates to their organization, how they experience their leadership influencing the congruence of the behavior with the stated values of their organization and finally, how they perceive their role in leading their organizations into the future.

To examine the development of leadership identity for undergraduate fraternity New Member Educators and their understanding of the way their role and experiences relate to their organization, this research study utilized an interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) (Smith, Flowers, & Larkin, 2009). Through choosing IPA, the researcher made a commitment to explore and interpret the way participants made meaning of their own experiences through gaining access to detailed personal accounts (Smith et al., 2009) of nine New Member Educators concerning their leadership identity in relation to their organization. The analysis detailed several themes in which the participants provided a broad range of perspectives on their experience

concerning their leadership identity related to their organization, Delta Delta Alpha. There were four superordinate themes that emerged from the analysis. These included: being able to comprehend leadership, being conferred to lead, being compelled to lead, and understanding and experiencing congruent leadership. Within each superordinate theme, two to three ordinate themes were identified. The themes identified and derived through the interpretive phenomenological analysis of the data lead to the development of the essence of the experience of undergraduate fraternity New Member Educators. This essence of the experience of these men concerning their leadership identity in relation to their organization subsequently created the findings within this study. The findings within this study led to the identification of five components that could be considered for use in future research, investigation, action and practice. This study focused on one organization (Delta Delta Alpha) and one position within the organization (New Member Educator). Thus, these five components could be explored further in terms of how fraternity men (and perhaps, more specifically New Member Educators) consider their leadership identity in relation to their organization. These five components were: modeling, reflection, experience, motivation and congruence. These components could potentially be used within leadership practice in terms of how men in fraternal organizations consider their leadership identity.

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## DEDICATION

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## DEFINITION OF TERMS

The proposed study defines the following terms as such to provide greater understanding and context:

*Fraternity:* A name that applies to all Greek-letter organizations characterized by a ritual, pin and strong ties to friendship and moral principles (University of Nebraska-Lincoln Office of Fraternity and Sorority Life, n.d.).

*Undergraduate Fraternity Members:* Students enrolled at a select college or university who have chosen as part of their undergraduate experience to engage in a form of fellowship and brotherhood pursuant to shared goals, purposes, and ideals (Sigma Chi, n.d.).

*New Member Educator:* The fraternity selected for this study defines the New Member Educator as being responsible for the supervision of new member group activities, including their meetings and learning program. He shall uphold the laws and rules of the fraternity regarding new member education.

*Leadership:* “A relational and ethical process of people together attempting to accomplish positive change” (Komives, Lucas, & McMahon, 2013, p. 14).

*Leadership Development:* The process an individual goes through that involves knowing, being and doing. Knowing is understanding yourself, the manner in which change occurs, and how you and others view things differently. Being is becoming an ethical, principled, authentic, and open, caring individual. Doing is acting in socially responsible ways congruently and consistently in community with others related to your commitments and passions (Komives et al., 2013)



*Leadership Identity:* An individual's self-awareness of own leadership as it relates to understanding the way that an individual is, and the influence therein of aspects such as perception, values, temperament, personality, motivations, experiences, surroundings, contextual environment, and various social identities (racial, ethnic, cultural background, etc.) (Komives et al., 2013). Leader identity, according to Sessa (2017) is "an identity that a person holds regarding whether he or she thinks they are a leader, what sort of leader they are, and how they relate to others as a leader" (p. 30).

*Values-Based (Driven) Leadership:* The manner in which "...leaders bring to the organization their own values and beliefs about how people should be treated, notions of what is right versus what is wrong, and ideas about what is just and fair. Organizations and communities are values-driven (based) as opposed to values-neutral" (Komives et al., 2013, p. 252).

## CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

### **Introduction**

Fraternities and sororities are organizations founded upon a set of standards and values to be upheld by their members (Earley, 1998). The founding values or principles of these organizations provide an ideal framework for ethical and moral development as seen through specific values that permeate the creeds, mottos, and purpose statements of these organizations. Examples include some of the following: integrity, truth, goodness, and social responsibility (Earley, 1998). Yet recent incidents and challenges demonstrate a clear disconnect between the stated values of the organizations and actions of members that have led to tragedy.

The mission of Beta Theta Phi fraternity is to “develop men of principle for a principled life” (“Beta Theta Pi,” n.d.). The stated values of the organization are mutual assistance, intellectual growth, trust, responsible conduct, and integrity (“Beta Theta Pi,” n.d.). On February 2, 2017, Timothy Piazza, a student at Penn State and a new member of Beta Theta Phi was taken through a pledging ritual that included forced alcohol consumption and other activities that resulted in him falling and sustaining severe bodily damage. From the time Timothy arrived at the chapter facility to the time paramedics were eventually called, reports and video footage of how the organization’s members failed to act provide a chilling and devastating account of actions that conflicted with the stated mission and values of the organization. Tim passed away from injuries sustained through this incident and the lack of action taken by members of an organization from which he was seeking brotherhood (Flanagan, 2017).

The creed of the Pi Kappa Phi Fraternity promotes being “bound together in a common loyalty which transcends any personal selfishness” and being made up of men who “prepare themselves diligently to shoulder their full responsibility as citizens” (Pi Kappa Phi, n.d.).

On November 3, 2017, Andrew Coffey, a 20-year-old, new member of Pi Kappa Phi Fraternity at Florida State University, was found dead on a couch following a Big Brother night. During this event, Andrew consumed enough alcohol at an off-campus party to have a blood alcohol level of .447, more than five times the legal limit (Swaak, 2017). When another new member found his body, he reportedly contacted five members of the fraternity before calling for emergency assistance, leading to an 11-minute delay (Levenson, 2017). Additionally, the grand jury presentment of the case indicated Andrew was unconscious on a couch in the middle of the party in which multiple fraternity members reportedly continued to drink around him (Levenson).

The tagline for Phi Delta Theta International Fraternity is: “Become the greatest version of yourself” (Phi Delta Theta, n.d.). The principles of the organization include: friendship, the cultivation of friendship amongst members of the organization; sound learning, the acquirement of a high degree of mental culture of members, and rectitude, the attainment of a high standard of morality (Phi Delta Theta, n.d.). On September 13, 2017, Louisiana State University student and new member of Phi Delta Theta, Maxwell Gruver, was brought to the chapter facility with other new members. There, they were taken through a hazing activity that allegedly included mustard, hot sauce, wall sits, and being forced to consume alcohol if they answered questions related to Phi Delta Theta and the Greek alphabet incorrectly. Due to the incident, Maxwell died from “acute alcohol intoxication with aspiration” and had a blood alcohol level of .495 (more than six times the legal limit) at the time of his death (Bacallao & Siemazko, 2017).

“The Phi Kappa Psi Fraternity engages men of integrity, further develops their intellect and enhances community involvement. With a legacy built on acceptance and trust, each brother realizes his highest potential through a lifelong experience of service and excellence” (Phi Kappa Psi, n.d.). On October 19, 2020, a new member of Phi Kappa Psi at Louisiana State University was dropped off at a hospital by fraternity members for alcohol poisoning and was placed on life support. According to reports, the new member along with others was forced to drink alcohol by the fraternity’s New Member Educator and had a blood alcohol level of .451 (Burnside & Levinson, 2020). It was determined no one made a call to 911 in the incident even though text messages would show individuals were aware of the condition of some of the new members. The New Member Educator was subsequently charged with 13 counts of hazing in the case (Burnside & Levinson).

Within these recent examples, it was reported that brothers of the respective chapters involved played direct roles in contributing to the deaths of these individuals. Additionally, as of November 2019 an additional five fraternity member deaths have occurred with some of them still under investigation or to be determined whether they are fraternity-related (Collman, 2019). As a result, there is a clear contradiction between the stated values, mottos, and creeds of these organizations and the behavior of their members. The question remains: how and why do these actions continue to occur, and what can truly be done to prevent tragedies like this from happening again. Additionally, if incidents like this continue to occur, it brings to question where the value of fraternities lies and how they promote the values of higher education. These incidents also question how the espoused values of these organizations align with the enacted behavior of the member and how and where leadership shows up within these organizations.

## **Problem Statement**

Astin (1999) asserted the greater a student's involvement in college, the greater the student's learning and personal development. This research identified various forms of involvement that contributed to this learning and development, including being involved in social fraternities and sororities. Additional research provided evidence there is a positive correlation between the fraternity experience and college student development (Mathiasen, 2005). This research demonstrated the college fraternity experience can generate opportunities for members to develop mature interpersonal relationships, capacity for teamwork, learn leadership skills, share ideas, and promote value alignment in behavior (Winston & Saunders, 1987).

Greek organizations have the ability to create a significant student culture and provide for their members' learning (Whipple & Sullivan, 1998). However, research also links participation in fraternities to negative influences on personal development and the moral development of members (DeSantis et al., 2009; Kimmel, 2008; McCabe et al., 2004; Murnen & Kohlman, 2007). For example, several studies indicate challenges within these organizations related to alcohol abuse, binge drinking, hazing, support of rape culture, sexual assault, hyper masculine tenets and beliefs, excessive use of stimulant drugs, and other destructive behaviors that directly conflict with the stated values of their organizations (DeSantis et al.; Kimmel; McCabe et al.; Murnen & Kohlman). Other challenges facing Greek letter organizations include diversity, development and critical thinking, legal issues, chapter standards, and expectations and ethical development of members (Whipple & Sullivan, 1998). When considering the future of fraternal organizations, it is important to examine how and why this contradiction exists in the research related to fraternities.

Hazing is a quintessential example of a contradiction of behavior and organizational values that has historically created increased tension between fraternities and the universities that host them (Curry, 1989). While hazing occurs frequently in other student organizations, scrutiny is often placed on fraternities and sororities in higher education (Baker-Zwerenz, Lopez-Phillips, Rogers, Strohming, Death, Laws, & Hundreds, 2004). The literature demonstrates how the hazing within these organizations is multi-faceted, has many contributing factors, and can be difficult to study. Reliable research on hazing has been limited due to the following factors: the secretive nature of fraternities, fear of retaliation, and the problematic building of loyalty, and community within these organizations (Salinas, Jr. & Boettcher, 2018).

Removing hazing practices from these organizations presents itself as a challenging and complex task because they are so embedded within the culture and shared identities of the members of the organization (Sweet, 1999). Therefore, (inter)national fraternal organizations continue to grapple with finding solutions to eradicate and address the issue of espoused values, the incongruent behavior among fraternal members and the practice of hazing.

In terms of programming and interventions, Allan and Madden (2008) conducted a study on hazing within various types of organizations. They recommended interventions needed to be more substantial than the standard practices of fraternal organizations and colleges of one-time presentations or the sharing of anti-hazing policies. Instead, Allan and Madden recommended interventions should include helping students to: (a) understand power dynamics within their organizations; (b) challenge groupthink within organizations; (c) recognize harm in activities; (d) find alternatives to building community without hazing; (e) align behaviors with values of the organization; (f) develop the leadership skills of members who can manage change resistance within their organization; (g) and develop skills to assist with moral and ethical decision making.

Salinas, Jr. & Boettcher (2018) challenged members, faculty, staff, administrators, and those outside of higher education to reflect on how hazing reflects the core values of fraternal organizations. Additionally, they asserted having a core understanding of organizational and institutional values can serve as a means to disrupt hazing cultures by highlighting discrepancies related to what organizations stand for and what they are willing to tolerate within their membership (Salinas, Jr. & Boettcher, 2018). To advance the development of organizations and institutions, as well as for the well-being and safety of members, anti-hazing education, required policies, and the disruption of hazing habits are essential (Salinas, Jr. & Boettcher, 2018).

Harms et al. (2006) discussed how an important part of the culture and stated purpose of fraternities and sororities on a college campus is the commitment to leadership. Research is limited on how these organizations enhance an individual's leadership development. Further research needs to be conducted to assess the outcomes of membership in undergraduate fraternities and sororities as they relate to an individual's leadership development (Harms et al., 2006). Dugen (2006) examined leadership development among both college men and women utilizing the Social Change Model of Leadership and concluded that there is a need for an increase in values-based leadership and exploration of leadership amongst college men (Dugen, 2006). Komives et al. (2005) stated most studies on leadership development focus on short-term programs instead of on the evolution and development of leadership identity and capacity to develop and change over time (Komives et al.).

There is sparse literature found on specific leadership positions within the fraternal experience or how a member understands and experiences leadership related to their organizations. Moreover, research on leadership might focus on positions that have the propensity and ability to influence change from within an organization. In the case of hazing and

new member education programs within fraternities, that position is the elected New Member Educator.

### **Purpose**

The purpose of this study is to understand how New Member Educators understand and experience their roles as leaders within their organizations as well as how they perceive their roles in leading their organizations into the future. Overall, the overarching question of this study is : What is the experience of undergraduate fraternity New Member Educators concerning their leadership identity in relation to their organization?

### **Research Questions**

Four main research questions guide this study:

1. How do undergraduate fraternity New Member Educators experience and identify themselves as leaders?
2. How do undergraduate fraternity New Member Educators understand and experience their leadership as it relates to their organization?
3. How do undergraduate fraternity New Member Educators experience their leadership influencing the congruence of the behavior of the organization with the stated values of the organization?
4. How do undergraduate fraternity New Member Educators perceive their role in leading their organization into the future?

### **Conceptual Frameworks**

This study utilized Komives et al.'s (2005) model for developing a leadership identity which constructed the view that leadership identity develops through six stages. The process by which an individual moves through each stage includes developing self with group influences,



which in turn influences the changing view of self with others from dependence to interdependence. This process demonstrates an individual shifting from an external view of leadership to leadership as a process (Komives et al.). Additionally, this study utilized the Social Change Model of Leadership (1996) as a guiding framework for developing the research on values congruence. One of the goals of the Social Change Model of Leadership is to enhance student development through self-knowledge and leadership competence (HERI, 1996). Through focusing on the utilization of congruence, one of the values/constructions within the individual component of the model, this study explored how beliefs are consistent with the values of the fraternal organization.

### **Background on New Member Education Interventions**

The discussion that follows provides examples of differing intervention programs or policy changes utilized by (inter)national fraternal organizations related to new member education programs and processes with focus on values-based and member-driven development programs. Sigma Alpha Epsilon (SAE), has been branded the United States' "deadliest fraternity" due to having at least ten members of the organization die since 2006 due to hazing or alcohol or drug-related incidents (Dockterman, 2014).

Effective in March 2014, SAE eliminated new member or "pledge" programming from fraternity operations as well as the formal classification of new members. The purpose of this change was to remove the formal hierarchical structure between new members and previously initiated members. Instead, the change introduced a program for all members with focus on development throughout their entire time in college. The program emphasized the Fraternity's values, mission, creed, history, and personal development. Additionally, the new member

educator was rebranded as the “Member Educator,” responsible for the education of all members (Sigma Alpha Epsilon, n.d.).

The Lambda Chi Alpha Learning Model (LCALM) focuses on the identity maturation within the membership and emphasizes self-awareness and individual reflection. This model utilizes “experiences in the fraternity environment to help members examine possible courses of action that will help them determine the skills needed to be a good member and person” (Reuter et al., 2012, p. 23) and emphasizes reflection and meaning making of their experiences. Findings from research on this model demonstrated that growth and self-awareness was observed of an undergraduate fraternity utilizing a specified learning model to inform new member education curriculum focused on the growth and maturation of members (Reuter).

In January 2018, Sigma Chi International Fraternity, one of the largest fraternities, announced a variety of health and safety initiatives including some related to new member education. One of the policy changes implemented was mandated all-chapter new member programs were shorter than five weeks to be effective by August 2018 (Sigma Chi, 2018). Beginning in the academic year 2018-2019, for all chapters of Phi Kappa Psi Fraternity the new member education period was reduced from six weeks to ten days and evolved into a larger continuing member education program (Phi Kappa Psi, n.d.).

In 2012, the international fraternity with New Member Educators in this study, embarked on the process of developing a standardized curriculum for a new member education program using online learning modules and a facilitator's guide for the member leading new member education. In 2013, this organization began hosting a New Member Educator Institute (a pseudonym for the conference to be used for the purpose of this study) to where undergraduate chapters had the opportunity to send their new member educators, in order to learn about the new

member education resources provided to members in this position. The institute was initially designed as a training on the new resources as well as engagement in conversation with other New Member Educators. In 2014, the institute became required for a delegate from each chapter to attend. Thus, the purpose of the program evolved from a training program to a leadership development experience. In 2019, the fraternity developed a shortened New Member Education pilot program in order to move to a more consistent and standardized experience for new members and New Member Educators. Detailed information on the New Member Educator Institute is discussed in chapter three.

### **Delimitations of the Study**

The delimitations are set by the focus of the study. The primary delimitation of the study is that it solely looks at one selected fraternal organization versus multiple organizations. This decision was made to examine the leadership identity of fraternity New Member Educators who are part of various chapters within the same umbrella fraternal organization. This study is not one on hazing, why hazing occurs within these organizations, nor the impact of hazing behavior and culture within fraternal organizations. While the aforementioned topics will be discussed throughout chapter two as they inform the study, the goal is to provide a greater understanding of the role these student leaders play within their organizations and how this relates to creating organizations that uphold their espoused values. The New Member Educator was intentionally selected due to his role in leading and working with new members of the fraternity and his role supervising new member activities and bringing them into the fraternity and culture. Consideration was also given to the lack of research on undergraduate positional leadership and leadership identity within fraternal organizations. Beyond being elected New Member Educators in their chapters, participants in the study will be in their third or fourth year of school to

demonstrate valuable experience within the chapter. To create an additional baseline with a leadership development program, all the participants had attended the New Member Educator Institute offered by the Fraternity.

### **Limitations of the Study**

The limitations are also set by the focus of the study. This study focused on understanding the leadership identity of undergraduate fraternity New Member Educators as it related to the stated values of fraternal organizations. The fraternity selected to be studied is a historically white organization with predominantly white membership and does not reflect racial and ethnic diversity in large numbers. There are varieties of positions of leadership for undergraduate fraternity members within the organization that play a role in upholding the espoused values of the organization. However, only the leadership identity of New Member Educators within these chapters will be examined. Additionally, the study had nine participants, which will limit the findings to those participants who were selected to participate in the study. Thus, participants cannot be viewed as representative of all fraternity men in the United States. Another limitation is that the size and scope of the New Member Educator role in each of the chapters is varied with a wide range of new members each respective New Member Educator is overseeing as part of a new member education program. Additionally, the membership numbers of the chapters they represent also is varied although they are all chapters of the same organization. Thus, the different approaches to New Member Education utilized by each chapter is also varied and not being examined as part of this study. Finally, the study is limited because it does not include a study of the overall culture of new member education within the chapter.

## **Significance of the Study**

Research has been conducted on the impact of the fraternity experience, connections to the personal and leadership development of fraternity membership, incongruent behaviors with the stated values of fraternal organizations, and hazing within fraternities. However, there is insufficient research on the role of the New Member Educator and their leadership development within the undergraduate fraternal experience. Additionally, there is insufficient research on how these leaders perceive their leadership influencing the congruence of the behavior of the organization with the stated values of their organization as well as within their role and New Member Educator experience. This is significant as in fraternities New Member Educators are the individuals who positionally have the ability to create a foundation for the future of their chapter related to how and in what ways they choose to onboard and bring new members into the chapter and the chapter culture.

The New Member Educator role and examination of new member programs is vital in examining the future viability of undergraduate fraternities on the college campus. Amidst the current culture and national incidents regarding fraternities and new member education, this study is significant in understanding more about the undergraduates who currently facilitate the new member education experience within fraternal organizations by examining their leadership development and understanding how they view and understand their fraternity experience as well as their role in the organization. The hope is that this research will contribute to the literature by providing an examination of the leadership identity of undergraduate fraternity New Member Educators and how they understand their role within their organization.

## **Researcher's Perspective**

I can vividly remember sitting with one of my Ph.D. classmates working on an assignment for my proposal course in the Ph.D. program and we began a conversation about undergraduate fraternity New Member Education, hazing, and the recent headlines regarding fraternities. We talked about how these headlines were utterly contradictory to what fraternities say they are about. The discussion continued and moved into conversing about undergraduate fraternity New Member Educators, and more specifically my involvement in the development of the New Member Educator's Institute with Delta Delta Alpha Headquarters as an alumni volunteer during the summer. The conversation proceeded and at one point, my classmate interjected, "You should really just do your dissertation on New Member Educators and their leadership!" I had always considered completing a study on fraternity men but until this conversation had not really thought about the ways in which a meaningful study could be constructed around New Member Educators. I had heard the stories of New Member Educators at the New Member Educator's Institute and had reflected on the ways in which these men were making meaning out the experience and their role informally as a faculty member at the Institute. And yet, this conversation was the beginning of a journey of exploring how exactly I wanted to construct a study around the New Member Educators and their understanding of their leadership as well as how it related to their organizations. Immediately following that conversation, I delved into the research related to leadership theory, college student leadership development and research related to the leadership development of fraternity men.

This fleeting initial conversation with my classmate led to the development of this study which ultimately landed on examining the essence of the experience of the fraternity New

Member Educators concerning their leadership identity in relation to their specific fraternal organization.

The organization whose members were studied is an organization I hold membership in and have personal experiences that influence my positionality and perspectives on the research. As an alumnus volunteer, I was involved with the creation of the new member education resources and curriculum design for New Member Educators initially. I also served as a Chapter Advisor for a local chapter of the organization and in the past volunteered as the co-coordinator of the New Member Educator Institute for a few years. Additionally, it is important to reflect on my own social identities and the role they play in my researcher reflexivity, including my identity as an identified Hispanic cisgender man who joined a historically white organization with predominantly white membership.

Throughout this study, it was important to consider my reflexivity as a researcher. This consideration includes reflection on how I engaged with the participants during the various phases of data collection, my subjectivity as a researcher, my role as an alumnus of this organization, and ensuring that the participants understood my role and their relationship with me. My connection to the organization assisted me with obtaining access to the organization's members and an immediate ability to develop rapport and trustworthiness with the participants. However, it was important to show caution and awareness of my potential bias as an insider and to spend time reflecting on this by maintaining a research journal or notes throughout the study.

## CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Fraternities and sororities are organizations founded upon a set of standards and values to be upheld by the members. The founding values or principles of these organizations can provide an ideal framework for ethical and moral development as seen through specific values that permeate the creeds, mottos, and purpose statements of these organizations including some of the following: integrity, truth, goodness, social responsibility, and more (Earley, 1998). For many students, joining a fraternity or sorority is a significant developmental occasion because they are making a decision to make a lifetime commitment to an organization (Cokley et al., 2001) and on many college campuses both members and non-members of these organizations are able to identify there are clear advantages to being members of fraternities and sororities (Malaney, 1990).

In examining the current research on the fraternity experience, as discussed in chapter one, there is a clear deficit view on the experience that these organizations provide members and all the various ways in which the behaviors of members are substantially incongruent with the stated values. A review of research overwhelmingly overviews the issues within these organizations related to alcohol abuse and binge drinking, hazing, the upholding of rape supportive culture and sexual assault, excessive use of stimulant drugs and other destructive behaviors (DeSantis et al., 2009; Kimmel, 2008; McCabe et al., 2004; Murnen & Kohlman, 2007). Fraternities are often the most frequently identified concerning irresponsible hazing activities (Ellworth, 2006). Additionally, research demonstrates fraternity men are well aware of the negative perceptions associated with being members of these organizations (Tollini &



Wilson, 2010), and yet there does not seem to be significant behavioral change associated with this knowledge of how members are perceived.

With all this in mind, how does this disconnect exist between the stated values these organizations say they are about and what the research demonstrates the experience actually be about and represent (Shonrock, 1998). However, amidst this, there is some evidence where there is a positive correlation between the fraternity experience and college student development (Mathiasen, 2005). This evidence demonstrates the fraternity experience can generate opportunities for members to develop mature interpersonal relationships, learn leadership skills, develop capacities for working as a member of a team, share ideas, and promote values alignment in behavior (Winston & Saunders, 1987). Research consistently has demonstrated and perpetuated the negative impact of these organizations on member development in direct contradiction to the stated values of fraternities. More significant exploration needs to be completed on this contradiction and paradox and how and why this continues to be perpetuated and exist within undergraduate fraternal organizations. This literature review focused on the following areas:

- 1) A brief history of the founding of fraternities,
- 2) An introduction to leadership theory
- 3) College student leadership development and more specifically undergraduate fraternity men,
- 4) The impact of the undergraduate fraternity experience on the moral development of members,
- 5) Incongruence with the stated values of fraternities through new member programs and activities including hazing,

- 6) Transformational leadership and leading change within organizations, and
- 7) A summary and overview of how a review of the literature contributed to providing context for the study on the experiences of undergraduate fraternity New Member Educators concerning their leadership identity in relation to their organization.

### **Brief History of the Founding of Fraternities**

As one of the oldest forms of involvement on a college campus, fraternities and sororities exist only in the United States and Canada (Joyce & Nirh, 2018; Whipple & Sullivan, 1998). The Phi Beta Kappa Society was founded in 1776 at the College of William and Mary, as during the American Revolution a group of five students created the organization within the historical context of a new nation. The shared values of the society included personal freedom, scientific inquiry, liberty of conscience and creative endeavor (Phi Beta Kappa, n.d.). While focused primarily on academics, Phi Beta Kappa developed norms that are still a part of today's modern fraternities and sororities including the utilization of Greek letters, secret rituals, symbols, badges, and shared values and beliefs (Whipple & Sullivan). Initially, the development of a community that was based on a common set of interests and values was significant to the creation of the modern college fraternity (Whipple & Sullivan). Prior to the founding of college fraternities in 1825, college men formed other societies that used Greek letters for names, however, they all did not last or became honor societies (Syrett, 2009).

On November 25, 1825, five members at Union College in New York formed a secret society for both literary and social purposes, the Kappa Alpha Society, which became the first Greek letter society to continue on and preserve the character of a social fraternity on a college campus (Syrett, 2009). In the following two years, two other societies were formed at Union College: Sigma Phi and Delta Phi and the societies began at other colleges and universities

(Syrett, 2009). By 1832, Alpha Delta Phi was founded at Hamilton. By the 1850s Greek letter societies existed on the majority of college campuses in New England and the Mid-Atlantic states and also existed in areas in the southern mid-western United States (Syrett). During this time of fraternity growth during the 1850s when students were excluded from one fraternity, they would often create another one and those groups would spread to various colleges across the United States (Syrett). White fraternities were founded predominantly on college campuses at a time when the student population was primarily white, Christian, and male (Boschini & Thompson, 1998). At the time of founding, social fraternities provided for a variety of needs of college men including providing a forum for resistance of faculty and administrators, a break from the routines of the collegiate experience, support with the transition to college and provide family-like companionship (Syrett). Fraternities provided a forum for companionship and camaraderie, but also inclusion in these organizations was also connected to class status, competition, and seeking out networking opportunities (Syrett).

### **Introduction to Leadership Theory**

Leadership is an often studied and researched concept in both quantitative and qualitative methods of research (Northouse, 2010). Some researchers analyze leadership as a specific trait or behavior. Others conceptualize leadership as a process or from a relational standpoint and within a variety of different contexts (Northouse). Others explore the character of leaders as it relates to ethical behavior (Johnson, 2015) and others have focused on primal and resonant leadership as it relates to emotional intelligence (Goleman et al., 2002). The variety of research and inquiry on the topic of leadership demonstrates that the leadership process is sophisticated and complex. Some define leadership in terms of power relationships, a transformational process, or from a skills perspective that make leadership possible (Northouse). Research has provided exploration

of the traits and behaviors of leadership, characteristics of followers, the relationship between leaders and followers, situational approaches to leadership and more (Cooper et al., 2005). All of this research has collectively advanced the knowledge of leadership as a complex and multi-faceted concept (Cooper et al., 2005). Often, leadership is more complex than presented in regular leadership books (Northouse, 2010).

According to Northouse (2010), leadership is defined as a “process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal” (Northouse, 2010, p. 3). Leadership is a concept that is not linear, but one that is interactive, it involves influence, occurs in groups, and includes attention to a common or mutual purpose (Northouse). “Leaders change the way people think about what is possible” (Northouse, p. 11), and leaders and followers are involved together in the leadership process (Northouse). Leadership is not something that is observable in the world nor an object as it’s a construct (Sessa, 2017). As one goes through life, an understanding of what leadership is, as well as understanding of yourself as a leader changes (Sessa).

The following highlights the literature on three select leadership theories/models: authentic leadership, servant leadership and multicultural leadership as well as the research on the frameworks for development of these types of leadership.

### **Authentic Leadership**

Authentic Leadership focuses on whether leadership is genuine and real and explores the authenticity of leaders and the way in which they lead (Northouse, 2010). There is not one single definition of authentic leadership that is widely accepted; however, there are a variety of definitions that emphasize different concepts and are written from different points of view (Northouse). Gardner et al. (2011) overviewed a review of the literature on authentic leadership

and discussed how the concept of authenticity can be traced all the way back to ancient Greek philosophy and the notion of “know thyself” (p. 1121). George (2003) identified five characteristics that authentic leaders demonstrate, including that they understand their *purpose*, they demonstrate strong *values* regarding doing the right thing, they hold trusting *relationships*, they act upon their values and practice *self-discipline*, and they act from the *heart*.

Shamir and Eilam (2005) discussed that while definitions of authentic leadership are arbitrary, authentic leaders possess self-knowledge and points of view that demonstrate their values and belief systems. Shamir and Eilam also discussed characteristics that define authentic leaders: authentic leaders do not pretend to be leaders, authentic leaders do not engage in leadership roles for status or reward, authentic leaders demonstrate their original values and convictions, and authentic leaders act based off their values and beliefs. These leaders have a high level of integrity because their actions are congruent with what they believe and value (Shamir & Eilam, 2005). In summary, Shamir and Eilam stated their definition of authentic leadership indicated the difference between authentic and inauthentic leaders can be recognized within the following four characteristics: the salience of their leadership role within their self-concept, the extent to which clarity centers around deeply held values, the manner in which goals are consistent with the self, and the amount to which their behavior and actions are consistent with self-concept. Overall, even though the definitions within the literature may slightly vary, the primary component is knowing and acting consistent with one’s true self.

### **Frameworks for the Development of Authentic Leadership**

Authentic leadership is a complex process that emphasizes the development of qualities that help leaders to be perceived as trustworthy and believable by their followers. The

leader's job is to learn to develop these qualities and apply them to the common good as they serve others. (Northouse, 2010, p. 221)

There are a variety of frameworks for the development of authentic leadership within the literature. Shamir & Eilam (2005) articulated for the development of authentic leadership there are four components related to the concepts of how one can identify an authentic or inauthentic leader. These four components include: development of a leader's identity as a central component of the person's self-concept; development of self-knowledge and self-concept clarity, including clarity about values and convictions; development of goals that are concordant with self-concept; and increasing self-expressive behavior, namely consistency between a leader's behaviors and the leader's self-concept (Shamir & Eilam, p. 399). Additionally, Shamir and Eilam identified these characteristics of development as an authentic leader are beneficial and manifest through one's life story. This occurs through providing personal experiences that demonstrate clarity around personal values and convictions (Shamir & Eilam).

George (2003) articulated these five related characteristics determine what an individual needs possess in order to develop authentic leadership: passion (purpose), behavior (values), connectedness (relationships), consistency (self-discipline), and compassion (heart). According to George, development of these five characteristics can lead to an individual becoming an authentic leader. Gardner (2005) developed a self-based model of authentic leader and follower development that begins with an individual's personal history and trigger events. This model leads to one's self-awareness and self-regulation, shaped by organizational climate, and influences followers by positive role modeling of these characteristics. This model-based approach leads to follower trust, engagement and a sense of well-being (Gardner). Gardner not

only focused on the development of authentic leadership for leaders, but also the impact and development of authentic followers within the realm of role-modeling by an authentic leader.

### **Servant Leadership**

The servant-leader is servant first... It begins with the natural feeling that one wants to serve, to serve first. Then conscious choice brings one to aspire to lead. That person is sharply different from one who is leader first, perhaps because of the need to assuage an unusual power drive or to acquire material possessions. For such it will be a later choice to serve — after leadership is established. The leader-first and the servant-first are two extreme types. Between them there are shadings and blends that are part of the infinite variety of human nature. (Greenleaf, 1970, p. 6)

Servant leadership's origins and roots exist in both Eastern and Western thought and Greenleaf (1970) brought contemporary interest to the concept of servant leadership (Northouse, 2010). Even biblical origins exist on the concept of servant leadership, according to Sandjaya and Sarros (2002). Jesus not only taught servant leadership but applied it in specific ways. An example of this exists in the Gospel of Mark where Jesus washed the feet of his disciples (Sandjaya & Sarros). Additionally, attributes of servant leaders exist through the teachings of Chinese Philosophers who “encouraged leaders to be humble valleys” (Johnson, 2015, p. 235). The basic idea of servant leadership is simply that leaders should put their followers' needs before their own (Johnson, 2015). In addition to serving, these leaders hold a social responsibility with everyone and recognize all individuals as equal stakeholders (Northouse, 2010). A servant leader does not use institutional authority to control; instead, they shift power to their followers (Northouse).

Servant leadership begins with the initiative of the individual (Greenleaf, 1970). In the literature, there has been a variety of different attributes listed to demonstrate servant leadership. The motivation of a servant leader: to serve others first, distinguishes the concept from other types of leadership (Sendjaya & Sarros, 2002). According to Johnson (2015), there are five concepts at the center of servant leadership. These are: stewardship, obligation, partnership, emotional healing, and elevating purpose. Sendjaya and Sarros asserted servant leaders demonstrate an unwavering conviction and strongly held beliefs when taking on the role and nature of a servant. Early in its history, support for the theory of servant leadership was more anecdotal and listed characteristics of what it meant to be a servant leader. However, more recent empirical research has begun to examine the concept of servant leadership (Johnson).

### **Frameworks for the Development of Servant Leadership**

According to Sendjaya and Sarros (2002), to develop a theory of servant leadership that pulls the concept together the following questions need to be explored: (1) What is the difference between those who choose to be and those who choose not to be servant leaders? (2) What does it take for someone to become a servant leader? (3) Are certain types of people more likely to embrace the role of a servant leader? (4) What are the results of practicing servant leadership? (5) How is servant leadership measured? (6) Are there specific factors within an organization that encourage or discourage servant leadership? Sendjaya and Sarros also argued current research is focused on anecdotal evidence; therefore, these questions need to be explored in order to construct and develop frameworks of servant leadership as a theory. A theme that is widely recognized within the perspectives of servant leadership is that the relationship between the leader and the follower is at the center of another leadership concept: ethical leadership (Northouse, 2010).



According to Russell and Stone (2002), there are functional and accompanying attributes that enhance the functional attributes of servant leadership. The functional attributes include vision, honesty, integrity, trust, service, modeling, pioneering, appreciation of others, and empowerment (Russell & Stone). The accompanying attributes include communication, credibility, competence, stewardship, visibility, influence, persuasion, listening, encouragement, teaching and delegation (Russell & Stone). These attributes can provide a foundation for a simple model for a theory of servant leadership (Russell & Stone).

Researchers have begun to look, not only at attributes and characteristics of servant leadership, but have completed empirical research on the impact of servant leadership on followers and organizations (Johnson, 2015). Research has determined some of the following in regard to the impact of servant leadership: servant leaders meet followers' needs and positively impact follower's job performance and satisfaction, servant leadership creates a trusting culture built upon ethics within organizations, and servant leadership inspires members of a team to meet goals and produce results (Johnson). In order to truly understand servant leadership, there was a need for reliable instruments to measure servant leadership behavior; however, several researchers have developed their own instruments and measures that are sometimes built on other research or interpretation of the original work of Greenleaf (Van Dierendonck, 2011).

### **Multicultural Leadership**

Bordas (2007) discussed how leadership and leadership theory have begun to shape and evolve into a multicultural form due to the following: 1) demographic changes 2) the civil rights movement 3) immigration 4) globalization 5) democratic tradition in America 6) educating leaders from diverse communities 7) the development of leadership models in communities of color and 8) social change in America (p. 5). Multicultural leadership is defined as "an inclusive

approach and philosophy that incorporates the influences, practices and values diverse culture in a respectful and productive manner” (Bordas, 2007, p. 8). This type of leadership resonates with various cultures and allows diverse individuals to engage, contribute and seek potential, it encourages things like synergy and innovation within groups of people (Bordas). According to Bordas, there are eight principles of multicultural leadership within three parts: Part One: 1) learn from the past, from individualism to collective identity, 3) developing a spirit of generosity, Part Two: 4) community conferred leadership, 5) a tradition of activism, 6) working for the common good, and Part Three: 7) the village the tribe and 8) gratitude, hope and forgiveness. Overall, the concept of multicultural leadership promotes justice, equality as well as the integration of the elements of spiritual responsibility and social accountability into the fabric of leadership within society (Bordas). The literature on and the evolution of leadership theory can assist in providing a framework for understanding subsequent research on college student leadership development and more specifically, research available on undergraduate fraternity men.

### **College Student Leadership Development**

The following details the empirical research on the development of leadership identity, the Social Change Model of Leadership Development, leadership development of Generation Z students, and research completed on undergraduate fraternity men and leadership.

#### **Development of Leadership Identity**

Komives et al. (2005) completed a study on the development of a leadership identity that resulted in a six-stage leadership development model. Komives et al. reviewed the scholarship on leadership as it related to approaches and styles, including a focus on leadership approaches that include collaboration and are relational. The researchers stated that most studies on leadership

development focus on short-term interventions or programs instead of how leadership identity and capacity is developed and changes over time (Komives et al.). Thus, the study sought to understand the process that an individual goes through as they develop a leadership identity. This study demonstrated a view that leadership identity develops through six stages that move an individual from a level of self-awareness to integration and synthesis of leadership and include awareness, exploration/engagement, leader identified, leadership differentiated, generativity and integration/synthesis (Komives et al.). The process by which an individual moves through each stage includes developing self with group influences, which in turn influences the changing view of self with others from dependence to interdependence. This process demonstrates an individual shifting from an external view of leadership to leadership as a process (Komives et al.).

Komives et al. (2006) identified the transition from stage four, leader differentiated, to stage five generativity in which a leader seeks to facilitate a successful group process from a leadership position (or not) and demonstrates a commitment to the community of the group and the understanding that leadership is a group process. In stage five, generativity, individuals demonstrated a commitment to the care and prosperity of others (members of their group). This stage was significant to the development of a leadership identity because in terms of developing self-interacting with group influences, individuals could now identify values immersed within their actions that led to an articulation of passion for causes, and for seeking to create and develop change. In this stage, individuals also identified that they had the responsibility to contribute to the development of others (Komives et al., 2006). In this stage, in terms of a changing view of self with others and broadening views of leadership, individuals became more deeply committed to people working together within leadership as a process with a responsibility to the group (Komives et al., 2006). The transition to the sixth stage of developing a leadership

identity was a reflective time that consisted of being open to new ideas, learning from others, and reflected on both personal values and integrity (Komives et al., 2006). It noted that in stage five: “Students who functioned well in coalitions were more likely to learn about and understand the importance of systems. Educators can both model and encourage students to form coalitions among groups on key campus or community issues, to work with networks to create change” (Komives et al., 2006, p. 417).

In stage six of the leadership identity development model integration/synthesis, individuals viewed themselves as working with others in various contexts, identified as a leader regardless of the role they played in an organization and actions were congruent with their values and beliefs (Komives et al., 2006). Individuals saw value in sharing their experiences with another person with an emphasis on values congruence with their actions and sought out environments and peers congruent with their values.

In terms of developing self-interacting with group influences, individuals saw organizations as complex and held a variety of contexts and in order to contribute to the organization, they would need to assess those contexts. In terms of changing view of self with others and broadening views of leadership, individuals held confidence with a variety of their peers and were confident in their ability to work effectively with others toward shared goals and contributed to their ability to identify as a leader (Komives et al., 2006). It was recommended that in stage six, educators could assist individuals with identifying what talents and strengths they can offer any group across diverse contexts. It was noted that individuals move into stage six as they are ending their college careers, a stage and process typically spawned by the reflection at this time. Komives et al. (2006) stated that “...activities that help students reflect on a congruent sense of self may help their leadership identity solidify” (p. 417).

## **The Social Change Model of Leadership Development**

The Social Change Model of Leadership Development (SCMLD) presents a model focused on the leadership development of undergraduate student leaders. This model is an inclusive model of leadership development focused on enhancing student leadership competence in the areas of self-knowledge and leadership, specifically in order to facilitate positive social change within a community (HERI, 1996). The SCMLD examined leadership development at the individual, group, and community/societal level. It includes seven values as critical elements of leadership development: consciousness of self, congruence, commitment, collaboration, common purpose, controversy with civility, and citizenship. There is an eighth value – change – which is the ultimate goal of the model, thus making a better world and society for the self and others (HERI, 1996). Congruence is defined as the following: “Thinking, feeling and behaving with consistency, genuineness, authenticity, and honesty towards others; actions are consistent with most deeply-held beliefs and convictions (HERI, 1996 p. 22). According to the Higher Education Research Institute, developing a consciousness of self is vital to an individual being congruent (HERI, 1996). Congruence as defined in this model is a significant concept in understanding values-based leadership development.

Dugen (2006) explored leadership development among college men and women utilizing the Social Change Model as a conceptual framework, specifically examining the eight core values of the model. Dugen (2006) hypothesized that there were significant differences between male and female students when analyzed using these eight values. The participants of the study included a sample of randomly chosen students from a large public university in the west (Dugen, 2006). The Socially Responsible Leadership Scale (SRLS) was utilized in order to measure leadership development through the eight values associated with the model. In the

study, 859 instruments were returned and the results determined that both men and women scored lowest on the same values: controversy with civility, citizenship, and change. However, women scored higher than men for all eight values/constructs, including congruence (Dugen, 2006). This discrepancy between the men and women studied (specifically on six of the 8 values of the model) demonstrated a need for an increase in values-based leadership development among college men (Dugen, 2006). Additionally, the results of gender on leadership typically varies within the literature and is dependent on the definition of leadership being used and the context within it is being examined (Dugan, 2011).

### **Leadership Development for Generation Z Students**

Seemiller and Grace (2017) sought to provide a guide for developing the leadership capacity of Generation Z students (students born between 1995-2010). In their guidance, they identified these students as compassionate, loyal and responsible (p. xiii) and discussed how engaging this population of students requires a different approach than what may have been used for previous generations (Seemiller & Grace, 2017). They articulated Generation Z students dislike formal and positional leadership positions and that has an impact on them wanting to be leaders. This perspective on leadership can offer both a challenge and an opportunity because the world is structured around positional and formal leadership roles and yet, their perspective can offer nonpositional forms of leadership as being helpful and influential. Generation Z students see those that are closest to them as role models and there can be an association of positive role modeling of leadership for them without being in a formal leadership position (Seemiller & Grace, 2017). Additionally, Seemiller, and Grace asserted students in this generation seem to have an inflated sense of their own abilities when it comes to leadership. They both see leadership as negative when demonstrated by those in positional leadership roles, and at the same

time, they see themselves as being skillful in leadership (Seemiller & Grace, 2017). According to Seemiller and Grace, when working with a group, Generation Z students focus on relating, thinking, and doing rather than necessarily leading as they have less of an identification with leading, thus a suggestion is for leadership programs and opportunities provided to these students to focus on the development of leadership competencies and skills and not necessarily about leadership development itself (Seemiller & Grace).

### **Research on Leadership and Undergraduate Fraternities**

Martin et. al (2012) reviewed the inconsistent literature on the leadership development of college fraternity members, including the above studies, and examined the impact of fraternity and sorority affiliation during the first-year of college on socially responsible leadership. The quantitative study utilized a modified version of the SRLS scale used in previous studies. The results demonstrated that fraternity membership correlated with increases in the citizenship and change values/dimensions of the Social Change Model (Martin et al., 2012). This correlation indicated that fraternities offer undergraduate men skills that assist them in efforts toward organizational change. These skills allow fraternity members to operate successfully within a group setting and instill in them a higher sense of responsibility to the communities they belong to than men unaffiliated with fraternities (Martin et al.). While this study demonstrated a positive correlation between fraternity membership and two dimensions of socially responsible leadership within the context of the Social Change Model of Leadership Development, it also demonstrated that fraternity membership failed to demonstrate a significant difference for other values/dimensions including congruence (Martin et al.).

One of the outcomes of the fraternity experience espoused by fraternal organizations is the commitment to leadership development of men in the organizations (Martin et al., 2012). In a

study of the relationship between personality and leadership in fraternities, Harms et al.'s (2006) discussed how a commitment to leadership is an essential part of the culture and stated purpose of fraternities. Utilizing the Five Factor Model Framework with five dimensions: extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, emotional stability and intellect, the researchers determined that undergraduate fraternal organizations have the ability to advance members' existing skills through leadership roles.

However, there is not substantial research on the outcomes of holding leadership roles or how these organizations enhance an individual's leadership skills; therefore, research assessing the outcomes of membership in undergraduate fraternities as they relate to an individual's leadership development needs to continue (Harms et. al, 2006). While leadership development is at the core of the stated purpose of these organizations, evidence to support their active attempts at providing this development appears limited, inconsistent and dated (Martin et al., 2012).

To study the influence of fraternity/sorority membership on leadership skills, Hevel and Bureau (2014) explored the Wabash National Study of Liberal Arts Education that examined student development at the beginning and end of the first year of college and at the end of the fourth year utilizing previous research. While a variety of outcomes related to fraternal membership were examined, the influence of fraternity/sorority membership on leadership skills was an outcome explored and is significant. This was the first large study that separated the direct effect of membership in a fraternity or sorority on socially responsible leadership (Hevel & Bureau, 2014). Overall, the study concluded that there is minimal direct influence on educational outcomes like leadership for fraternity and sorority members (Hevel & Bureau). Again, this study affirms the inconsistency with what these organizations say they are about and what empirical studies demonstrate. As values-based leadership organizations, it is also significant to



explore what the literature states regarding the moral reasoning and values alignment of fraternity men.

### **Moral Development and the Fraternity Experience**

Kohlberg (1976) theorized that an individual's moral reasoning develops through six stages and those stages are grouped into three levels. Each of the levels represents a relationship between the individual and the expectations and rules of society (Evans et al., 2010). The three levels include preconventional, conventional and postconventional. Level 2 is the level at which individuals identify with the rules and expectations of society and work to align behaviors with them. The stages within this level (Interpersonally Normative Morality and Social System Morality) are where an individual begins to understand expectations of those with whom they have close relationships. Shared feelings, agreements and understanding of those agreements are a priority. Once these expectations are examined, a person is able to progress to the second stage in the conventional level where reflection on what society or larger communities deem as "right" is reflected in decisions (Evans et al., 2010). At this stage, individuals recognize their behavior having an impact on their larger social group.

### **Fraternity Member Moral Development**

According to the Association for Fraternity and Sorority Advisors (AFA) Student Development Theory Resource Guide, this is the level at which most adults are positioned. Traditional students rarely accomplish progressing past this stage during their time in college (AFA, 2012). Kohlberg's theory of moral development can be significant for understanding where individual fraternity men may be at in their development as it relates to values-based decision-making and behaviors and the understanding of how values congruence has an impact on their social group or organization (i.e., fraternity).

It should be a reasonable expectation that since one of the ideals of the fraternity and sorority experience is to demonstrate a more complex sense of moral reasoning with a higher sense of integrity and adherence to ethical standards, that there should be an effect on members' moral development (Winston & Saunders, 1987). There has been research completed on the effects of the fraternity experience and how it relates to college student moral development, which has generally concluded that membership in these organizations does little to enhance moral and personal development of members (Tripp, 1997). The research tends to bring up the question as to whether or not membership in a Greek organization has an impact on one's moral development or if they are bringing in those characteristics to the Greek experience (Tripp).

Marlowe and Auvenshine (1982) completed a study in which they sought to explore the impact of membership in a fraternity or sorority and the moral development of college students by looking specifically at college freshmen. Again, the researchers expected a positive effect from membership in a fraternity and sorority because the founders of these organizations believed that "society would not function unless its leaders were persons of moral sensitivity and integrity" (Marlowe & Auvenshine, p. 54). The method for the study used a pretest and posttest design utilizing the Defining Issues Test from Rest (1974) followed by statistical analysis. The results of the study showed that there were no differences of principled moral reasoning between affiliated and those not affiliated with a fraternity or sorority during the span of their first year of college. However, they did indicate that being a member of a fraternity or sorority did not weaken principled moral reasoning compared first-year students who were not affiliated with fraternities or sororities (Marlow & Auvenshine).

## **Impact of the Fraternity Experience on Moral Development**

Mathiasen (2005) and DeBard and Sacks (2010) contributed to the literature regarding identifying the positive effects of the undergraduate fraternity experience. This is due in part to the abundance of research indicating negative effects of the fraternity experience on student development. Mathiasen (2005) indicated that research on the effects of Greek life or more specifically on college student moral development, has generally been inconsistent and concluded that membership in these organizations does little to enhance the moral development of members. However, through a case study of one chapter, evidence was provided that identified a positive correlation between membership in a fraternity and the moral development of members.

In their study, DeBard and Sacks (2010) indicated the positive influence of the fraternity experience on the academic performance of fraternity men in terms of GPA and retention (they also studied sorority women). Utilizing academic records, they were able to make the positive correlation between fraternity (and sorority membership) and academic success during the first semester of college. Both member development and academic performance of members can be connected to the level at which organizational values are represented in member experiences. Thus, future research could provide a clearer definition of the values promoted within the fraternity experience, and a critical analysis of the various contributions membership makes to student development (Mathiasen, 2005). The need for more research demonstrates the inconsistency related to research on the fraternity experience and how in one area (academics), research demonstrates positivity related to the experience; however, research on how other fraternal values are promoted within the membership experience is inconsistent. Thus, research

on the fraternal experience and how behaviors incongruent with the values of the organization, like hazing tend to be more prominent throughout the research.

### **New Member Education and Hazing**

Hazing is a prime example of behavior incongruent with fraternity organizational values and, historically, hazing has created increased tension between fraternities and the universities that host them (Curry, 1989). While hazing can and does occur frequently in other student organizations, scrutiny is most often placed on fraternities and sororities at colleges and universities (Baker-Zwerenz et al., 2004). There are a variety of perspectives on when and how exactly hazing was brought into fraternal organizations in a college setting. One of these perspectives is that when class identity and solidarity declined on a college campus, and thus as a result so did the hazing of older classes to younger classes (i.e., sophomores to freshmen), fraternity identity took the place of class identity and therefore some of those traditions were brought into fraternities (Syrett, 2009). Other perspectives include that hazing was utilized during the Civil War and as students who fought in the war came back to campuses, they brought with them hazing practices in the late 1860s or that hazing may have come from West Point from students who left to attend nonmilitary institutions (Syrett). After both the Vietnam War and World War II and with the introduction of the GI Bill and more students attending college hazing within fraternities increased (Joyce & Nirh, 2018). In 1873, fraternity hazing issues first garnered public attention with the death of a Kappa Alpha pledge, Mortimer Leggett at Cornell University (Syrett).

The literature demonstrates that hazing within these organizations is a complex issue, has historical origins and, at times is difficult to study. Due to the fact that fraternities are generally secretive organizations, it can be difficult to conduct reliable research on hazing within these

organizations (Sweet, 1999). It is apparent that recent studies are more inclined toward exploration of value-incongruent behaviors beyond (but that may have connections to) hazing, including interpersonal violence and alcohol and substance abuse. Hazing, however, still exists within these organizations. The following section of literature review discusses some of the research on hazing and its implications to new member education and values congruence within the fraternity experience.

### **Hazing Defined**

*Hazing* can be defined in a variety of different ways. Different individuals, organizations and institutions can define the term differently depending on the lens through which they are looking (i.e. the person doing the hazing, the person being hazing, and administrator, a coach or advisor, a university policy versus the law, etc.) (McGlone, 2010; Salinas & Boettcher, 2018). Over centuries, hazing has been acknowledged, and yet there is not one widely accepted definition, which could be due to the various types of initiations and rituals that occur within various types of organizations (McGlone).

The website [www.hazingprevention.org](http://www.hazingprevention.org) defines hazing as “any action taken or any situation created intentionally that causes embarrassment, harassment or ridicule and risks emotional and/or physical harm to members of a group or team, whether new or not, regardless of the person's willingness to participate” (Hazing Prevention, 2016, paragraph 1). The Fraternity Executive’s Association Statement on Hazing is the following:

The association defines hazing as any action taken or situation created, intentionally, whether on or off fraternity premises, to produce mental or physical discomfort, embarrassment, harassment, or ridicule. Such activities and situations include paddling in any form; creation of excessive fatigue; physical and psychological shock; quests,

treasure hunts, scavenger hunts, road trips, or any other such activities carried on outside the confines of the house; publicly wearing apparel that is conspicuous and not normally in good taste; engaging in public stunts and buffoonery; morally degrading or humiliating games and activities; late work sessions that interfere with scholastic activities; and any other activities that are not consistent with fraternal law, ritual, policy, or the regulations and policies of the educational institution. (FEA, 2003)

McGlone (2010) identified two categories of hazing: physical and mental. Physical hazing can include acts such as beatings, branding, paddling, exercise, use of substances, or sexual acts such as sodomy, simulated sex acts, or forced kissing. Whereas, mental hazing (often overlooked and undetected) may include verbal abuse, being blindfolded, being forced to be in small spaces, and simulating sexual activities (McGlone).

Ellsworth (2006) researched whether the definitions of hazing differed among the following student organizations: fraternity members, sorority members, Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC), student athletes and marching band. The quantitative study argued definitions amongst the groups did not differ. Ellsworth determined there were many contextual and cultural differences that influenced how the various groups defined hazing and the differences in definitions were significant amongst men and women. Additionally, Ellsworth identified the following types of hazing: physical hazing activities, psychological hazing activities, a combination of both physical and psychological hazing activities, and “other” hazing activities. The study supported previous research that determined fraternities have a significant amount of knowledge related to what constitutes hazing behavior and tended to choose to participate in these behaviors more than other groups being studied (Ellsworth). Finally, Ellsworth concluded students’ definitions of hazing were significantly influenced by the type of organization and by

gender. Students, regardless of the group studied, agree on what types of behaviors constitute hazing and reiterated the complexity of defining and understanding the ways in which members of these organizations engage in these behaviors and why (Ellsworth, 2006).

### **Experience of Hazing by College Students**

Allan and Madden (2008) facilitated an extensive study on the experiences college students have and the perceptions they have of hazing within their organizations. They did this by developing an executive summary of the National Study of Student Hazing which examined over 11,000 respondents at 53 institutions and around 300 personal interviews. Their research indicated 47% of college students and 55% of college students involved in clubs, teams, or organizations experience hazing (Allan & Madden). According to Allan and Madden, more students perceived positive rather than negative aspects of hazing and, in 95% of the incidents in which students defined their experiences as hazing, the individuals did not report the hazing incidents to campus administrators. Nine out of the ten students who have been hazed do not define their experiences as hazing (Allan & Madden). Additionally, it was found that seven out of ten students experienced at least one hazing behavior in order to gain membership on a team or a Greek organization. The study had over 11,000 respondents at 53 institutions and around 300 personal interviews (Allan & Madden). This study was significant because it conducted comprehensive research of hazing across various types of organizations. Insights from the study had the potential to identify student groups that are most at risk for hazing and campus efforts to prevent hazing and to provide a baseline for changing hazing behaviors over time. Finally, the study confirmed hazing is a significant part of student life and campus cultures within colleges and universities within the United States (Allan & Madden).

The studies by Allan and Madden (2008) and Ellsworth (2006) are significant to the literature as they helped sustain and demonstrate the complexity of eliminating hazing within these organizations because it seems the members know when they are engaging in hazing behaviors as well as the differences between hazing for men and women yet choose to continue doing so. In terms of the most common types of hazing activities reported amongst social fraternities (and sororities), Allan and Madden explored the following: participating in a drinking game; singing or chanting in an environment one would not typically sing or chant in; drinking large amounts of alcohol to the point of getting sick or passing out; being awakened during the night by other members; being screamed at, yelled, at or cursed at; and sleep deprivation.

### **Reasons Fraternity Men Haze**

Host campuses generally have condemned hazing activities within fraternities; however, they continue to be practiced unofficially (Drought & Corsoro 2003). It is common for members of fraternities and sororities to justify hazing as a necessary part of earning membership within their organizations because they believe the hazing process allows new members to form connections, learn how to solve problems, and demonstrate their commitment and loyalty to the group (Baker-Zwerenz et al., 2004). Additionally, members of these organizations do not see any viable alternatives to accomplish the same goals of having new members earn membership and adhere to organizational traditions (Baker-Zwerenz et al.). Sweet (1999) asserted the reason fraternity men haze is because they see it as necessary to their initiation practices.

Joyce & Nirh (2018) stated fraternities and sororities are organizations grounded in tradition and rituals performed to help develop purpose and meaning within the organizations. They maintained that college is a time when students are seeking admittance and acceptance within peer groups. By participating in particular common experiences such as rituals and



traditions, new members of fraternal organizations have the ability to feel more a part of a group as shared experiences can create connections to others within and the organization itself (Joyce & Nirh, 2018). Salinas and Boettcher (2018) argued hazing is a habit and not connected to traditions within organizations, and that while traditions should be connected to history, pride and organizational backstories, hazing is the result of habitual behavior because it occurs without reflection or intention. Habits simply replicate behaviors while traditions should build connections, bonds and a healthy community that is founded on common goals, interests, beliefs and values of a group (Salinas & Boettcher) When traditions do not align with organizational values or focus on the care of individual members within an organization, the traditions become hazing habits (Joyce & Nirh, 2018).

Utilizing symbolic interactionist theory (a sociological perspective), Sweet (1999) explained the origins of fraternity hazing and determined that fraternity hazing is not conducted by morally flawed individuals. Yet, according to symbolic interactionist theory, hazing is the result of symbols, manipulated identities, and situations that are constructed within the context of fraternity initiation practices (Sweet). This system of tradition makes it difficult to remove hazing practices because they are so embedded within the culture of the organization. This argument explores the persistence of hazing regardless of years of prevention programming and intervention (Sweet).

Bandura (1999) discussed the concept of moral disengagement as it relates to denying responsibility to a sense of personal agency, euphemistic labeling, advantageous comparison, displacement and diffusion of responsibility, disregarding or minimizing the consequences or effects of one's actions, and the dehumanization of those who are victimized via particular actions or behaviors. First, moral justification allows individuals to disengage morally from

behaviors by cognitively reorganizing a specific behavior. Through this process, particular behaviors are made personally and socially acceptable by viewing the action as having particular socially worthy or moral purposes. This, then, in turn, allows individuals to act in such a way that gives themselves permission to view themselves a moral while at the same time contributing to the harm of others (Bandura, 1999). Euphemistic labeling is used in order to take problematic and harmful behaviors and make them respectable and to reduce personal responsibility by the selected language used to describe the behavior. Advantageous comparison is used in order to make one behavior seem acceptable as compared to particular alternatives (Bandura). These aspects of the moral disengagement process can assist with providing insight into the ways in which fraternity members can justify hazing as an accepted behavior within their organizations and morally disengage justifying it through tradition or ritual (Joyce & Nirh, 2018).

### **Rationale for Hazing**

Cimino (2011) sought to fill the gap in research regarding the logic of individuals choosing to haze within organizations and how hazing behavior is sustained. The theories presented discuss contributing factors to why hazing occurs and include the following: that hazing generates solidarity hazing is an expression of dominance, and hazing allows for the selection of committed group members. Cimino chose to focus on exploring theories that related to dominance and commitment. Campo et al. (2005), asserted research states individuals participate in hazing to build group community. Community was defined as creating respect, discipline, and loyalty within the organization. Additionally, Campo et al. determined a more holistic approach to addressing hazing behaviors within organizations needs to be taken. Some suggestions they made included an environmental approach, strict enforcement and policy

change, and involving students in the process. Campo et al. encouraged research to continue studying hazing interventions to reduce hazing behaviors.

### **College Men's Gender Identity Development, Masculinity, and Hazing**

According to Syrett (2009), from around 1825 to 1970, fraternal masculinity was identified by most college students as the foremost form of masculinity on the college campus and the standard by which all other college men were measured. Historically speaking, hazing became a way for fraternity men to test and evaluate the manliness and masculinity of prospective members and initiates. Edwards and Jones (2009) completed a study in which they examined the experiences college men have through portraying their gender identity as developed via society's expectations of them as men. The results of the study developed a theory of college men's gender identity development first grounded in the process of how they interacted with society's expectations of what it means to be a man. Then, the theory moves on to the process of how men learn the expectations, perform the expectations in order to conform (wearing a mask) and then, struggle to transcend society's expectations (take the mask off). The expectations of what it means to be a man are rigid, narrow, and limiting including overall expectations such as being competitive, unemotional, aggressive, and responsible, having authority, successful, strong and or a rule breaker (Edwards & Jones, 2009). The expectations define who men both should be but also about who they cannot be in society's view and have been readily present within their memory and consciousness for as long as they can remember (Edwards & Jones).

As men grow older societal expectations move from being straightforward to, over time, becoming more expanded, complex, restrictive, and applicable to an additional variety of aspects within their lives. Around attending college, the expectations and notions of masculinity via

society's views takes the expectations from junior high (playing sports, fitting in with the right group, competing for girls' attention, access to girls, breaking rules such as swearing and fighting), and high school (be competitive, not be gay and break the rules) and add the societal expectation of college partying and freedom (Edwards & Jones, 2009). This model for college men's gender identity development can provide context for where fraternity men are in their development and the ways in which notions of masculinity relate to hazing behaviors. Additionally, this model of college men's gender identity development also provided the recommendation to create opportunities, encouragement and supportive environments in fraternal organizations that both allow for men to let go of the performance of masculinity and to allow moving toward being their true selves (Edwards & Jones).

Kimmel (2008) discussed how initiations represent transitions, which help move an individual from one status to another to solidify a new permanent identity. Within fraternities, there are infantilizing rituals that take the validation of manhood back to making men feel like babies. Kimmel focused on how initiations within fraternities are about masculinity and that it requires validation. This validation is embedded in the societal expectation that men must challenge each other's manhood and that men put up with this type of degradation because they are seeking acceptance (Kimmel).

Mechling (2008) explored the practice of hazing among male groups, specifically the practice of paddling, which is most prominent in fraternities. Mechling discussed how a paddle represents male power and authority and is a homoerotic and sadomasochistic physical and psychological test of worthiness. He continues to discuss how hazing behaviors such as "the practice of paddling play a significant role in the social construction of heterosexual masculinity" (Mechling, p. 70). College men's gender identity development, the intersection of rituals and

initiation practices in fraternities with masculinities and symbols of masculinity all provide context for understanding the role of masculinity in and the complexity of hazing within fraternal organizations.

### **Student Attitudes Toward Hazing**

Allan and Madden (2008) found more students perceive positive than negative outcomes of hazing. Cokley et al. (2001) developed an instrument called the Survey of Attitudes About Fraternities and Sororities (SAAP) in which they assessed the attitudes of college students toward hazing and pledging in Greek societies in order to derive meaning out of the attitudes that exist related to hazing. Analysis of the study resulted in six areas of attitudes toward fraternities and sororities and included the following: purpose of pledging, impact of pledging, conformity to pledging rules, perceptions of Greek organizations, moral concerns about pledging, and belief about pledging difficulty (Cokley et al., p. 451).

Drought and Corsoro (2003) examined Greek and non-Greek attitudes regarding a specific hazing incident that took place within a fraternity. They determined that both Greek and Non-Greek participants attributed the same level of responsibility to the brothers involved in the hazing incident provided as part of the study (Drought & Corsoro) – an unexpected result. In an early study of hazing attitudes within fraternities, Baier & Williams (1983) found that alumni members were more accepting of hazing behaviors than current undergraduate members of the organizations studied. These studies add to the discussion and the complexity of how individuals perceive hazing behaviors within fraternities.

### **Impact of Hazing**

Mercuro et al. (2014) completed a study to examine whether or not fraternity men were more likely to be hazed than sorority women and to determine if hazing has an impact on one's

self-esteem. Mercurio et al. (2014) questioned whether the benefits associated with joining a Greek organization outweigh the disadvantages and the risk of hazing as part of membership requirements for joining an organization and being hazed in order to become a member.

Additionally, they determined research demonstrates that hazing not only has an impact on the perception of Greek organizations, it has the ability to have an impact on new members who are hazed both mentally and physically. Mercurio et al. collected data that revealed fraternity men were more likely to haze than sorority women and that individuals who were members had lower self-esteem due to hazing. They determined more research needed to be collected to examine participant's experiences during the hazing process (Mercurio et al., p. 59).

### **Hazing Interventions**

Ellsworth (2006) stated to confront hazing effectively, a common definition of hazing, unacceptable hazing behaviors, and common perceptions have to become standard across functional areas. Richmond (1987) agreed to move organizations away from hazing, a commonly held view and perception of what constitutes hazing needs to be determined. Additionally, Richmond (1987) charged student affairs staff with taking necessary steps to address hazing issues on college campuses, including developing and enforcing institutional policies related to hazing; programming to educate members, new members, and alumni about the consequences of hazing; requiring approval of all new member activities and enforce policies strictly. Bryan (1987) agreed institutions need to develop strict hazing policies, with harsh consequences, within organizations.

Baker-Zwerenz et al. (2004) determined, in their discussion of restorative processes for fraternity and sorority culture, the way to remove hazing from organizations is to remove dangerous activities from the new member program and replace these activities with alternatives

that support the organizational initiation goals and values. However, they asserted because hazing is a difficult and complex thing to investigate within Greek organizations, it adds to the difficulty of changing the behavior (Baker-Zwerenz et al.).

Owen et al. (2008) studied the prevalence, attitudes and solutions for hazing within student organizations. Their results encouraged professionals to stop the current hazing practices occurring on campuses while utilizing police investigations and prosecution of offenses as an immediate and effective deterrent from hazing. While this was recommended, they noted that this type of deterrent action rarely results in a long-term solution to eradicate hazing within organizations (Owen et al.).

The second recommendation that came out of Owen et. al (2008) was to utilize social norms as an anti-hazing strategy by addressing the ways in which alcohol abuse is addressed on college campus. Lastly, in terms of intervening and interrupting hazing within organizations, they recommended changing hazing cultures of organizations. However, they offered no clear steps on how to do this and acknowledged that this was the most difficult strategy for working to interrupt hazing behaviors (Owen et al.).

Utilizing the application of symbolic interactionist theory, Sweet (2009) concluded while hazing was deeply embedded within the organizational cultures of fraternities, one method to address this complex issue was to redefine and reshape situations within the fraternal context. According to Sweet, definitions of situations are created that encourage belief that hazing new members is a desired part of the experience. In this regard, Advisors can be instrumental tools in helping the organization reshape definitions of situations to have the membership accept change in the organization (Sweet, 1999). Thus, being sensitive to the different ways in which fraternities understand hazing, and the ways in which they shape new members' abilities to

define themselves, may be the best method of designing programs and implementing policies to prevent hazing (Sweet).

One challenge with utilizing advisors that Allan and Madden (2008) discovered in their study is that in 25% of hazing experiences, students believed coaches or advisors were aware of the activities, and in 25% of hazing experiences alumni were present. These perspectives support the continued complexity of developing hazing interventions within fraternities and the different methods by which researchers have understood intervening.

### **Hazing Programming and Education**

Allan and Madden (2008) concluded it is important to design intervention and prevention programs that are based on research and whose effectiveness are assessed. This is due to the fact that 47% of students who were participants in their study had experienced hazing prior to coming to college which may then play a role in their expectation of being hazed within organizations that they join when they arrive in college (Allan & Madden, p. 38). Additionally, they recommend interventions need to be more substantial than just one-time presentations or sharing of anti-hazing policies. Instead, interventions should include helping students to: understand power dynamics within their organizations, challenge groupthink within organizations, recognize harm in activities, find alternatives to building community without hazing, align behaviors with values of the organization, develop the leadership skills of members who can manage change resistance within their organization, and finally to develop skills to assist with moral and ethical decision making (Allan & Madden, p. 39).

Joyce and Nirh (2018) discussed how all constituents beyond just university administrators have the opportunity to help facilitate hazing prevention efforts including parents, students and alumni in order to make fraternities aligned with organizational missions and goals.



A primary way to do this is to identify hazing not as ritual and tradition but as assault and humiliation as a start to changing the conversation surrounding hazing behavior. Additionally, through systems of accountability for individuals and organizations, a more engaged and responsible student culture can be built (Joyce & Nirth, 2018). Last, Joyce and Nirth articulated through addressing hazing behaviors within fraternal organizations, an opportunity to develop impactful communities with a greater sense of belonging is possible for students. This opportunity includes providing experiences in leadership, academics, and significant belonging for undergraduate college men instead of communities directed by notions of toxic masculinity, violence or degradation of individual members. Examining the research on recommendations for hazing prevention and education is a starting point for examining how to create change within fraternities. Additionally, it is important to review the research on transformational leadership and processes for transforming organizations.

### **Transformational Leadership**

Dvir et al. (2002) stated how the theory of transformational leadership represents newer theories that have been at the center of recent research on leadership. Like the notion of servant leadership, transformational leadership does not focus solely on the leader, but the relationship with followers. Burns (1978) introduced the concepts of transformational and transactional leadership together and discussed how transactional leadership was the traditional form of leadership while transformational leadership served higher-level needs of followers. Transactional leadership is viewed as an “exchange of rewards for compliance” (Kark et al., 2003, p. 247). In contrast, transformational leadership is focused on building motivation, morale, and morality of followers and is focused on the interests of followers (Bass, 1999). Transformational leadership also works to assist followers in meeting their potential (Northouse,

2010). An example of transformational leadership is Ghandi who not only gave hope to people but also changed himself through the process (Burns, 1978). Transformational leaders are led by ethical principles and thus treat those they are leading with respect (Johnson, 2015).

Transformational leadership includes a leader pushing a follower, utilizing charisma and inspiration to mature and move beyond personal interests (Bass). Transformational leaders also promote harmony, use authenticity, are persuasive, individually coach and mentor others, and allow freedom of choice for followers (Johnson). Due to this, the concept of charismatic leadership is often conflated with transformational leadership (Northouse, 2010). Bass and Avolio (1993) noted transformational leaders have the following characteristics: idealized influence, inspire motivation, stimulate innovation and creativity, and consider followers as individuals.

### **Frameworks for the Development of Transformational Leadership**

Bass (1985) developed a framework and model for transformational leadership that indicated there are four main components of transformational leadership. These include the following: idealized influence (charisma), inspirational leadership, individualized consideration, and intellectual stimulation. For idealized influence (charisma), Bass articulated charismatic leaders have an awareness of the needs and goals of those they are following and have the ability to build on those through inspirational means. Followers want to match the qualities of the transformational leader because they identify with them (Northouse, 2010). In terms of inspiring, transformational leaders utilize specific qualities that include articulating high expectations to followers, and charisma and influence to motivate those they are leading (Northouse, 2010). Transformational leaders are aware of the individual needs of their followers, including areas for development (Bass, 1985). Additionally, transformational leaders listen carefully and create a

climate that is supportive while serving as mentors and coaches to help followers move through challenges (Northouse). Finally, for intellectual stimulation, transformational leaders help followers develop problem solving skills and enhance their understanding of their beliefs and values (Bass), which also encourages followers to be creative and innovative through their methods and work (Northouse). Bass utilized the framework for the development of transformational leadership in contrast to the notions of transactional leadership which includes contingent reward, constructive transactions, management-by-exception and active and passive transactions.

Other transformational leadership frameworks or perspectives include Bennis and Nanus (1985) and Kouzes and Posner (2002). Bennis and Nanus established there were four strategies for transformational leadership within organizations including having a clear vision, being social architects, creating trust, and utilizing positive self-regard. Kouzes and Posner (2002) developed a leadership model that articulated five practices of leadership: modeling the way, inspiring a shared vision, challenging the process, enabling others to act, and encouraging the heart. These practices articulate what leaders need to do to be effective within their leadership roles (Kouzes and Posner, 1988). Finally, when discussing transformational leaders, it is significant to note that the concept of transformational leadership can also be connected to examining bad leadership. A leader can be transformational but also cause harm to their followers. While a majority of the research assumes that leadership is good (Kellerman, 2014), in the introduction of transformational leadership, Burns (1978) did not account for the fact that transformational leadership can be utilized to cause harm (Johnson, 2015). Sometimes leaders do not do the right thing, and when looking at leadership effectiveness and ethics, sometimes a leader can be unethical but very effective (Kellerman, 2004). According to Kellerman (2014), sometimes

leaders and their followers do make a significant difference and at times, the outcome is not a positive one. The exploration of bad leadership is an additional framework to explore transformational leadership through. The literature on transformational leadership theory provides one framework to examine creating change within organizations.

### **Kotter's Eight-Stage Process for Leading Change**

Another framework includes Kotter's (1996) model that included an eight-stage process for leading change and transforming organizations. This process is foundationally built upon the notion that major change within organizations does not happen easily. The eight-stage process that Kotter uses to describe how organizations can lead change includes the following steps: establishing a sense of urgency, creating the guiding coalition, developing a vision and strategy, communicating the vision for change, empower for broad based action (removing obstacles to change), creating short term wins, building on the change, and anchoring the change in the culture of the organization. Each of the steps of the process are directly related to what Kotter determines to be the errors made when trying to lead and create lasting change within organizations including: allowing too much complacency, failing to create a sufficiently powerful guiding coalition, underestimating the power of a vision, under communicating the vision, permitting obstacles to block the new vision, failing to create short term wins, declaring victory too soon, and neglecting to anchor the change firmly in the organization's culture (Kotter, 1996).

### **Creating Change in Fraternal Organizations**

There is limited research focusing upon member-based organizations undergoing long-term change initiatives within the fraternity/sorority movement (Reuter & Backer, 2015). Fraternities and sororities are relational organizations that have many stakeholders who may

have differing views on their purpose and value, which can create challenges when developing change within these organizations (Reuter & Backer). Therefore, Reuter and Backer (2015) reviewed the literature on organizational change theory and subsequently developed a suggested model to facilitate transformational change to be used within the context of fraternities and sororities. “In relation-based organizations such as fraternities and sororities, transformational change occurs through programmatic shifts which impact the education and development of members, stakeholders and others who shape the development of brotherhood and sisterhood” (Reuter & Backer, p. 58).

Thus, a model for implementing change in the fraternity and sorority movement consists of the following:

- 1) identify the opportunity and need for change,
- 2) task a coalition to be the primary stewards of the change,
- 3) create a model for change supported by research and theory, and then gain support of leaders and decision-makers,
- 4) develop and confirm the initial implementation strategy,
- 5) pilot the core organizational change components and build awareness and readiness through communication with key stakeholders,
- 6) create the resources necessary for individuals and sub-cultures to learn, implement and adapt to change initiative,
- 7) build organizational momentum through marketing the announcement and rollout of the change,
- 8) change and adapt structures and processes through the organizational learning that occurs,

- 9) assess the state and needs of members and sub-cultures and personally engage them to affect change,
- 10) build relational equity with key environmental stakeholders: (inter)national offices professional associations, and host institutions, engage them in the change initiative, and share success and outcomes,
- 11) communicate organizational change successes and outcomes both within the organization and with environmental stakeholders to promote and validate the change initiative,
- 12) continue organizational development via a vision clarification that produces benchmarks and deadlines to formally reaffirm the organization's commitment to the change,
- 13) reaffirm the organization's commitment to the change initiative through restructuring the organization's formal structures and expectations of individual members and sub-cultures, and
- 14) maintain awareness that steps 1-13 will need to be repeated at various times during the ongoing process of change (Reuter & Backer, 2015).

While the model is presented, application is not provided. However, through this 14-step model for facilitating change within fraternities and sororities, it is the hope of that change within fraternities (and sororities) can be operationalized and a measure can be provided to facilitate additional conceptual and programmatic research (Reuter & Backer).

### **Summary of Literature Review**

The literature review provided an overview of the empirical research completed on the leadership development of undergraduate fraternity men and the impact of membership in a

fraternity on moral development and demonstrated incongruence with the stated values of fraternities. The literature presented inconsistent and contradictory evidence on the impact of the undergraduate experience and correlations with values-based personal development. Additionally, theory and research on transformational leadership and leading change within these organizations was provided. The following study hopes to contribute to the research by examining the experiences of one leadership position within the fraternity experience, the New Member Educator concerning their leadership identity in relation to their organization. Additionally, research on specific positions within the fraternity experience are limited if not non-existent and, when it comes to values-incongruent behavior such as hazing, it is imperative to study the New Member Educator position within fraternities, and connections therein, to the leadership development of those individuals.

## CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

This study focused on how New Member Educators understand and experience their role as a leader within their organization as well as how they perceive their role in leading their organization into the future. Overall, the overarching question of this study was the following: What is the experience of undergraduate fraternity New Member Educators concerning their leadership identity in relation to their organization? There were four main research questions guiding this study:

1. How do undergraduate fraternity New Member Educators experience and identify themselves as leaders?
2. How do undergraduate fraternity New Member Educators understand and experience their leadership as it relates to their organization?
3. How do undergraduate fraternity New Member Educators experience their leadership influencing the congruence of the behavior of the organization with the stated values of the organization?
4. How do undergraduate fraternity New Member Educators perceive their role in leading their organization into the future?

### **Context of Organization for Study**

The organization whose members were studied is given the pseudonym, Delta Delta Alpha Fraternity for the purpose of this study. Delta Delta Alpha is an International Fraternity with approximately 185 chapters in the United States and Canada. In 2015, the fraternity collected demographic information via a survey of their undergraduate members. The resulting



demographics included the following: 84% Caucasian, though 75% said their chapters were diverse, 78% are Business/STEM/Health Majors; 66% Christian and 27% reported No Religion; 45% are Republican, 94% Identified as heterosexual, 71% have married parents, 60% are from households with combined annual income of \$100,000+, and 14% are first-generation college students. These demographics provide a portrait of the membership of the organization for context.

### **Rationale for the New Member Educator Institute**

The New Member Institute was given a pseudonym for the purpose of this study. According to Delta Delta Alpha communication, the New Member Educator Institute (NMEI) was created in 2013 with the goal of providing the premiere new member experience to cultivate dedication, connection and drive, and to align membership experiences with the values of the fraternity. The goal of creating online resources and a facilitator's guide for New Member Educators was not to replace current programs that chapters have in place, but to enhance and transform them to ensure that they are in alignment with the values of the organization. Sharing these resources also taught new members the essential facts of the organization to decrease the burden of new member education on the chapter and allow the chapters to focus more on their history, relationship building, operations, and chapter/campus involvement. In theory, the resources provided through the NMEI increase the knowledge and appreciation of the fraternity for new members. It is the hope that the NMEI increases the level of learning that occurs during new member education and connects members using engaging content focused on mastery and performance that will form the foundation of new member programs for all chapters.

## **Development of Delta Delta Alpha New Member Educator Institute**

As previously discussed, it was 2012 when Delta Delta Alpha began the process of developing a standardized curriculum for their new member education program. This program consisted of online modules centered on the stated values of the organization and developed an extensive facilitator's guide for the leaders of new member education. This facilitator's guide focused on reflection of the online modules as well as activities that could serve as alternatives to activities that were counterproductive to the stated values of the organization (i.e. hazing). In 2013, the fraternity began to annually host a New Member Educator Institute, where undergraduate chapters had the opportunity to send their New Member Educators to a leadership conference. The conference was designed for the New Member Educators to learn about the new member education resources provided, to gather feedback on helpful enhancements for their current new member education programs, and to invite discussion among New Member Educators to share ideas and best practices with one another.

In 2015, the New Member Educator Institute transformed from a training program to a leadership development experience and became required for every chapter of the organization to send a delegate. The Institute was now focused on providing New Member Educators with the opportunity to gain skills related to their role as New Member Educator, to understand the purpose of new member education, and to gain skills that fostered their own leadership development. By bringing together the undergraduates in the New Member Educator role from chapters across the United States and Canada, the New Member Educator Institute creates a workshop environment where one is able to obtain resources and best practices and develop leadership skills from sessions provided by peers and distinguished alumni who serve as faculty members.

The format of the New Member Educator Institute consists of small groups of 10-15 New Member Educator undergraduates, along with an alumnus who serves as the faculty member and small group facilitator. In terms of programming, there are large group general sessions, followed by small group discussions. New Member Educators stay in the same group for all small group discussions with the same alumnus facilitator in order to build camaraderie and rapport among the group and enhance the trust that promotes productive conversations. As of 2018, the content of the Institute focuses on developing leadership skills of participants through the following topics/themes: individual reflection on one's own leadership, the importance of new member education, the purpose of new member education, facilitation skills training, masculinity, accountability and hazing, the responsibility of new member education, and leading change within their organization. Beginning in 2019, the New Member Educators Institute added a pilot track for a select number of chapters focused on training on a shortened and standardized model for new member education.

### **Assessment on New Member Educator Institute**

Institute participants completed a pretest and a posttest that assess the experience developed by the fraternity's Education Committee. The purpose of this has been to gain insight and data into the effectiveness of the experience directly from the participants. Some of the data published in the Executive Summary of the 2017 Institute included the following:

- 97% of delegates considered the Institute an effective tool for leading others.
- 93% rated the large group sessions as effective in challenging delegates to strengthen their facilitation skills.
- 86% rated the Institute either very effective or extremely effective.
- Facilitation faculty were rated at 4.84/5.00 effectiveness.

- Faculty demonstrated an overall effectiveness in encouraging conversation and the expression of different opinions in the group with a rating of 4.83/5.0.
- Delegates believe at an average of 4.65/5.00 that they are confident in their ability to lead organizational change.
- Delegates are aware of anti-hazing policies of the organization at a rate of 4.81/5.00.
- Delegates believe that there are alternatives to hazing that lead to the successful development of members at a rate of 4.68/5.00 (posttest) up from a 4.45/5.00 from the pretest.

This data was helpful in the design of the experience for conference coordinators, yet the data did not get at the essence of the New Member Educator experience, how they saw their role as a leader, and how they related the experience back to the values of the organization.

### **Research Design and Rationale**

Creswell (2014) discussed how qualitative research seeks to explore and understand the meaning that individuals (or groups) attribute to a “social or human problem” (p. 4). Through the process of qualitative inquiry, researchers focus on individual meaning as well as the significance of understanding the complexity of a particular situation (Creswell, 2014).

According to Smith, Flowers and Larkin (2009), qualitative research examines the manner in which people make sense of what is happening and what the meaning is of that happening.

### **Constructivism**

The philosophical worldview brought to this research is that of constructivism. Constructivism works to develop an understanding of the world we live in and how individuals develop subjective meaning of their experiences. Because there are varied meanings developed

from different life experiences, researchers with a constructivist worldview examine the complexity of multiple views within a particular study (Creswell, 2014). Through this epistemological perspective and methodological approach, this study will help to examine the personal meaning making and sense making of undergraduate fraternity New Member Educators as I, as a researcher, make my own interpretation of said meaning and sense making (Smith et al., 2009).

### **Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis**

In order to examine the development of leadership identity for undergraduate fraternity New Member Educators and their understanding of the way their role and experiences relate to their organization, this research study conducted a phenomenological study utilizing an interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) (Smith et al., 2009). A phenomenological study examines the essence of lived experiences from a participant's perspective (Vagle, 2014). Phenomenology is the study of essences and attempts to provide a direct description of our experiences without taking into account the psychological origin and the explanation that historians, sociologists or scientists may be able to provide (Vagle).

While phenomenology focuses on the common structure of an experience, IPA is a method used to examine how people make sense and find personal meaning out of their own life experiences within a particular context, as well as reflect on the importance of what is happening within that particular experience (Smith et al., 2009). IPA holds the perspective that people have a tendency to try to make meaning of their experiences and provides the opportunity for individuals to share accounts of their experiences and reflect on those meanings (Smith et al., 2009). IPA believes each individual person sees things in different ways which are informed by their own unique and individual personalities, motivations and experiences in life (Smith &

Osborn, 2004). Additionally, with IPA, the researcher is focused on what the participants are saying about what they think and feel about a particular topic (Smith & Osborn). By choosing IPA, researchers make a commitment to explore and interpret the manner in which participants make meaning of their own experiences through gaining access to detailed personal accounts (Smith et al., 2009). IPA also recognizes while researchers use this method to understand the perspectives of the participants, it also requires interpretation by the researcher in order to develop that understanding of their meaning making (Smith & Osborn).

### **Participants**

Through utilizing IPA as a methodological approach, selection is made of participants who can give the researcher access to a particular perspective in the study (Smith et al., 2009). Researchers who utilize IPA as a method tend to work with a more homogenous sample of participants who would be able to provide meaning to and perspective on their research questions (Smith et al., 2009). The participants in this study were undergraduate fraternity members of Delta Delta Alpha. Additionally, the participants had served as a delegate who participated in Delta Delta Alpha's New Member Educator Institute in August 2019 in order to create a baseline with a leadership development program. Participants in the study also served as a New Member Educator for their respective chapter during the fall 2019 or spring 2020 semester. The study included recruiting nine participants based on specified selection criteria.

### **Participant Selection**

The initial list of delegates from the 2019 New Member Educator Institute was acquired from the Director of Education from Delta Delta Alpha International Headquarters. This list was narrowed down to delegates who met the following criteria: a) initiated members of the organization; b) elected New Member Educator for their respective chapter for the fall 2019 or

spring 2020 semester and c) third or fourth-year level college students. These criteria was selected to ensure participants could provide the specific perspective sought to examine within this study (Smith et al., 2009).

### **Participant Recruitment**

A participant recruitment email was sent to all the undergraduate men who met the criteria, detailing the study and the requirements for participants interested in participating (Appendix B) as well as announcements regarding participation in the study were made in person during general sessions at the 2019 New Member Educator Institute. Of those who responded with interest to the recruitment e-mail or in person recruitment, they were sent via e-mail a brief questionnaire (Appendix C) administered via Survey Monkey. This questionnaire provided participants with the opportunity to define leadership in their own terms and briefly comment on their understanding of their own leadership, as well as evaluate themselves as a leader (Appendix C). An informed consent form was also provided to the selected participants (Appendix D), outlining the study in full detail, including the requested time commitment of participants, estimated duration of the study, interview details and process, and technological needs to participate in the study. For example, each participant needed to have access to a computer with a camera to participate in the video interviews. Interested participants were asked to not only complete the questionnaire but also to review the informed consent form and sign it and return it to the researcher via e-mail. The researcher then signed the consent form and sent it back to the participant with both signatures reflected. Informed consent will begin at this point within the study and continue through completion of data collection. The researcher ensured throughout the data collection and analysis phases of the study and processes participants felt they had the ability to choose not to continue their participation if they did not wish to.

The data from the questionnaire was not viewed or analyzed until the analysis phase of the study but was instead used at this point in the process to reaffirm commitment to participation in the study. Of those who complete the survey, nine participants were selected. If interested parties are not selected to participate in the study, their questionnaires were not be reviewed and held until the completion of the study and were asked to serve as back-up participants in the study were a participant to withdraw. However, this was not necessary for the completion of this study.

### **Participant Identity**

The identity of participants in the study was protected using pseudonyms for all notes, interview transcripts, etc. Thus, the contact information of participants and their actual names were never co-mingled with the transcripts and notes from the interview were kept in a separate place that only the researcher had.

### **Participant Profiles**

The following introduces the participants of the study to better understand the findings. Once again, each of the participants met the following criteria to participate in the study: a) initiated member of the organization (Delta Delta Alpha); b) elected New Member Educator for his respective chapter for the fall 2019 or spring 2020 semester; and lastly, c) was a third or fourth-year level college students. Additionally, all participants attended Delta Delta Alpha's New Member Educator Institute in August 2019. Table 3.1 below briefly overviews some demographic information for the nine participants of this study.



**Table 3.1***Participants*

<b>Name</b>	<b>Hometown</b>	<b>School</b>	<b>School Enrollment</b>	<b>Year in School</b>	<b>Major</b>
Tom	Boise, ID	Attends public research university in the Western U.S.	Approximately 32,000 students (undergraduate and graduate)	Senior	Mechanical Engineering-Aerospace and Robotics
Michael	Potomac, MD	Attends a private research university in the Northeastern U.S.	Approximately, 13,000 students (undergraduate and graduate)	Junior	Statistics and Machine Learning
Vandy	Lake Geneva, WI	Attends a private liberal arts college in the Midwestern U.S.	Approximately 800 students	Senior	Sociology and Anthropology
David	Westchester, NY	Attends private university in the Southeastern U.S.	Approximately 6,000 students	Senior	Aerospace Engineering
Gavin	Naperville, IL	Attends a private, Catholic Liberal Arts college in the Midwestern U.S.	Approximately 2,300 students	Senior	Business Administration/Human Resources
Baker	Cheshire, CT	Attends a private university in the Northeastern U.S.	Approximately 3,900 on campus students	Junior	Hospitality Business
Tank	San Diego, CA	Attends a public research university in the Western U.S.	Approximately 33,000 students (undergraduate and graduate)	Senior	Business Administration-Finance & Real Estate
Ritchie	Houston, TX	Attends a private, liberal arts university in the Southern U.S.	Approximately 1,500 undergraduates	Junior	Economics & Business
Bob	South Bend, ID	Attends a private university in the Midwestern United States	Approximately 4,400 undergraduates	Senior	Chemistry (Pre-Med), Psychology (minor)

What follows is an extensive introduction of each participant of the study. Each of the pseudonyms were selected by each of the participants. The following introductions include their responses to the initial questionnaire provided by the participants related to their evaluation and understanding of their own leadership. Additionally, to get to know each of the men, included are excerpts stated in their own words how they identify as a leader.

### **Tom**

Tom joined Delta Delta Alpha his first semester of college. At first, he had no intention of joining a fraternity. His intention was to play lacrosse for his university. Upon trying out for the lacrosse team, Tom wasn't really feeling like it was a fit for him and another guy at the university who he knew and had helped recruit him to the university was a member of Delta Delta Alpha. He brought him around the fraternity and Tom ended up joining the organization with Delta Delta Alpha being the only fraternity at the university he looked at. Prior to being elected New Member Educator beginning in Fall 2019, Tom had an extensive amount of positional leadership experience in his chapter including serving as Vice-President of his new member class, Philanthropy Chairman, and Vice-President of the chapter. In terms of race/ethnicity, Tom identified as White. Tom stated:

I lead by example. I try and go to all the events and I try to, you know, do full effort and try to show what it would be to, you know, be a good productive member of the fraternity. The other ways that I try to lead is I try to make connections with guys in the organization or the team and, you know, try to relate to them and try to find ways to bring them in or bring them along, and get us all kind of on the same page.

Tom continued:

I've never, or I didn't used to be a really vocal leader, but that's changed the past couple of years. I've learned to speak out a little more, chapter meetings and taking positions and that kind of stuff. It's kind of brought that out by actually getting up and speaking and saying, "Hey, we need to go in this direction for these reasons." I'm trying to find solutions that everyone can agree with. I've never been the type that, I mean the reason I took the VP position is I've never been really good at the leader that like sets the image or sets the goal and vision for a chapter or for a group. I've never been great at that. The way I lead a form of leadership that I excel at, is if the President or to someone were to give me a direction or give me a goal or give me a vision that they want to achieve. I'm really good at working with the guys in an organization and find the ways in an organization to try to achieve that goal. That's kind of where I excel at.

Tom defined leadership as:

Leadership to me is the ability and desire to unite those around you towards a common goal. More specifically with me and [Delta Delta Alpha], I lead by working to improve the fraternity by following the [values] and trying to get those around me to do the same.

Tom described first realizing he was a leader: "I realized I had the potential to be a leader in middle school when I started naturally falling into leadership roles and found myself starting to push those around me." On a scale of 1-10, he rated himself a seven as a leader, because as he stated: "I am confident in my ability to lead when it is called on me and am seen as a strong

leader in my chapter. However, I know that I have a lot to learn and am still trying to improve as a leader.”

## **Michael**

Michael joined Delta Delta Alpha in the spring of his second semester in college. He got connected to Delta Delta Alpha through exploring playing soccer in college. He joined the club soccer team and that’s how he met older members of Delta Delta Alpha who were on the club team. He felt an immediate connection to these other men and how they demonstrated support for one another, which in turn, made him think that fraternity life could be for him. Prior to serving as the fall 2019 New Member Educator for his chapter, he previously served as the spring 2019 New Member Educator. Michael identified as Asian. Michael asserted:

When I lead, I’m more of a team captain in a sort. I like to recognize my own faults and my own problems and try to acknowledge it as best as possible. So, it doesn’t really affect me as much when I’m in a leadership position. But when I lead, I make sure that I have a team or teammates beside me and all I am is just a team captain of some sort where I go up, I do a coin flip and that’s about it. I like to lead where everyone has an equal voice and we all get together in like a circle and really talk about what needs to be said around our committee. I may have the position, right? Like [New Member] Ed, I may have the position, but I don’t want to have a power trip of some sort and really, really lay down my own thoughts because I feel that specifically with [New Member] Ed that um, it should be the group mentality, not just one person’s mentality affecting the fraternity

Michael defines leadership as “how some person in a team (can come from anyone in the team) takes command of a situation and steers the group in a direction.” Michael first realized he

was a leader when he was young and stated: I would always be the first person to lead in most situations.”. Finally, on a scale of 1-10, he rates himself a seven as a leader because as he states: “I am usually the leader in most situations, but I have some qualities that are sometimes not suitable to be a leader.”

## **Vandy**

Vandy joined Delta Delta Alpha in the spring semester of his second year of college. He previously had joined a local fraternity chapter on his campus in the spring of his first year. However, due to hazing and other behaviors of the chapter and identifying that he joined for the wrong reasons, he determined he wanted to walk away from the experience and left the organization midway through his new member process. As a member of the football team, many members of the football team were members of Delta Delta Alpha. During the summer following his first year of college, he began to spend more time with those guys and understanding who they were, and the morals and principles they represented. He wanted to be a part of the fraternity and ended up joining the organization. Vandy was a division three athlete through playing football at his school and prior to being elected as the New Member Educator for Fall 2019, he previously served as the Recruitment Chairman for the chapter. Vandy identified as White. Vandy expressed:

I'm very vocal. I'm actually captain of the football team this year. Like I said, very vocal. I actually want to hear viewpoints from other people. I wanna make sure that their opinions are heard. I just want to make sure there's good communication for people, and I don't want people getting upset with each other. Like if you have something that you don't agree with me, I want you to come and say it like a man, and we can talk it out. I want to hear other viewpoints... I want to see if my

viewpoint is not the only one that I want to follow, but also in the fact of that you are in a leadership role, and I can't let other people like step on me and like get in the way of me doing what I want to do. If I want to teach them something, I'm going to teach them something. There's a reason why we elect somebody as [New Member] Ed to run that. It had to be somebody who would put a strong foot down, who's willing to communicate, who's willing to have a strong voice, and who's willing, just like I keep saying, just to listen.

Vandy defined leadership as “someone that is looked up to by others and shows how things should be done.” Vandy first realized he was a leader When he started playing football. He stated: “I realized coaches and players started to rely on me more and more as I played. Pretty much for every team I’ve played on, even college, I’ve been a captain”. On a scale of 1-10, he rates himself an eight as a leader because as he says: “...No one is perfect. There are areas that need to be worked on and I’m still learning as I go. I need to be more understanding to others, this one being the main area of improvement.”

## **David**

David transferred to the university he currently attends after two years at the United States Naval Academy and a year away from school working. He joined Delta Delta Alpha his first semester as a transfer student on campus at the age of 21 after three weeks on campus of not meeting anyone he connected with. He happened to come across members of Delta Delta Alpha at an event on the quad and met them and ended up connecting with them for recruitment and thus joining the organization. In his words: “As soon as they start some hazing with some other weird stuff I didn't like, I could just turn around and walk away and no harm, no foul. They never gave me a reason to drop.” David has previously held the positions of Magistrate, Secretary and

Fundraising Chairman prior to being elected New Member Educator for his chapter for the Fall 2019 semester. At the time of the interview, David also served as the Interfraternity Council President at his university. David identified as White. David stated:

I think my big thing is servant leadership. I lead to help the people who are, not under me, but the people who follow me. I want to make their lives better. I think I just had it drilled into me at the Naval Academy that you know, we were all these kids basically who wanted to be officers in the military, but at the end of the day, it wasn't about us being officers, it was about us doing what we can to enable the enlisted. We're not there to show off and be important, but we're there to help them and ultimately to help the country do whatever it is we need to do, at the end of the day, win wars and protect you know, the United States, which sounds grandiose and it kind of is, but when you hear it as often as it's said at the Naval Academy, you kind of come to believe it. At the end of the day, everything you're doing is for that purpose of protecting the United States. So, it was serving the enlisted below us and it was just ultimately serving the country.

David defined leadership as a quote from Dwight D. Eisenhower. He stated that it was the first quote he saw when studying leadership at the U.S. Naval Academy and the best expression of how he views leadership. "Leadership is the art of getting someone else to do something you want done because he wants to do it." He continued to discuss the quote by saying: "Ultimately, it is about motivating people to achieve a common goal." David first realized he was a leader when he was young. He stated:

I would always step up to lead, although I did not always realize I was doing so.  
To me, I was just doing what I thought was the right thing to do. I would say the

moment I realized I was a leader was when I first visited the Naval Academy in Annapolis my junior year of college and immediately fell in love with everything it stood for.” On a scale of 1-10, he rates himself an 8 because he views himself in the following way: “I am an above average public speaker, I am intelligent, and most importantly I am extremely caring. This empathy allows me to connect with my people and understand how to motivate them effectively.”

## **Gavin**

Gavin joined Delta Delta Alpha in the first semester of his third year of college. He took a gap semester immediately after high school and started school in the spring of his first year of college. In his second year, he explored and received a bid from another organization on campus. He decided, however, that fraternity life was not for him. That was until he met a group of guys in some of his classes. He connected with (without knowing they were a part of a fraternity). Once he realized they were part of a group, he'd see them all over campus together hanging out and laughing together and he decided he wanted to be a part of that. That is when he decided to be recruited to the organization. According to Gavin, joining Delta Delta Alpha has been the best decision he has made in college so far. Prior to being elected New Member Educator for the chapter and serving in the Spring of 2020, he served as the chapter Brotherhood Chairman. Gavin identified as White. Gavin asserted:

So, a way that I describe myself as a leader, I would say very collaborative. I like to lead conversations, which is a big thing that I'm about. So, I like to facilitate conversations and I like to have open conversations, open collaboration. So, while I do think of myself as a leader in those conversations, I almost think of myself as facilitating the conversations as opposed to leading them or organizing them. I



would describe myself also as a leader as being very open and really sort of no matter what the position is, no matter what that individual's position might be, just treating them the exact same way that I would if it was the President of our chapter or if it was a potential new member. Still just like having that same openness, I think is a big leadership quality that I have as well as I would just say strength in general, being able to be firm with something that I was not anticipating.

Gavin defined leadership as “Guiding and teaching a team of individuals.” When Gavin first realized he was a leader: “I believe I realized I was a leader when I participated in a Voyageur Outward Bound leadership expedition. There, I learned countless lessons about myself, and leadership as a whole.” On a scale of 1-10, Gavin rated himself a 6 as a leader. As he said: “I’m able to lead a team effectively but I feel as though there is always room for improvement. In addition, I feel as though I am often too heavily influenced on the opinions of those that I am leading, as opposed to my own views.”

## **Baker**

Baker joined Delta Delta Alpha the fall of his first year of college. He knew coming to college that he wanted to join a fraternity. As he shared, growing up with no brothers of his own, but growing up with three sisters he was seeking a brotherhood experience. Initially, Baker was looking to join another fraternity until he met someone in Delta Delta Alpha who brought him around the chapter, and he ended up joining. Currently Delta Delta Alpha is the only fraternity on Baker’s campus. A point of pride for Baker was serving as a Peer Health Educator in high school after his father cut him from

the high school lacrosse team. Baker had an extensive list of positional leadership roles he has held within his fraternity including: Treasurer, Recruitment Chairman, Social Chairman, Assistant New Member Educator and New Member Educator for Fall 2019.

Baker identified as White. Baker described:

I'm very open, I'm very willing to teach and to learn. You also have to learn how to be a listener and a leader, like how to step back and how to step forward...

Learning different leadership positions like, being not only e-board, but from high school, like taking upper positions. Like, I planned a conference for over 400 people, for Peer Health Educators when I was in high school. Just knowing how to take on different leadership positions has excelled myself to be the person I am today. Like being in the hospitality field, like knowing how to use time management skills. My major in general has taught me how to be just a great leader overall.

Baker defined leadership as "A motivator, someone who leads a great footprint behind, someone who makes others become better versions of themselves." Baker first realized he was a leader when, in his words: "I realized I was a leader when I started making an impact on others' lives. I was taking the lead early in life and I knew that I could be someone." On a scale of 1-10, Baker rated himself an eight as a leader. He said: "...no one is perfect. I have to work on stuff to better myself and doing that every day will get me better. But I know I am an 8; because of the growth, experience and impact I have made."

## **Tank**

Tank joined Delta Delta Alpha in his first semester of college. Growing up with a big family and playing on sports teams growing up, drew him to seeking out the fraternity experience. After feeling lost on campus his first few weeks of school, he ended up finding Delta Delta Alpha because friends from his residence hall were going to check the fraternity out. Although self-described as quiet and nervous, and intimidated by what fraternity life could be like, he found a connection and a home at Delta Delta Alpha. Prior to being elected as New Member Educator as a senior for the Fall 2019 semester, he was elected to serve as Vice-President of the chapter as a sophomore. Tank identified as White. Tank asserted:

When someone's leading a group, you have to take everyone's input and you just have to pretty much pick and choose your battles is my biggest thing. You have to lead, but also take advice and take input. Because I don't believe a strong leader is someone that's very single minded. I think a good leader, and how I describe myself as a leader is someone that can take in a lot of different ideas and see them from all different points of view. I think that the biggest point about being a leader is, you need to see where everyone's coming from, their different aspects of life, and what their point of view is, and decide for collective effort, not what you're single mindedly thinking.

Tank defined leadership as “being a role model for others, and guiding peers to success or a common goal.” He articulated he first realized he was a leader at the beginning of playing high school football. Tank served as Captain of his high school football team. On a scale of 1-10, he would rate himself as an eight as a leader. In his words, he “does his best to lead in example and deliver a message clear and concisely.”

## **Ritchie**

Ritchie is a division three swimmer at his university and while he appreciated the brotherhood and connections of being an athlete, he looked toward fraternity life to find a deeper connection and brotherhood. Additionally, most of his friends were exploring fraternity life, and thus, he decided to give it a try. He joining Delta Delta Alpha in his second semester of college during his first year in the spring semester. Prior to being elected New Member Educator for his chapter, Ritchie never held a leadership position within his chapter. Ritchie identified as White. Ritchie stated:

I feel like I often can motivate people around me. I think part of my....my biggest strength is I know what sets certain people off. It's like I know how to hype certain people up, and I think part of that is just being an athlete. I know what people want to hear in order to you know, get excited and get hyped up for something, and so, that's helped me a lot in my chapter. I know what people are wanting to hear and I know how to say things in the right way so that people have, I guess, a positive perception.

Ritchie defined leadership as “Using myself in order to unite others for a common goal” and first realized he was a leader in high school when he joined sports teams. On a scale of 1-10, Ritchie rates himself as a seven. He said: “I feel as though I have good leadership qualities but sometimes am unable to keep myself motivated.”

## **Bob**

Bob joined Delta Delta Alpha in his first semester of his junior year of college. Upon coming to college, Bob did not really see himself joining a fraternity. Due to his father's own experience in college without a fraternity and his mom's concerns with the stereotypes and

hazing that she viewed occurred in fraternities, he did not really believe it was for him. He said he always told himself that if he did decide to join a fraternity and there was hazing, he would just turn around and walk away and leave it behind. He started considering joining a fraternity the spring of his sophomore year because he was living on campus and two of his roommates had joined Delta Delta Alpha. While he attended some events, he did not attend enough to meet enough people to actually join and thus tried again his junior year. He was drawn to the guys, the philanthropy cause and what the guys were about. When offered a bid, he took some time to make sure he talked with friends and family and made a reflective and thoughtful decision, and he ended up joining the organization. Being elected New Member Educator for the Fall 2019 semester was the first leadership position Bob has held within the organization. Bob identified as White. Bob described:

I guess I try to be the best version of me as possible. I've always been in that mindset even before I was in the fraternity. And there have been quite a few times in my life where I haven't been that best version of myself that I could be. And so, you know, recently, I try to be that. And I feel by doing that and by just being myself that you know, other people see that, and that hopefully they'll want to do the same. I think they have seen that. And it was really cool, because like I said, I haven't even been a fully initiated member for even a year yet, and I already had a guy come up to me, one of our guys, one of the brothers who's a sophomore this year, but who just got into the house officially last spring, he came up to me and he was like, "Hey, dude, I just want you to know that if I am half the person you are right now, I will be so happy with my life and with myself. It'll just be so great." And that meant a lot to me, and that really, that kind of solidified that

thinking that I'm going to stand here, and I'm going to stand up for what I believe in. And I want to be that example to people that like you can be in a fraternity, but you don't have to actually go out and drink every weekend. Or you can be in a fraternity, and you don't have to necessarily feed the stereotypes. And you don't have to take sides when there's a huge issue in the house. You can remain neutral, or you can try to look at things from all the perspectives and not just look at one side but look at all sides. And so, I guess in that way I kind of see myself as a teacher. And that's another way that I see myself as a leader.

Bob defined leadership as “guiding others to reach a collective goal.” He identified as realizing he was a leader in high school when he attended a non-denominational Christian Youth Retreat. On a scale of 1-10, Bob rated himself as 6 as a leader. He said: “I know that people look up to me and that I've been a leader for a while, but sometimes I feel awkward with the people I'm supposed to lead and then I'll start to lose interest or engagement.”

### **Data Collection**

Prior to engaging in the study and delving into analysis, the researcher reviewed the website of the international fraternity, the resources provided by the international organization for New Member Educators, and the new member education manual for the organization to refresh my own knowledge of the historical information about the organization. This data provided additional information and contextualizing for the interviews that were part of the study.

As previously mentioned, those who responded with interest to the recruitment e-mail or the in-person recruitment were sent a brief questionnaire (Appendix C) and of those who completed the survey, nine men were selected and asked to participate in the study. Once

participants were identified and informed consent was provided, the researcher viewed the responses to the individual questionnaires prior to moving on to the next phase of data collection. These responses provided a foundation for exploring each participant's understanding of their own leadership identity. This information, as well as the review of materials from the international organization, provided additional data to help contextualize the interviews and assisted with finding greater insight into how to develop rapport with the participants at the start of each interview.

### **Semi-Structured Interviews**

The next and primary phase of data collection was achieved through approximately a 90-minute, semi-structured, in-depth interview with each of the nine participants. This interview provided participants the opportunity to share their perspective and tell their own stories as the researcher actively listened and asked follow-up questions (Smith, Flowers, & Larkin, 2009). The interview protocol is found in Appendix E of this proposal. Interviews took place via remote video and were recorded via the online video conferencing system as well as with a digital recorder to transcribe the conversation and ensure that the most accurate portrayal of the interview as possible is provided. It was important for the researcher to have awareness of participant subjectivity in the study as they are giving their own personal meanings to the phenomenon and experience.

In the beginning of each interview, the researcher reviewed the consent form with each participant and received verbal consent to participate in addition to the written consent provided. Additionally, early in the interview, it was important for the researcher to develop a rapport with the participants of the study and ensure that they were comfortable in order to build enough trust to gather the most descriptive and detailed data possible (Smith, Flowers, & Larkin, 2009). In the

construction of the interview protocol, it was important that time was allowed for initial rapport building with the participants of the study. Following each interview, the researcher kept detailed notes and memos regarding each interview completed. This included the researcher noting his own important recollections from each of the interview experiences. Beginning analysis can, at times, overwhelm the researcher with ideas and various connections within the data so this process allowed the researcher to remain focused on the data in the study (Smith, Flowers, & Larkin, 2009).

### **Data Analysis**

Throughout the study, the research questions provided framework for analyzing the data collected. This analysis aligned with IPA as described by Smith, Flowers, and Larkin (2009) and included the following steps: 1) reading and re-reading; 2) initial notation; 3) exploration of emergent themes; 4) searching for connections among the emerging themes; 5) move to the next participant and; 6) discerning patterns.

#### **Initial Interview Analysis**

The first step, reading and re-reading, was to ensure the researcher delved deep into the data from the start and to provide himself with the opportunity to denote salient and significant observations. The focus of this analysis step was to become immersed and get comfortable with the data (Smith et al., 2009)

The second step was used to analyze the data was that of initial notation, which required the most detail and time (Smith et al., 2009). This step began the process of creating transcripts of the interviews and noting items of interest throughout, with the goal of creating a detailed set of observations from the data. Initial notation includes making three types of comments throughout the transcripts: descriptive, linguistic, and conceptual (Smith et al., 2009).



Descriptive comments focus on key words, phrases, or explanations with the interview transcript, which may likely develop into greater meaning as analysis progresses (Smith et al., 2009).

Linguistic comments consist of noting the way in which the meaning and content of the interview was presented by the participant. Conceptual comments focus on questions about the data from the researcher's perspective. Those comments also interpreted the meaning participants attributed to their experiences (Smith et al., 2009). Initial notation of data was completed via Dedoose, a secure, online qualitative data analysis platform.

### **Developing Themes**

The third step of data analysis was exploring emergent themes. The researcher identified relationships, connections, and patterns found through the initial notation process and reflect a greater understanding of the interview data (Smith et al., 2009). It is important to note that in IPA, the researcher naturally and inadvertently infused part of himself (Smith et al., 2009).

The fourth step of data analysis was searching for connections across the emergent themes identified in the previous step. According to Smith et al. (2009), there are a variety of ways to do this, including contextualization, numeration, and function as well as compiling transcript extracts to make collections of emergent themes. These methods are not mutually exclusive and can be used as needed to explore the research (Smith et al., 2009). Compiling transcript extracts to make collections of emergent themes seems to be a useful method in searching for connections across the interviews. This analysis process includes utilizing Dedoose to identify each emergent theme and identifying and noting all the transcript extracts that relate to that emergent theme within the corresponding transcript. This created a more specific analysis of each theme.

Step five of the data analysis was moving onto the next interview participant and repeating the previous steps. The thing to keep in mind in this stage of analysis is the researcher had already been influenced by the analysis of the transcripts completed. However, it was important for the researcher to be aware and to allow new emergent themes to come from each succeeding interview participant (Smith et al., 2009).

Step six of analysis was to look for patterns across each of the participant interviews, notations, and emergence of themes. This is where connections between the data were made with the themes and exploring the most important aspects of the data and connections were made (Smith et al., 2009). Through all of this data analysis, the researcher worked toward compiling themes and answers to the research questions posed throughout the study.

### **Trustworthiness and Validity**

In terms of trustworthiness or validity, Creswell (2014) recommended the usage of multiple strategies by qualitative researchers in order to assess the accuracy of the data. The first method to ensure trustworthiness of the data was member checking (Creswell, 2014; Lincoln & Guba, 1986). After the 90-minute interview was transcribed, the researcher sent the transcript to the participants to verify the data and to ensure their perspective and meaning-making had been accurately portrayed. This included checking with the participants on the context of the interview and what was said in the interview. At this point, after sending them the transcript, the researcher followed up to verify the accuracy of the data via a phone call in the case he did not hear back from the participants.

Another method to ensure trustworthiness and validity of the study was to continually clarify and reflect on the bias of the researcher brought to the study. As recommended by Creswell (2014), by self-reflecting throughout the study on how the researcher's own

interpretation of the data were informed by his own identities, backgrounds and experiences (including those of being affiliated with a fraternity), the researcher added to the trustworthiness of the study. This was achieved through the researcher's notes and memos kept after each of the interviews and was sure to reflect on his own reflexivity and positionality in these notes and memos. Finally, Smith et al. (2009) discussed the concept of the independent audit as a manner to think about validity within qualitative research. The independent audit is a way in which the researcher sets up the research project in such a way that, hypothetically, any person could follow every step of the research project from the beginning of the study to end, including research notes, proposal, interview protocol, interview recordings, researcher notes, etc. (Smith et al., 2009). This method of organization also assisted with the validity and trustworthiness of the study.

## CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

Each of the participants demonstrated different paths and routes to joining their organizations. They demonstrated a variety of perspectives on their experiences and understanding of their leadership identity as it relates to their organization. The purpose of this qualitative study was to focus on how New Member Educators understand and experience their role as a leader within their organization as well as how they perceive their role in leading their organization into the future. Overall, the overarching question of this study is the following: What is the experience of undergraduate fraternity New Member Educators concerning their leadership identity in relation to their organization? The following presents the findings from the interpretive phenomenological analysis (IPA) within the study. As outlined in the methodology, findings from an IPA study include a reflexive approach with the participants and the researcher. Arriving at these findings was a process that included coding, categorizing, theming, and member checking at multiple stages throughout the process. The findings from the experiences of these undergraduate fraternity New Member Educators begins with a brief recap of developing emergent themes in IPA which frames the findings. Then, the identified superordinate themes will be explored through the individual voices of the men as well as the subsequent ordinate themes, which will be followed with the ways in which the identified themes answer the research questions in the study. Finally, an overall essence of the experience of undergraduate fraternity New Member Educators concerning their leadership in relation to their organization will be shared.

### **Emergent Themes in Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis**

Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) focuses on understanding personal lived experience; thus, exploring persons' involvement in a particular phenomenon (Smith et al., 2012). The "I" and the "P" of IPA is jointly produced by the researcher and participants. The goal is to capture the lived experience of participants and then, in turn, evoke interpretations on the researcher's part. Studies with larger samples require a focus on retaining the individual voice while making claims for the larger group of participants (Smith et al., 2012).

The analysis detailed several themes in which the participants provided a broad range of perspectives on their experience concerning their leadership identity related to their organization, Delta Delta Alpha. Four superordinate themes emerged from the analysis. These included: being able to comprehend leadership, being conferred to lead, being compelled to lead, and understanding and experiencing congruent leadership. Within each superordinate theme, two to three ordinate themes were identified. The first superordinate theme, "comprehend leadership," represents how the men came to understand leadership at some point within their lives and their own leadership identity as a starting point. This first superordinate theme provided the opportunity for the men's further self-reflection on leadership identity and subsequent relation to their organization.

#### **Comprehend Leadership**

The men's reflection on their leadership identities began with their ability to comprehend leadership. In the pre-interview brief questionnaire, participants were asked to define leadership and rate themselves as a leader. Early in the interviews, participants were asked to share how they came to know themselves as leaders which demonstrated how the participants understood and experienced themselves as leaders.

## **Observing and Experiencing the Leadership of Others**

Tom reflected in the following manner:

I think the difference between, you know, some good leaders and some great leaders are sometimes good leaders ask to be the leader. They ask guys to follow them. They asked, they ask guys to respect them, you know, demand and ask for it. And then I think sometimes the better leaders, our current President's a great example of it, I try to be a good example of it. Sometimes, the stronger leaders, the ones that people ask them to lead, take those roles not so much asking for them, but knowing that they can be good in those roles and that people will ask them to fill those roles. And that's kind of where I've always tried to be as a leader. I don't wanna be the guy that's going out and fighting to be the leader. I don't want to be going out and they're trying to push people away and like trying to like step on people to try to become that strong leader. I've tried to develop my skills as a leader in order to be a good enough leader that it's asked of me instead of me asking for it. The difference between asking for respect and asking for the right to lead as compared to, you know, being the type of leader to demand and be asked to be in positions as a leader. I've always tried to be the kind of person who gets asked instead of asking for it. That makes it both easier to be an effective leader if people are already following you.

Tom articulated how observing the current president of his chapter aligned with the type of leader he tries to be. This is an example of how the participants first and foremost comprehended leadership in connection with their own leadership identities, through observing and experiencing the leadership of others.

Like Tom, other participants referred to how observing other members of their chapter and experiencing that leadership helped them understand their own identities as leaders and how they came to know themselves as leaders. For Ritchie, he explicitly stated the influence his big brother in the fraternity had on his understanding of leadership through watching him.

Yeah, I mean I think my experience in [Delta Delta Alpha] has grown me so much as a person and as a leader, just being around other people that are leaders. Being around like the President. My big (brother) was the President at the time, and so, seeing how he handled situations so clearly and so calmly and level-headed, it just inspired me to take a different approach to things. I think that's the biggest part for me, is seeing how other people have handled situations has made me so much of a better leader than I could've ever been if I was just a regular student. I think that gives me an advantage, and everyone an advantage whenever they go into the job market. Whenever they graduate and are looking for a job, I mean being able to say that's how to handle these situations and actually mean it, it's a big help.

While Tom and Ritchie identified how they came to comprehend leadership through examples from the leadership within the chapters and related to their organization, other participants went back to growing up and comprehending leadership through observing and experiencing leadership through those that raised them growing up. Tank speaks generally of his experience with his parents:

Like, I think it's just kind of growing up with parents, with my dad being a huge leader and everything. I think it was just huge to have those role models and seeing them and just kind of growing up the way I was raised I think is the biggest part of it. And I think I was unconsciously becoming a leader without even knowing it.

While Tank generally discussed about learning leadership from his parents (more specifically his dad), Vandy reiterated a similar theme and experience with a specific part of his identity as a leader:

It's definitely from my parents, honestly. They instilled me at a young age that if you want your voice to be heard, you better speak up. I can't say everything that I say is perfect. I mean, sometimes I bring up stuff and they're like, 'Yeah, just come on, keep your mouth shut. C'mon.' It's just one of those things that's like, you know what, no matter what I'm just going to keep saying what I want to say. Maybe one of these times it's going to work, and people will listen to me, and they'll understand where I'm coming from...But like I said, definitely my parents and the people that I've been around since growing up.

Bob echoed similar sentiment regarding how his understanding of how he comprehended leadership through observing and experience the leadership of his parents:

I think a huge part of it just has to do with my parents and the way that I was brought up, and the way that I've always, especially watching my dad serve, he's a family practitioner, but he also served on like, he did some stuff for Health Select network ... where he served on a board and like was the President of that board at one point. And I watched him serve on the board for my elementary and middle school as Vice-President and President...So part of it was just watching him, but also him helping shape me into the person that I am today with him always being understanding and compassionate, and always willing to step up and teach me when he felt the need to, or even let me fall when he felt the need to. And so, I owe a lot of that to him. And my mom has always been the same way. They're both just so motivated and so driven too that it had a huge impact on



who I became as a person. Even when I didn't really even see it in myself or realize that those things were developing they always really were.

It was common the men all described observing someone demonstrating what they believed to be leadership qualities that helped form how they began to comprehend and understand their own leadership identity.

### **Reflection on Past Experiences with Leadership**

The second way the men comprehended and understood their leadership identity was through reflection on past experiences with leadership and in what they would deem to be both positional and non-positional leadership roles. Eight of the nine participants played a varsity sport in high school and the majority of the men were captains of their teams. For them, reflection on these past experiences with leadership lead them to understand and reflect upon how they experienced leadership in the past:

*Tank:* I came to know myself as a leader I think just growing up in sports and everything like that. Like, being the captain of the football team and doing stuff like that. I believe I didn't really know myself that I was a leader. I think just the way I carry myself and the way that I hold just kind of held myself to kind of just morphed into being the leader type. I don't think I necessarily had to change much of who I was to become a leader. I think I kind of just like, the way I held myself to a standard, and the way I carried out everyday life. I felt like I would be able to be respected enough to have people want me to be in those leadership roles. And I think it just kind of came naturally in a sense, if that makes sense. It wasn't really like ... I didn't really have to do much to kind of morph into a leader I would say. Like I think it's just kind of growing up with parents, with my dad being a huge leader and everything. I think it was just huge to have those role models and

seeing them and just kind of growing up the way I was raised I think is the biggest part of it. And I think I was unconsciously becoming a leader without even knowing it.

Here, Tank once again referenced observing and experiencing leadership through his parents (more specifically, his father) as well as how he felt he just “morphed into a leadership role” without even realizing what was happening. Vandy reflected on how his past experiences with leadership helped him to understand and comprehend leadership differently than Tank. Whereas Tank shared he felt like he kind of fell into leadership without even realizing it. Vandy discussed how he always saw himself as one of the leaders.

Honestly, I was always the type of guy where I always viewed myself as one of the captains or one of the leaders, I wasn't a follower. But also, the fact that I had the qualities in high school and in what I do now where people are like, "Okay, Vandy knows what he's talking about or he knows what's going on" and stuff like that. I've just always been motivated to not be a follower, not to be a sheep. In a sense, I want to be the lion. So. Sounds cliché to say that, but it's just how I feel.

In this statement, Vandy also said something significant. He not only reflected on his past leadership experiences in terms of how he came to comprehend leadership, but also indicated that part of how he understood his own leadership identity was through others identifying him as a leader and saying he demonstrated the qualities of being a leader. This relates to the next superordinate theme from analyzing the data, which was the men understanding and experiencing leadership through being conferred to lead by others.

### **Conferred to Lead**

During the interviews, when asked how they came to know themselves as a leader as well as being asked to provide examples of personal experiences with leadership, all of the

participants discussed how they were conferred to lead by others at some point in some manner. This meant others recognized they each held qualities deemed to be qualities of leadership or the fact they exhibited traits that would allow them to be placed in leadership roles. The first ordinate theme of the participants being conferred to lead is the men being placed in leadership roles by others. Many of them unexpectedly were placed in these roles and not seeing or understanding at first why they were chosen to be conferred into various particular leadership roles.

### **Being Placed in Leadership Roles**

*Tom:* To be honest with you early on, I'm not really sure what, pushed me into those roles and what made people want to bring me into those roles. It was just kind of something I was thrown into and I guess coaches saw something in me. Then from there I started to try to develop and I found myself getting pushed into those roles and so, it kind of became a habit for me to try to look on ways to try to improve in those roles and seek out those kind of roles.

Each of the participants, while in different ways, discussed how others placed them in leadership roles or gave them opportunities to exemplify what they would identify as being leaders. David began by once again like many of the others, discussed what he learned from his father as it related to leadership and how his father began noticing things about his skills and abilities and sharing that with him; therefore, contributing to how David understood and experienced leadership:

I have a very, very good relationship with my father and growing up, he was the one who pointed out that I always wanted to step up that I always wanted to be the guy, that I looked like a give me the ball kind of guy and I know he's right because he's extremely

smart and observing. He's watched me grow up, he's been there the whole time, he knows me probably better than I do, he was one of the first who pointed out that I was that kind of guy who would always step up, always want to take the lead and that's when I was like, "You know what? I mean, he's probably right. He's always been right before so..."

David continued later in the interview by giving an example from the Naval Academy in which he was placed in a leadership role by others and his subsequent reflection on the experience, specifically on being placed within a peer leadership role:

I was put in charge of the watch team, which is how we divide the ship or the boat. Basically, when the adults were asleep or if they were doing whatever, I was the guy that got to be in charge and I embraced that role and was excited for it, but I also had no idea what I was doing, no more than any of the other kids who had been running the two weeks. It was interesting that I had to take charge and I had to act like I knew what I was doing because they looked up to me and trust anything I said. At the same time, I only knew as much as they did. And peer leadership I think is generally agreed upon as the hardest kind of leadership because you don't have real authority. At the end of the day, you're just one of their peers. Being able to maintain that respect and that level of authority is hard because there's nothing real there. But we made it. We didn't sink.

David was placed in an unanticipated leadership role amongst his peers and discussed the difficulty he reflected on through working with others as peers.

As a member of the fraternity, Baker was put into a positional leadership role by others also unexpectedly, which started a process for him of taking on responsibilities of leadership due to what other people saw in him, thus, demonstrating how he related how he experienced leadership in his organization:

In the fraternity, it's actually a funny, but cool story. When I first joined the fraternity, I actually got asked, which is not usual, I got nominated to be the treasurer of the fraternity, after getting initiated that next semester. For me, coming in, I was like oh my god, what do I do? I never got trained. I really had to learn on my own. So, I had to do the things I needed to do to be that leader, to take control of the money. The treasurer, I feel like is a really big backbone to the fraternity. For me, I take charge of our government association accounts for school, our bank accounts, making sure dues are in place. Just being that leader who just makes sure that we set the money, set the tone is just not perfect.

While Baker provided an example from within the fraternity where he was placed into a leadership role (chapter treasurer), Michael provided an example from high school where he was named team captain of his high school volleyball team when he had never even played volleyball before:

So...my senior year of high school in the spring semester I started to play volleyball. Um, well, for some reason I was named team captain my first year of playing. Like even touching a volleyball, (laughs) right? It was like, it was just mind boggling to me. There are some people here who've played longer than me, like why was it me? You know, I'm a senior, I've never had any leadership within the sport, but I had general leadership and that like, I knew what to do. I made sure that the team was doing what they needed to do. And I as well, as I am a very, very hard worker in the things that like need to be done when I know like things need to be done. So, I never really thought I was a leader until I got to, um, college or right at the end of high school. I was mainly, um, the kid who was always very nice and that people chose me to be captain because I was

just a very nice person that I'd like to bring up the team mentality to like positive, um, positive, like reinforcement I guess.

Michael not only identified being conferred into a leadership role, but why he believed that he was selected for this specific leadership role. Like Michael, Ritchie identified a time and experience with leadership in which he was conferred to lead similarly by being selected to be captain of his swim team:

I think that was when I realized that people were rallying around me, because I really didn't. I don't want to say I didn't want to be team captain, but I never said to myself, I am going to push really hard to be team captain. It was just something where everyone was like, our coach announced that we were doing team captains and I was the fastest one there and I kind of had the most experience about it. Everyone I think kind of looked up to me because of I guess how fast I was at the time, and so, it just kind of came. I guess once you're in a leadership position you start to realize what you need to do in order to I guess improve those around you, because that's ultimately what being a leader is, is you're looking out for those that you're surrounding yourself with or those that you're watching over.

Ritchie described how he was placed in a leadership role of team captain of his swim team by others as well as his own reflection on why he believed this to have occurred. David spoke of leading others through his example, Baker discussed the impact on others in the organization through his role as chapter Treasurer. Michael talked about how he elevated others through his leadership role as team captain of the volleyball team. Additionally, Ritchie took the time to talk about what was realized for him while in a leadership position as it relates to working with others and as he stated, "improve those around you." Through being conferred to lead and being placed

in leadership roles by others, the men were able to reflect upon and demonstrated an understanding of leadership as it related to engaging with others.

### **Engaging with Others in a Leadership Role**

The men discussed in depth how they identified themselves as leaders and experienced leadership through working with and engaging with others. Additionally, they identified some of the challenges as leaders that came therein working with others. Through being conferred to lead by others, they were able to understand and experience leadership, and thus had the opportunity to work with and engage with others in both positional and non-positional leadership roles both related to their organization and in other situations.

Michael discussed how he saw himself as a member of a team, even as a leader in a positional role. Gavin discussed how he viewed himself as a collaborative leader with others, and, also, how, as a leader, motivating and encouraging others can be challenging:

*Michael:* But when I lead, I make sure that I have a team or teammates beside me and all I am is just a team captain of some sort where I go up, I do a coin flip and that's about it.

*Gavin:* So, a way that I describe myself as a leader, I would say very collaborative. I like to lead conversations, is a big thing that I'm about. So, I like to facilitate conversations and I like to have open conversations, open collaboration. So, while I do think of myself as a leader in those conversations, I almost think of myself as facilitating the conversations as opposed to leading them or organizing them.

Gavin also took the time to share challenges he found through working with others, which was staying optimistic for others:

Yeah, so, high school sports, just really trying to rally a group of people is something that I found difficult as a leader. And so, just trying to stay optimistic but recognizing what's going on.

He continued and gave an example outside of his fraternity experience through working with others:

It was like in Northern Minnesota and that was an upward bound course and that taught me a lot, taught me a lot about leadership and again one of those situations where how am I supposed to rally these people that are gassed? How am I supposed to tell them that they have to carry a few on their back for another 300 yards? And it's one of those sort of like it was another trial by fire moment. And I think that taught me more about leadership than I would say anything else would have is those trial by fire moments.

While Gavin described those trial by fire moments along with others that helped him to experience and identify as a leader. Ritchie talked about how understanding leadership as engaging with others requires skill:

I think the biggest thing is you've got to think of every comment you make, like everything you say, even down to the simplest sentence, just waiting to see how people receive things in their body language, the way that they respond, their tone of voice. A lot of it becomes kind of subconscious. You'll say something and then you'll realize how someone's responding to it. You'll realize how someone's responding to it and you can tell, do I need to be more assertive, do I need to tone it back? Like are they wanting to hear more positivity? I think that's the biggest thing for reading people, is just getting a feel for how they respond to certain little comments you make or building little trusts



before you build bigger trusts. Like asking for smaller favors and then seeing how they respond and then if you need help or if they need help.

Ritchie also stated:

I feel like I often can motivate people around me well. My biggest strength is I know what sets certain people off. It's like I know how to hype certain people up, and I think part of that is just being an athlete. I know what people want to hear in order to you know, get excited and get hyped up for something, and so, that's helped me a lot in my chapter. I know what people are wanting to hear and I know how to say things in the right way so that people have I guess a positive perception.

This awareness Ritchie shared demonstrated how he understood and experienced leadership as it related to engaging with others as a leader. Beyond the skills he noted being significant to leadership and his own leadership identity, he discussed leadership as motivating others when you are engaging with them.

Tank affirmed understanding and experiencing leadership as working and engaging with others by bringing others in:

I would say that when I lead, when someone's leading a group, you have to take everyone's input and make it ... It's hard to explain it for me. But you just have to pretty much pick and choose your battles is my biggest thing. And you have to lead, but also take advice and take input. Because I don't believe a strong leader is someone that's very single minded. I think a good leader, and how I describe myself as a leader is someone that can take in a lot of different ideas and see them from all different points of views. I think that the biggest point about being a leader is, you need to see where everyone's

coming from and their different aspects of life, and what their point of view is, and decide for collective effort, not what you're single mindedly thinking.

The men all discussed in some form a connection to others in relation to how they identified as leaders and understood or experienced leadership. Whether it was being placed into leadership roles by others or engaging with others as part of the leadership process, they were conferred to lead. This process of experiencing leadership as being connected to others helped to frame not only why and how the men identified as leaders but also why they chose to experience leadership.

### **Compelled to Lead**

Through comprehending leadership and then being conferred to lead by and alongside others, the men developed a passion and urge to be motivated to lead. This is demonstrated by the third superordinate theme: being compelled to lead. The first ordinate theme within this superordinate theme was the men identifying leadership as demonstrating and eliciting both motivation and drive in a leadership role.

### **Leadership as Motivation and Drive**

Tom identified seeing leadership as being motivated and drive was connected to how he was raised to just make things happen when given a role.

I was kind of raised that when given a job, you know, you just find a way to do it. And so, when I was putting in the roles of trying to be a leader or a captain, I just had to figure out a way to make it work.

Further, Tom provided an example from high school football that demonstrated how he had this motivation and drive as a leader and how it played out with a specific example:

So, my senior year I played inside linebacker and the way that our defense was set up there's two inside linebackers. One was the strong side basically, and one was the weak side. I was the weak side inside linebacker, and for years, the strong side inside linebacker had been the defensive captain. Like hands down. The leader of the defense ran the defense. The guy in that position just wasn't doing it. He just wouldn't step up. He was not a vocal leader; he was not buying into it. Our coach would try to ask him questions in defensive meetings and he would just not respond. He just didn't have a response. It was kind of a combination of me and the coach, we're pretty close, so he kinda started looking to me to try to pick up the slack from him not being a leader. At that point in time I was comfortable being a leader. So, I kind of looked at being that position. I figured since he wasn't stepping up, I was the next guy in line to do it.

Vandy and Michael shared how they viewed and understood leadership to be about having the motivation and drive to lead others. Vandy shared how he has always felt this intrinsic motivation to lead and not to follow using the analogy of being a lion versus a sheep:

Honestly, I was always the type of guy where I always viewed myself as one of the captains or one of the leaders, I wasn't a follower. But also, the fact of I had the qualities in high school and in what I do now where people are like, "Okay, Vandy knows what he's talking about or he knows what's going on" and stuff like that. I've just always been motivated to not be a follower, not to be a sheep. In a sense, I want to be the lion. So. Sounds cliché to say that, but it's just how I feel.

This quote by Vandy demonstrated sequentially how he comprehended his own identity as a leader, was conferred to lead by others and thus, was compelled to lead because of his own motivation and drive. Additionally, Michael asserted the significance of leading with motivation,

or as he refers to it as “passion” and drive. He began by (in his mind) distinguishing between leading by passion and drive versus leading by example and the importance he believed there to be with leading with passion (motivation) and drive:

I think to spin that around is leading by passion and leading by drive should be the more correct answer because leading by example is kind of just standing up and just saying, “Oh, this should be done.” Right? And that's ‘cause kind of leading by example, right? There's a lot of open ended to that. But leading by passion is not just every time being the first person to stand up and talk but being the first person to talk in things that you actually care about. Right? And being the first and being the spearhead in the things that you individually care about as well. Right? Because as a member, you don't want your leader to kind of half- half-ass something. Right? You want a leader who's passionate, who's really, really willing to drive and make the event or make something,

This motivation and drive the men discussed ties into the next ordinate theme from the participant data of the superordinate theme being compelled to lead, which is the men saw leadership as a type of obligation or duty.

### **Leadership as Duty**

Through being compelled to lead, the men described how they experienced leadership as a type of duty they felt both within experiences outside and inside the fraternity. Within this theme of being compelled to lead, the men were obliged through seeing action as part of their duty as leaders. Vandy described an experience that exemplified this from high school football:

In football, we had an incident where somebody was saying something they shouldn't be doing, and they were doing something they shouldn't be doing, and nobody was confronting him. I actually confronted him and the coach heard about it

and he actually kicked the person off the team. Just going through those kinds of the awkward things, like ripping the band aid off, it's like, I don't want to do this, but I feel as though I need to do this, it's just those little things. A lot of things that people push off to the side. It's like the bystander effect. "Oh, I'll let somebody else deal with it." Well, it turns out, I'm that somebody to deal with it. I'm the one who's going to bring it up. I'm the one who's going to bring it up. I'm the one who's going to like stop the bull right there and I'm going to say, "Hey, what's going on? Why are you doing this?"

In this case, Vandy described the duty he felt to lead and within leadership, how he felt like he had an obligation to step up as a leader and take care of things. Michael, similarly, described this urge or duty he has felt as a leader to execute his obligations or duties as connected to his passion and drive:

In the end I felt that for me, I am the person that if not done, I should do it.

Right? If I care about something deeply then I should be the one leading. I should be the one spearheading. I should be the driving force within my community. Within the fraternity and anything that I do, I should be the one who's leading it because I should be the one caring about it the most.

Michael stated as a leader if you care about something enough, you should take the reins and do something about it if you truly care for it. He continued by discussing how as a leader as it related to his organization, there is an importance to maintaining that duty he spoke of:

You can get up and quit and say, "I don't want to be a part of this fraternity anymore because they have too many problems. Or you can come in, you can really fight for what you want, and you can really be passionate about something and you can

make this fraternity a better place. Right? And it's all about how you feel and what you wanna do. Right. And at the end of the day, we're not perfect.

Tom discussed leadership as duty as it related specifically to the New Member Educator role. He shared that in this position, he has a duty to ensure that the future of the membership aligns with the stated values of the organization, while also defining what he saw the significance of the role of New Member Educator to be:

That's my job to get these new members ready to be part of the fraternity. But also I'm the last post for them becoming members of the fraternity. So, if it becomes clear that someone just purely isn't suited for our fraternity, doesn't fit with our values, doesn't fit the organization, or they can't handle being a student and a strong fraternity member, it is, it is my duty to make sure that they don't become a dead weight on the fraternity and get initiated. So, my main job is to get everybody to become initiated and become active members. But, also the ugly part of my job is to, um, remove the team members that wouldn't make good members of the fraternity.

In their own ways, they each articulated the manner in which they experienced leadership as a duty both in life and as related to their organization. Through being compelled to lead, the men made the connection to their duty as members of a values-based organization. As an example, Tom alluded to in the role of New Member Educator, removing new members who do not align with the values of the organization as being a central part of his role. This connected to the last superordinate theme from the data, the men seeking congruence in leadership.

### **Congruent Leadership**

The final superordinate theme from the data analysis was that of congruent leadership. The men spoke of developing a culture within their organizations of leaders leading by example,

holding others accountable to the values of the organization and creating the future of the organization. The first ordinate theme, leading by example, was one of the more prominent themes constructed from the data analysis.

### **Leading by Example**

Bob described the process of recognizing others seeing him as an example in a leadership role and the manner in which he learned the value of being that example for others and how that was a process for him and has been carried into his fraternal organization.

I think one of the things that really solidified it for me was in high school I was a part of this nondenominational Christian youth retreat that I would do a weekend in the fall and in the spring. And so, I did it all four years of high school. And even starting my sophomore year of high school I started becoming a leader in that the younger people who were coming in would look up to me as someone who was fun to be around, fun to hang out with, was really funny, and would mess around with everyone else. But also, when it was time to be serious, you know, take a deep breath and leave the jokes behind and actually focus when they needed to. And that, that was part of me becoming a leader and not even realizing it. And then it really solidified for me, my senior year was when it really just all hit me, and I realized that I had all of those people in this program that looked up to me as an example of what to be and who to be. And then the spring of my senior year I led one of the weekends, because there's two student leaders for everyone weekend, and it's always two seniors. And so, I was asked to lead a weekend. And like I said, that's when it all came together for me, and that's when I really started seeing myself as a leader. And then my freshman year, I struggled a lot, my freshman year of college I should say. And that's kind of when I started to not really feel like a

leader as much. I just kind of talked about being comfortable with myself, striving to be the best person I can be. And I think I really fell off the wagon there my freshman year of college because I had a really rough transition from home to here. But once sophomore year rolled around, I started to pick myself back up, and I worked on myself a lot. And I think that was really good for me. And then once I got into the fraternity, it was kind of that realization again that I'd had that senior year. And I'm in [Delta Delta Alpha] now, I can be this person, I can be this example to other people. And so, I think that's kind of how it all went.

Additionally, Tank, in the interviews, reiterated the importance of leading by example and referenced the “higher standard” (as he deemed it) example leaders should hold themselves to and the importance both in formal and informal leadership roles:

And I think that's how you gain a lot of respect as a leader too, and how you can make people not necessarily follow you, but respect you as a leader, is by just hearing them out, hearing their viewpoints and making educated decisions....And I think that's the biggest part about being a leader, and holding yourself to a higher standard. Not only holding yourself to a higher standard, maybe just holding yourself to a higher attitude, you know, like not being the kid that goofs around in the back. Someone that's focused and that has a drive to succeed. And whether that's preparation, whether that's time management, anything like that, and making sure that everything you do gets done, and you do it the right way.

The way in which Tank continued to reiterate leading by example and demonstrating the “higher standard” he spoke of follows:



As a leader standpoint, I think the biggest point about helping members understand the values would be like I think just holding yourself to those values at 110%. And if you're holding those values at 110%, those guys that are maybe like halfway there will start to see you in that role model position, and slowly work towards that and see what this is all about. And I think it's a chain reaction. Once one guy in a leadership role puts 110% of the values and lives by everything that we're about, I think it's a chain effect down the way. More guys will join and join and join until you're all living by the same values.

Tank discussed how holding yourself to that higher standard and leading by example, aligns with congruent leadership. That is, holding yourself to the values of the organization and thus the positive effect to the organization and others through doing that in a leadership role.

Additionally, Gavin spoke of as a leader of the organization to lead with the values of the organization in mind and lead by example:

So, as the leader of my organization I feel like it's almost having the ability to show what those values look like I have the responsibility to show what those values look like and yeah...So, which is something that I've always, sort of how if you have the ability you have the responsibility. So, I would say being a leader in this organization, it's up to me to ... it's up to me it's up to all of us, as an organization especially but it's really up to me to show what [the values of the organization] look like in everyday life...

Ritchie reaffirmed leading by example as being significant to leadership within the organization and having an impact on others in the organization:

Leading by example, and then you have to make those people want ... They have to want to do better. At that point I feel like that's the best way to do it, is by leading by example, showing people that this is what we're about, this is what our culture is. You need to

either get in line or there's the door. At the end of the day, above everything else you don't want toxic people in your chapter, because there's nothing that that'll do other than just bring down others.

Vandy related leading by example by demonstrating leadership congruent with organizational values specifically to the New Member Educator role within the fraternity:

...If you, with our values, if you don't value them as a, as a [New Member Educator], as a leader, I mean, what's the point of you running for the respect from your peers and brothers? If you have somebody up there who doesn't believe in one of the values that we have, and hold true ourselves, it's like you, what's the point in being in house and obviously there's an issue of voting if that's the case. But that's where it comes in, and being serious about positions in house, being serious about the brotherhood and the fraternity is a big thing. So, I feel as though like everyone should have them, but the educator or the president or somebody that should have them more so than other people, they should be like the prime example of what the values are in the person that they elected.

For the guys, the New Member Educator position within their fraternity served as a springboard to provide them the opportunity to not only demonstrate congruence by leading by example and demonstrating the values of the organization, but also to work to hold other members to the values of the organization.

### **Holding Others Accountable to the Values of the Organization**

The participants all discussed in some way the importance of holding others accountable to the values of the organization as leaders within the organization holding a formal leadership

role, that of New Member Educator and the differing ways to be able to do that as leaders. Gavin stated:

...And it's up to me to have a voice and I was given that voice, so it's up to me to really act those [the values of the organization] out and for me to take that seriously and to really you know, to take that seriously and to really reflect on that and to really I guess to really sort of teach that and to really remind my brothers about that. So yeah, I guess it ties back to having the ability, it means having the responsibility I think is a good way of putting it as cliché and you know, as cliché as that might sound. I feel like that is sort of my job. I'm given a voice, so inside of my fraternity, show them what we mean. Show them what we stand for. Show my brothers what we are supposed to stand for as a fraternity. That we love hanging out with each other. Obviously we love hanging out, we really love having parties together, we love chatting you know and everything like that, we love our group chats but, we love hanging out and everything like that but what we're here to do is to harness this energy that we have and to really go to out and to do something amazing with it. Like we have a very special ability here to have so many like-minded individuals in one cohesive group and one cohesive chapter. One cohesive chapter that we really, that's not something that we take lightly. That's something that we really, we have the ability to change things, so we have the responsibility.

Gavin shared it is up to him to demonstrate the values of the fraternity and help others understand why that is important to harness the power of the fraternal experience and the responsibility that all members within the organization have. Ritchie articulated the importance of holding members accountable within an organization to the values:

I think the biggest thing is when people mess up, I don't want to say making an example of it, but you have to correct people whenever they do something. If they're being disrespectful towards someone or they're being disrespectful towards a woman, you have to call them out and you have to make sure that everyone knows that they've been called out, so that it's very apparent that it's not just something we're saying, it's something that we're doing, and that there's no room for messing up. Obviously, I don't think we should kick someone out the first time they mess up, but you have to let it be known that you're serious about what you're saying and that you're not just bs-ing.

Tom agreed with the notion of as leaders ensuring you are holding members accountable to the values of the organization:

We work to hold each other accountable as best as we possibly can. Um, whether that's through expansion or expulsions or suspensions or whatever means that we have to keep our values and then try to keep guys aligned to our values.

Furthermore, Tank connected leading by example and demonstrating behavior congruent with the values of the organization with holding other members of the organization accountable in order to help an organization thrive and move forward:

And, I think it all starts with one person, and one person being a role model for others and holding others accountable. I think that's the biggest part about being a leader, is holding others accountable for that, for those positions, and also being a role model. Because we always have to hold each other accountable for our values, and that's how the fraternity can grow. And it's not always the easiest thing, but it's huge from a leadership standpoint.

Upon further reflection on holding other members accountable to behavior congruent to the values of the organization, Tank asserted:

So, with members of our fraternity, I think there is a solid 90% of guys who live by those values. Now, you're always going to have your stragglers that are kind of like on the edge, not too about it, too cool for school, you know those kind of guys because you get your standard deviation every time in every class. And I think just, but those 90% of guys that are pushing the chapter to become better and focusing on the values of the fraternity, I think that's what pushes the organization further. And hopefully, slowly that 10% of guys will slowly start to see what this is all about, even post [New Member] semester and see what our values are and how that will transcribe to them being a good member of the chapter and living by the values. And so, I think from a membership standpoint, I feel like most of our members live by our values of holding each other accountable for school, holding each other accountable and having good friends and pushing the chapter further and not being a cancer to the chapter...realistically, if you had 100% of guys that lived by the values and wanted to push the chapter in the right direction and knew it was good for the chapter, like you couldn't be stopped. And I think once you get that 100% is when you can start becoming one of the best chapters in the nation I think, but to do that, everyone needs to follow the same values that's held by the organization, and I feel like we do a good job of that. But at the same time, you always have your outcast type guys that will just care about the social scene, doing other stuff and not necessarily caring too much about the values and principles we're founded upon.

Congruent leadership thought holding other members accountable to the values of the organization helped the men identify the ways they could help their fraternity grow into the future.

## **Creating the Future of the Organization**

The last ordinate theme within the superordinate theme of congruent leadership was the men's understanding of their leadership role of New Member Educator as being imperative to creating the future of their organization as well as the ways in which fraternities need to evolve to be relevant to future generations.

Throughout all the interviews, it was clear the men viewed the New Member Educator role as creating the future of their fraternity and as a starting point for developing and enacting change.

*Michael:* I felt very passionate in wanting to make a better future within the fraternity and so, I kind of wanted to understand what's the direct path in that future. And so, when I really thought about all the positions on our exec board, I thought that New Member Educator would be the best position to help the future of the fraternity.

As leaders, these men viewed the importance of their role and its significance to creating a better future for their chapter, their organization, and fraternities at large.

*David:* I want my legacy... because at the end of the day, it'll be one of the things we ask is like, "Who was your educator?" When we're dealing with someone who is being an idiot and we don't just forget about that. We knew who was Educator for each class. I think my legacy is going to be these guys. If the future of the chapter, which is important, but it's also the future of my legacy. In four or five years when people look at [this class] and they say, "Who was your Educator?" I want that to be a good thing like, "Hey, he did a good job," and not, "Wow, how did he let you guys in and why didn't teach you guys better?"

While David viewed the new members as his legacy, Bob viewed the New Member Educator role as holding the future of the chapter in his hands through this leadership role:

So, I think specifically one of the big things is I feel I like kind of hold the future of my chapter in my hands, and that's because I'm teaching these new guys all those things...how to be a member, the history, all this stuff about our fraternity. Because if they don't know what it's like to be a member of a fraternity, I feel like I didn't do my job right. Or if they don't know why they're here, I feel like I will not have done my job right. But I think another aspect of it too would be, I'm on our executive team too. I'm part of a team that's going to help either push our chapter in the direction or not, or just keep it where it's at. And so, another big part of my role, at least in our chapter being on the executive team is to try and help make sure that we're not just staying here, but that we're just going to keep going up as a chapter. And I have the power to really do things, to talk about things, to bring them up, you know, share my opinion and then vote on things if I have to with the other members of the executive. So, I think that's another really important role that I have in shaping the future of the chapter.

Tank also articulated the notion that the New Member Educator being critical to creating the future of the organization:

It's the most important role in leading the future of the chapter. I'm graduating in two semesters. The guys that I'm bringing in are going to be here for the next four years. So, it's one me to lead them effectively and teach them all they need to know to push the chapter further and in the right direction for years and years to come after I leave. So, when I come back 15 years later, I can see the chapter being successful all because of the work the [New Member] Educator did. And so, I think it's just the most important

position to keep a chapter moving in the direction that it's going. And not to... Because like I said earlier, if you get one bad [New Member] Educator that brings in the wrong guys and doesn't hold guys accountable or to a higher standard and is not a good role model for them, then it's not going to be good for the chapter. And it's the most important position in order to have the guys see all of our values and all the aspects of what makes our fraternity so good and so well.

Additionally, Ritchie articulated the importance of the New Member Educator role to creating the future of his chapter and organization:

I think my role is pretty important for this class, because once someone's initiated, pretty much the learning phase is over. It's kind of hard to change someone once they've already been initiated. You initiate someone who is toxic during pledgship odds are they're still going to be toxic when they graduate. But if you initiate people who are you know, respectful and respect the fraternity and respect the colors, I think that those people are going to be the ones who end up leading in the future, which is what you want to see.

Beyond sharing the manner in which they viewed the New Member Educator role in creating a congruent future as leaders with the values of the organization, the men expressed how fraternities at large needed to change in order to demonstrate this congruence and how as leaders, they could promote that change:

*Ritchie:* I think we need to focus less, not in our fraternity, but I think just the fraternity lifestyle in general needs to focus less on hazing. I understand that it's such a big cultural thing, and I don't think it can really be gotten rid of per se, but I think that the concept like you're saying of breaking people down to build them up just isn't effective enough. I feel like there are better ways to do it with positive reinforcement rather than negative



reinforcement. Obviously, it's just never worth it whenever you would have the potential to lose somebody, like somebody passing, and that's just, it's horrible. We'd be safer as a whole. I think that [the fraternity] as a whole, from what I talked to the guys at [New Member Educator Institute], or because we were all really honest with each other. No one was really holding anything back. I think that was the best thing about [New Member Educator Institute], is it wasn't us talking to older people who were going to judge and hold us more accountable, but it was us talking to each other and explaining what happens, and people saying, look, I think this is a little bit too much. I think we should cut this out or, it's a lot better hearing it from your peers than it is being scolded from someone that you've never met in your life and you're probably never going to see again. I think it honestly just takes honest conversation about it at [conferences] or I think it takes people who are also undergrads who are also going through the same thing explaining, look guys, we're not coming out ahead in this situation. They've been doing this for so long. The culture's changing. Fraternities have to get with it or they're going to be gone, a thing of the past...a lot of people are not willing to be hazed vigorously. People think, okay, well it's not worth it. You don't want someone saying, well, it's not worth it to be a [Delta Delta Alpha], I don't want to get hazed. I mean you want people to think that they're going to get a lot out of it, because they are. You don't want to have a negative perception on it, because then at the end of the day the people that you get who are willing to be hazed are probably not the people you want in your chapter to begin with. I think it just takes peer-to-peer. I don't think it can be done through the media. I don't think it can be done through legislation as much as it already has been. I think it's

just the culture's happening, it just can't happen overnight. It's got to keep progressing like it is naturally.

David reiterated hazing as a barrier to creating a future of the organization that is congruent with the values of the organization:

Fraternities in general need to stop killing people, and I've always been a bit of an outsider for having a unique take on this, but as I told you, when I joined [Delta Delta Alpha], my idea was, I'll go until they give me a reason to drop. If I had been at [another institution] and they'd been like, "Hey, drink this." I would have been like, "Ha, no. Bye." I guess I get that, but if someone handed me a handle of vodka, I'd tell them to shove it and walk away. I am like, "It doesn't make sense to me that you would allow someone to treat you that way." And I guess that's just because I'm different than other people, but I think the answer to hazing is by empowering the people who are victims of it and being like, "You don't have to go through this." If every freshman in America decided they weren't going to put up with hazing, hazing would end next week. I think if all of those organizations, maybe still talked to us, but also focused on seniors in high school, like, "Hey, you don't have to take this. If you walk into an organization and they do this, turn around and walk out." I think that's how we solve hazing. I guess that's the change I'd like to see in fraternities is telling the pledges like, "Hey, you're still a human being, you still have basic freaking rights. If someone tries to do things to you like this, say no and leave." The pledges who are willing, that's not what this is supposed to be and if you think that's what this is... I had guys in my pledge class who were like, "I want to get hazed." I'm like, "You can get the hell out of here. That's not what this is." That's fine if you want that, but no. That's not what I'm looking for here. I think that's the

number one change I'd like to see in fraternities. Even pledges and new members are still human beings and they deserve just the basic amount of respect that you would give anyone else.

Tom focused on the party culture within fraternities as needing to be changed in order to create a future for fraternities on the college campus:

It's such a huge culture in a lot of fraternities, um, the party culture that is apparent, um, both in fraternities and in college in general. I don't know where that is going in the next couple of years. I don't know where it should go in the next couple of years, but I know it's gonna have to change at some point. Universities are cracking down on it. Um, fraternities in general are cracking down on it. We're a dry fraternity, which I feel like a lot of fraternities will probably end up doing in the next couple of years, either willingly or be forced into it. I don't think it necessarily needs to be a part of fraternities, but it's a part of college, college in general in the U.S. I don't, I don't know where fraternities are going to fit into that role in the next 10, 20 years.

How the men articulated the ways in which fraternities needed to evolve into the future supports the theme of creating the future of the organization aligned with congruent leadership.

### **Answering the Research Questions**

#### **How Do Undergraduate Fraternity New Member Educators Experience and Identify Themselves as Leaders?**

According to the study, the men experienced and identified themselves as leaders in a few ways. Experiencing leadership began for many of them while they were younger and they were making observations of how leadership was demonstrated by parents/guardians, coaches

and other mentors in their lives. Observing the leadership of others helped the men to begin to first experience and comprehend leadership. In terms of beginning to identify themselves as leaders, this was also connected to taking (and being provided) the time to reflect on their own previous leadership experiences. During this reflection, and in the interviews, the men were able to explore the ways in which leadership was part of their lived experiences and when and how they came to know themselves as a leader. Additionally, early on, many of the men were placed in leadership roles whether that was a sports team or some other positional leadership role. Others in their lives (parents/guardians, coaches, mentors), identified their leadership qualities and instilled in them a motivation to take on opportunities to lead. An example of this was for a few of them, putting them into high school team captain positions. It is significant to note all the men except for one played some sort of high school sport from which they were able to draw many connections to how they understood and experienced their leadership identities. Coincidentally, most of the men ended up in team captain roles of their high school sports teams as well. There was a mix of how each of the men responded to being conferred to lead. Some demonstrated some initial hesitation to identify as a leader while others jumped right into these roles headfirst and sought out identifying as a leader in these roles.

The men also experienced and understood their leadership as working with and engaging with others. All the participants throughout the interviews referenced working collaboratively with others as identified leaders. While each of the men may have had a different approach to how they chose to work and engage with others, all of them saw the significance of leadership as a collaborative process. Furthermore, the New Member Educators studied were all compelled to lead in some sort of way. While it was not fully identified where exactly this intrinsic drive and motivation came from in the study, the men all were exceptionally driven and motivated to lead

and saw their leadership as a duty, which may have had some connection and relation to their organization and organizational values.

### **How Do Undergraduate Fraternity New Member Educators Understand and Experience Their Leadership as It Relates to Their Organization?**

The participants understood their leadership as it related to their organization (fraternity) in a few ways. The first was through comprehending leadership earlier on in their lifetimes. It was the leadership that was observed by others and taking the time to reflect on past leadership experiences that helped them make connections to their organization. Additionally, they were able to connect how those leadership experiences all led to them being the New Member Educator for their chapter. A second way the men understood and experienced leadership as it related to their organization was through being conferred to lead in their chapters. Most of them found themselves in leadership roles in their chapters quickly and for some of them unexpectedly. A few others sought out leadership roles within their organizations based on their drive and their motivation to be a positive force and leader within their chapters. When asked for leadership examples both within and outside the fraternity during the interviews, the participants always seemed to return to their experiences within their chapters and related other leadership experiences they may have had previously back to their organizations in some manner. Additionally, many of the men had held other positional leadership roles within their chapter prior to being elected to serve as New Member Educator.

Another way in which the participants understood and experienced leadership as it related to their organization was the ways how each of them were compelled to lead. In talking with the participants throughout the course of the study, the organization they are all a part of seemed to be a driving force for them seeing leadership as being a duty for them. Furthermore, an

additional way in which the men understood and experienced leadership as it related to their organization was specifically connected to the role of the New Member Educator within the fraternity. It was clear from the interviews with the men that they understood and established that the New Member Educator role in their chapter was responsible for not only being part of their legacy within the organization as leaders, but also from a bigger picture perspective, creating the future of their chapter and organization. The men also articulated the impact they believed their leadership in the New Member Educator role could have on fraternal relevance into the future.

### **How Do Undergraduate Fraternity New Member Educators Experience Their Leadership Influencing the Congruence of The Behavior of The Organization with The Stated Values of The Organization?**

According to the Higher Education Research Institute, developing a consciousness of self is vital to an individual being congruent (HERI, 1996). Comprehending leadership as demonstrated in this study is part of the participants understanding more about themselves as leaders. Through the discussions with the men of being conferred to lead, they spoke of leadership as a sense of duty. When discussing this duty in relation to their organization, Michael summarized and stated: “If I care about something deeply then I should be the one leading.” This sentiment was prevalent for the men. This then related to congruence of behaviors in the organization with the organization’s stated values. This was demonstrated by how the men chose to represent themselves in leadership roles as related to what they cared about and were passionate about. While the men reflected on their experiences as leaders within their organization and taking on leadership roles, specifically the New Member Educator role, they spoke clearly of the importance of leading by example. There was a focus on being a role model to new members who they were educating and onboarding into the fraternity experience. The

men discussed how in order to teach the new members of the organization the stated values of the organization, they needed to role model and demonstrate them consistently. Additionally, the participants discussed the importance of holding both new members accountable to the stated values of the organization, but also their peers (brothers) and why that was an important part of new member education.

### **How Do Undergraduate Fraternity New Member Educators Perceive Their Role in Leading Their Organization into The Future?**

The New Member Educators studied perceived their role in leading their organizations in a few ways. The first was through their understanding of leadership congruent with the stated values of their organization. It started with them understanding and focusing on leading by example and serving as role models for the new members they are responsible for in new member education and holding other members accountable in a leadership role to the stated values of the organization. The men perceived their role in leading the organization into the future by understanding that the role of the New Member Educator is the person responsible for the future members of the organization and the manner in which they educate them and the culture of which they bring them into matters. The participants understood the new members with whom they worked with were a part of their legacies within their respective chapters. They also perceived and understood the significance of their role to the future of their chapter and organization. As Tank simply put it: "It's the most important role in leading the future of the chapter." He also shared: "I think it's just the most important position to keep a chapter moving in the direction that it's going." There is significance to the level at which all the men in the study understood and articulated this about the New Member Educator role.

Finally, the men were able to identify ways in which current international fraternity culture and behavior is incongruent with the stated values of fraternal organization. They also were able to articulate that in order to survive as organizations and on college campuses and remain relevant for future generations, things need to change. Some of the examples the men discussed related to change included: less of a focus on and removing hazing practices from fraternal organizations, educating potential new members about the risks associated with joining a chapter or an organization whose actions and behavior are incongruent with stated values, addressing college party culture prevalent within fraternities, and providing leaders of chapters opportunities to engage with their peers and create coalitions of learning and the development of solutions to current challenges together. As Ritchie stated: “The culture's changing. Fraternities have to get with it or they're going to be gone, a thing of the past.” The men who participated in this study perceived their role as New Member Educator as being vital to leading their organization and fraternities overall into the future.

Table 4.1 lists the main research questions within the study along with the corresponding superordinate themes and ordinate themes that emerged from the analysis:



**Table 4.1****Research Questions and Related Themes**

<b>Research Question</b>	<b>Related Themes</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How do undergraduate fraternity New Member Educators experience and identify themselves as leaders?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Comprehend Leadership: Observing and experiencing the leadership of others, Reflection on past experiences with leadership</li> <li>Conferred to Lead: Being placed in leadership roles, Engaging with others in a leadership role</li> <li>Compelled to Lead: Leadership as motivation and drive</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How do undergraduate fraternity New Member Educators understand and experience their leadership as it relates to their organization?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Comprehend Leadership: Observing and experiencing the leadership of others</li> <li>Conferred to Lead: Being placed in leadership roles</li> <li>Compelled to Lead: Leadership as duty</li> <li>Congruent Leadership: Creating the future of the organization</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How do undergraduate fraternity New Member Educators experience their leadership influencing the congruence of the behavior of the organization with the stated values of the organization?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Compelled to Lead: Leadership as duty</li> <li>Congruent Leadership: Leading by example, Holding others accountable to the values of the organization</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How do undergraduate fraternity New Member Educators perceive their role in leading their organization into the future?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Congruent Leadership: Leading by example, holding others accountable to the values of the organization, creating the future of the organization</li> </ul>

**Statement of Essence of The Experience**

Overall, the essence of the experience of undergraduate fraternity New Member Educators concerning their leadership identity in relation to their organization is: Early on, undergraduate fraternity New Member Educators began to comprehend leadership through observing the leadership of others. Subsequently, it was significant for undergraduate fraternity

New Member Educators to reflect on their past leadership experiences. Additionally, the New Member Educators were conferred to lead through being placed into leadership roles and engaging with others within those roles. Being conferred to lead created a desire for New Member Educators to be compelled to lead through taking on leadership roles as this was something they were motivated and driven to do. Taking on these leadership roles also felt like a duty for them. Finally, once in leadership roles, the men sought out congruence and accountability in those roles with organizational values and sought to create the future of their fraternities (organizations). This chapter provided summaries of these nine undergraduate fraternity New Member Educators who participated in the study to provide context for whom this research was based upon. Additionally, this chapter detailed the findings from the data. A discussion on the findings as they relate to the theoretical framework and the literature as well as recommendations and suggestions for future research will be provided in the next chapter.

## CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION

This study provided participants the opportunity to make meaning out of their own lived experiences with their leadership as well as their fraternal organizations. These experiences were vast, and unique to each participant, and yet, collectively were brought together to understand these lived experiences as undergraduate fraternity New Member Educators. Each participant had a unique voice and personality that brought to life their experiences and provided a space for the men to deeply reflect on their roles as a leader within their organization. Furthermore, this study provided these men with the ability to reflect on how they perceived their role in leading their organization into the future through their lived experiences.

This study, designed as an interpretive phenomenological analysis demonstrated the perspective that people have a tendency to try and make meaning of their experiences and provided the opportunity for individuals to share accounts of their experiences and reflect on those meanings (Smith et al., 2009). The chosen methodological approach believed that each individual saw things in different ways which were informed by his own unique personality, motivation and experiences in life (Smith & Osborn, 2004). Through IPA as the researcher, I made a commitment to explore and interpret the way participants made meaning of their own experiences while myself providing my own interpretation to develop and understand their meaning making (Smith & Osborn, 2004). Through the epistemological perspective of constructivism, I examined the complexity of the multiple views of the participants within the study (Creswell, 2014). Based on this epistemological perspective and methodological approach, I made my own interpretation of the meaning and sense making of the participants (Smith et al., 2009) to identify the essence of their experiences.

## **Revisiting the Purpose of the Study and Research Questions**

The purpose of this study was to focus on how undergraduate fraternity New Member Educators understood and experienced their role as a leader within their organization, as well as how they perceived their role in leading their organization into the future. Overall, the overarching question of this study was the following: What is the experience of undergraduate fraternity New Member Educators concerning their leadership identity in relation to their organization? There were four main research questions guiding this study:

1. How do undergraduate fraternity New Member Educators experience and identify themselves as leaders?
2. How do undergraduate fraternity New Member Educators understand and experience their leadership as it relates to their organization?
3. How do undergraduate fraternity New Member Educators experience their leadership influencing the congruence of the behavior of the organization with the stated values of the organization?
4. How do undergraduate fraternity New Member Educators perceive their role in leading their organization into the future?

This chapter focuses on integrating and taking the findings of the study and connecting them to the literature and sharing elements and components from this study worth consideration and further investigation concerning leadership in fraternal organizations. In addition, the leadership identity development of the New Member Educator position is discussed. Finally, this chapter highlights recommendations for future action, practice, and research.

## **Modeling, Reflection, Experience, Motivation, and Congruence**

The themes identified and derived through the interpretive phenomenological analysis of the data in this study lead to the development of the essence of the experience of undergraduate fraternity New Member Educators. This essence of the experience of these men concerning their leadership identity in relation to their organization subsequently created the findings within this study. The following will connect each specific finding to the conceptual frameworks and synthesize with additional selections of the literature reviewed to make meaning out of the findings within this study on undergraduate fraternity New Member Educators. I believe the findings within this study have led to the identification of five components that could be considered for use in future research, investigation, action, and practice. As this study focused on one organization (Delta Delta Alpha) and one position within the organization (New Member Educator), these five components could be explored further in terms of how fraternity men (and perhaps, more specifically New Member Educators) consider their leadership identity in relation to their organization. These five components are: modeling, reflection, experience, motivation, and congruence.

### **Modeling: Early On, Undergraduate Fraternity New Member Educators Began to Comprehend Leadership Through Observing the Leadership of Others**

This finding demonstrated undergraduate fraternity New Member Educators began to understand and experience themselves as leaders through seeing others in their lives exhibit qualities that they deemed to be qualities of leadership. The men started to observe the leadership of others beginning early in their lives. For most of the men this began with their parents or whomever raised them as they grew up. For example, in the interviews with the men, Bob talked about watching his father “serve” and described his father as “understanding” and

“compassionate.” Tank discussed how his father was a leader and through observing what his father did growing up, he “inadvertently” became a leader himself. Vandy shared how early on in life, his parents instilled the value of having a voice and speaking up in situations through role-modeling. Each of the men demonstrated differing ways to discuss what they observed from their parents growing up that contributed to their understanding of leadership and even shared different things that they were modeled and observed related to leadership. Yet, one thing held true for each of them in some manner and that was they were modeled and observed leadership behaviors growing up. One of the men, Tom, throughout the interview not only discussed observations and modeling of leadership by parents but of his high school football coach and the Chapter Advisor of his fraternity. Tom spoke with deep admiration for his Chapter Advisor and the ways in which his Chapter Advisor modeled leadership to the undergraduates of the fraternity. As a Chapter Advisor myself, this stuck with me and resonated with me in thinking about the ways in which I have or could model leadership to the undergraduate men with whom I have the opportunity to work with.

I believe all these examples of leadership modeling were significant to these men’s understanding of their own leadership identities and it is my interpretation that this modeling and observation of leadership for these men contributed to the framing of their understanding of their own leadership identities. Without this initial modeling and observation of leadership behavior for these men, there may have been a detriment to their own understanding of what leadership means or how to integrate it into their own understanding of themselves as leaders both prior to joining and once in their organizations. Understanding the types of leadership modeled and observed by these men helps to better understand the framing and lens through which their experiences began. Seeking to understanding the types of modeling and observation related to

leadership for the men is significant to future exploration of the development of leadership identity. Continued seeking of understanding of the types of leadership behavior modeled and observed by undergraduate fraternity men could help provide a solid foundation for understanding where to begin with reflection on leadership development activities for men within these organizations. Additionally, taking the time to understand and listen to the ways in which leadership was modeled and observed for undergraduate fraternity men could perhaps also allow for the opportunity to more intentionally develop mentoring relationships for these men both within and outside of these organizations. As a researcher, through hearing early on in the interviews the ways in which the men were role-modeled and observed leadership, helped me to better understand the foundation from which their understanding of leadership may have been built. In addition, understanding their experiences with developing their leadership identities was beneficial. Throughout the interviews the men focused on mostly positive leadership modeling growing up.

Sessa (2017) stated leadership is not something observable in the world as an object because it is a construct. As one goes through life, an understanding of what leadership is, as well as one's understanding of self, as a leader changes. While leadership not as an object but as a construct makes sense to me, I believe the construct of leadership is initially developed for an individual via the modeling and observation of what "leadership" could look like in others. Furthermore, Generation Z students see those who are closest to them as role models and there can be an association of positive role modeling of leadership for them without being in a formal leadership position (Seemiller & Grace, 2017). This was affirmed through the findings of this study in terms of this group of students seeing those with whom they are close as being role models whether in a formal leadership position or not. This finding does not support the research

findings on Generation Z students related to their resistance to seeking leadership roles due to their dislike of formal and positional leadership (Seemiller & Grace, 2017).

Komives et al.'s (2005) Model of Leadership Development articulated in stage one: awareness, individuals were made aware of leadership through understanding that it was “out there somewhere” (Komives et al., 2006, p. 406) and in terms of developmental influences in this stage, parents were critical to modeling leadership and leadership was viewed as being external to others. There is a connection to and some consistency with the finding that undergraduate fraternity New Member Educators began to comprehend leadership through the modeling and observation of the leadership of others and the first stage (awareness) of Komives et al.'s Model of Leadership Identity Development (2005). Overall, modeling leadership and this finding that early on these men began to comprehend leadership through observing the leadership of others is the first component that can potentially be used within leadership practice in terms of how men in these organizations consider their leadership identity.

**Reflection: It Was Significant for Undergraduate Fraternity New Member Educators to Be Able to Reflect on Their Past and Current Experiences with Leadership**

At the end of the interview, Vandy told me: “I love this. I have been looking forward to this ever since I told you I was interested in helping out.” At the end of the interviews with the men in the study, the men offered appreciation to me as an interviewer for providing them with the space and time to reflect on themselves and their leadership. Providing the men in the study this opportunity to reflect on their past experiences with leadership seemed to be overall significant to how the men experienced and understood themselves as leaders. Through reflecting on their current and past experiences with leadership, the men were able to make connections with those experiences and what they have experienced within their fraternity. This



finding results in the second component to be considered for use in leadership practice within these organizations for fraternity men concerning their leadership identity, which is reflection.

As a researcher, I was taken aback by the depth of reflection provided on their previous leadership experiences. From the modeling they observed growing up in their leadership experiences in high school on sports teams or through other opportunities, the time spent with them allowing them to reflect and make meaning out of these experiences seemed incredibly worthwhile to their understanding of their leadership identity. Overall, for me, this solidified the notion of how unbelievably important it may be to consider providing forums and opportunities for reflection on leadership for fraternity men. This may be especially true for those in positional roles such as the New Member Educator position because of the value it appeared to hold to help the men process through their experiences concerning their leadership identity and to relate it back to their organization. Ultimately, through the reflection, the men were able to look at their own skills and abilities through the lens of their experiences with leadership. This merged to help them find and understand a sense of who they were as leaders and then apply it to the role of New Member Educator and their fraternal organizations.

In the study, the men identified points in their lives and make meaning out of when and how they identified themselves as leaders both in positional and non-positional leadership roles and speak to those leadership experiences. As discussed in chapter two, Seemiller and Grace (2017) said Generation Z students dislike formal and positional leadership positions and impacts whether they want to be leaders. According to Seemiller and Grace, this perspective on leadership offers both challenges and opportunities because the world is structured around positional and formal leadership roles and yet, their perspective offers non-positional forms of leadership as being helpful and influential. Additionally, Seemiller and Grace shared students in

this generation seem to have an inflated sense of their own abilities when it comes to leadership and they see themselves as being skillful in leadership (Seemiller & Grace, 2017). Through the reflection on past leadership experiences by the men, I did not feel the men had a resistance or pre-conceived notions of positional leadership. Whether they were speaking of times as captains of their football teams or as officers in their chapters or as New Member Educators in their chapters, the men reflecting on how those experiences contributed to their understanding of themselves as leaders and their current positions in their chapters. However, the reflection on past leadership experiences did provide the men with an opportunity to offer examples of some non-positional roles in which they ended up taking on some sort of leadership role. It was undetermined whether the men in the study offered inflated senses of their own leadership ability as they described their reflection on their past leadership experiences. While some of the men demonstrated more confidence in their leadership ability, I did not feel I had the information to affirm that perspective from the literature on this generation based off the conversation with the men in this study.

The component of reflection and finding it was significant for the men to reflect on their current and previous experiences with leadership connects to various parts of Komives et al.'s (2005) Model of Leadership Identity Development. In this model, reflection on experiences takes place at various points in the six stages of the model. This reflection formed the basis for their model moving from awareness in stage one to exploration/engagement, leader identified, leadership differentiated and finally, stage six generativity (Komives et al.). The significance of allowing the men to reflect on their past experiences with leadership to identify how they experienced and understood leadership aligns with Komives' development of a leadership identity.

Additionally, the first value in the Social Change Model of Leadership (1996) is consciousness of self, in which an individual has awareness of the “beliefs, attitudes, and emotions that motivate one to take action” (HERI, 1996). Allowing the men to reflect on their experiences with leadership aligned with the first value of this model in terms of helping the men develop a consciousness of self. Overall, reflection on leadership experiences is the second component that can potentially be used within leadership practice and study in terms of how men in these organizations consider their leadership identity in relation to their fraternity.

### **Experience: New Member Educators Were Conferred to Lead Through Being Placed into Leadership Roles and Engaging with Others Within Those Roles**

“It was just kind of something I was thrown into,” Tom stated. “I looked like a give me a ball kind of guy,” David shared, “People were rallying around me,” Ritchie confirmed. These were all part of the narratives provided by the men regarding how they were placed into leadership roles and engaged with others within those roles. As discussed in the findings in chapter four, during the interviews, when asked about how they came to know themselves as a leader and to provide examples of personal experiences with leadership, all the participants discussed how they were conferred to lead by others at some point in some manner. This meant others recognized they each held qualities of leadership or others believed that they exhibited traits that would allow them to be placed in leadership roles. Or, somehow the men found themselves in leadership roles because of others’ influences.

The third finding in this study was these fraternity New Member Educators were conferred to lead by being placed in various leadership roles. It was through this and engaging with others through which these men got to experience leadership themselves. The men understood leadership was a process of working with others. Thus, the third component offered

from this study for further consideration in leadership development and practice considering leadership identity within fraternal organizations is the actual experience of leadership. The men were able to experience leadership because others put them in these leadership roles and in the examples provided, the men would not have found their way to these roles were it not for others conferring them in these roles. It also provided some insight into what lead these men to end up in the New Member Educator role specifically.

I feel this conferring of leadership was significant for the men, because to identify the way the men understood and experienced themselves as leaders, it was important for them to identify that others saw leadership potential in them first before they were able to then experience these leadership roles. The impact of others noticing the leadership abilities of the men and providing them with experiences in which they could develop as leaders was apparent through the interviews. It was interesting to me the way in which the people that conferred these men into leadership roles varied, from sports coaches in high school, to their peers, to fraternity Chapter Advisors, to their parents as well as others. For most of the men, the conferring of leadership began with high school sports but continued into their leadership within their fraternity and for some included being conferred into the role of New Member Educator. Conferring these undergraduate fraternity men who demonstrated skills and abilities by others is significant to work with fraternal organizations.

I believe identifying men who demonstrate the ability to lead early on in their fraternity experience and providing them with the experiences and a sort of laboratory within the fraternity to further develop their leadership skills could be invaluable for these men. Based off this, it could be important for others to help understand the previous leadership roles of men who are within the fraternity chapter (maybe through some reflection on those experiences) and then use

that to provide opportunities for men to gain experience in a variety of ways within a fraternity chapter.

As previously noted, one of the outcomes of the fraternity experience espoused by fraternal organizations is the commitment to leadership development of men in the organizations (Martin et al., 2012). Harms et al.'s (2006) stated how a commitment to leadership is an essential part of the culture and stated purpose of fraternities. However, there is not substantial research on the outcomes of holding leadership roles or how these organizations enhance an individual's leadership skills (Harms et al.).

While leadership development is at the core of the stated purpose of these organizations, evidence to support their active attempts at providing this development appears limited, inconsistent and dated (Martin et al., 2012). Understanding the ways in which these men found themselves in leadership roles within the organization such as New Member Educator is an important consideration for future practice and study related to how men in fraternities consider their leadership identity. This also could support further inquiry into leadership development in alignment with that stated purpose of these organizations. However, the literature around leadership not specific to fraternal organizations does however seem to be in alignment with the significance of the component or providing an individual experience in leadership to promote their leadership development through conferring them into leadership roles.

Additionally, Multicultural leadership theory studies the ways in which leadership within communities of color has framed ways in which leadership has evolved over time, and according to Bordas (2007), in many cultures, it is not correct to say that one is a leader as leadership is externally conferred by others who can recognize abilities, talents and vision. Utilizing Comanche and Iroquois tribes, Bordas discussed how leaders were not elected and that leaders

were people who had admirable qualities that may include things such as generosity, sharing and a view of responsibility to self and others (p. 85). This concept taken from multicultural leadership theory is in alignment with this component of providing these men experiences in leadership through conferring them into various leadership roles.

In the transition from stage two to stage three of Komives et al.'s Leadership Identity Development Model, which is exploration/engagement to leader identified, individuals begin to recognize their leadership potential what is reinforced by mentors and role models (2006). Additionally, beyond just being placed in leadership roles, the men in the study experienced and understood themselves as leaders through working with others. This part of the finding is connected to Komives et al.'s Model of Leadership Identity Development, leaders where individuals identified leadership as a group process, and in various stages, utilized the interactions and engagement with others as a catalyst for their own development of a leadership identity (Komives et al., 2006).

The fourth value of the Social Change Model of Leadership Development (1996), collaboration, represented a common effort worked on by a group (HERI, 1996). This finding is consistent with this value of the Social Change Model of Leadership Development in which the men both articulated and understood the significance of working with others toward a common goal as part of how they understood and experienced leadership. Generally, the actual experience of leadership both inside and outside of fraternal organizations is the third component that can be further explored and examined within leadership practice and study in terms of how men in these organizations consider their leadership identity in relation to their fraternity.

**Motivation: Being Conferred to Lead Created A Desire for New Member Educators to Be Compelled to Lead Through Taking on Leadership Roles. This Was Something They Were Motivated and Driven to Do. Taking on These Leadership Roles Also Felt Like A Duty for Them**

One of the conversations in the interviews that stuck with me was with Vandy. He was providing me with an example of where he was motivated to lead in high school football. He shared: “I’m that somebody to deal with it. I’m the one who’s going to bring it up. I’m the one who’s going to like stop the bull right there.” The notion that men were the guys to resolve issues, to step into leadership and to get things done was apparent in its own way in each of the conversations with each of the men. Upon completing the interviews with the New Member Educators, I was fascinated with the ways in which the men were compelled to lead within their chapters and how they felt it was their duty to be a leader and to serve their organization and their brothers. I feel as if I was left with more questions for further inquiry on what exactly was behind that motivation for them and what the pieces were that created this drive and duty for them. Perhaps it was just as simple as it seemed for the men in the study. That through being conferred to lead, New Member Educators were now motivated to take on leadership roles. Through reflecting on this desire and motivation of the men to lead in the fraternity myself, I was left with questions on how to recreate this in these organizations. I have questioned if a more in-depth understanding of this could provide more insight into the experience of leadership of these men in relation to their fraternities. This finding helped identify the fourth component which is a valuable to put forth for consideration in future leadership practice with fraternities and how these men consider their leadership identity development.

There are a few immediate connections I can make with the literature with the component of motivation to lead and the view of leadership as a duty as derived from the fourth finding in the study. First, the men in the study understanding and experiencing their leadership as a duty as part of their fraternity also connected to Komives et al.'s (2006) Leadership Identity Model specifically in stage five, generativity, in which individuals exhibited a passion for causes, and felt a responsibility as leaders and felt a commitment to others and a responsibility to a group (Komives et al., 2006).

Additionally, in stage five, an individual's values are immersed with actions. For Delta Delta Alpha, the values of the organization connected to the actions of seeing leadership as a duty and making the organization better. A prominent and well-known leadership theory within the literature is Servant Leadership which begins with the initiative of the individual (Greenleaf, 1970). According to Johnson (2015) there are five concepts at the center of servant leadership one of which is obligation. Furthermore, the component of motivation to lead identified within this study seems to be in alignment with the literature around various types of leadership, for example that of servant leadership. Finally, the Social Change Model of Leadership Development, one of the seven values within the model, commitment is the starting point for the development of a common purpose as a group (HERI, 1996). This motivation and duty exhibited by the men in the study seems to be in alignment with the concept that commitment to an organization or cause can result in moving toward a larger purpose. Overall, motivation to lead within these experiences is the third component to be put forward for consideration for use within leadership practice and study in terms of how men in these organizations consider their leadership identity and relate it to their fraternity.



**Congruence: Once in Leadership Roles, The Men Sought Out Congruence and Accountability in Those Roles with Organizational Values and Sought to Create the Future of Their Fraternities (Organizations)**

As New Member Educators in their chapters, the men understood and articulated the significance of leading by example, holding others accountable to the values of the organization and were able to articulate how they viewed their role as creating the future of their fraternity chapter. Together, this all demonstrates the fifth and final component derived from the final finding that I view to be of significance for consideration in future leadership practice with fraternities and how these men consider their leadership identity development. Like the component of motivation and duty to lead (compelled to lead), I was taken aback and inspired by the depth and level of understanding these men were able to demonstrate related to congruence. The men felt and cared deeply about this and for some almost in blunt ways articulated why this was the most important element of their role as New Member Educators within their chapters. This commitment to congruence led me to believe that the position of New Member Educator within these chapters could possibly be as influential as I may have perceived it to be when identifying it to be the position I wanted to use in this study.

Fraternities are values-based organizations, and they promote these values or principles as being inherent to the experience within these organizations. Affirmation was provided for me as a researcher that the men identified congruence as being part of their experiences concerning their leadership identity in relation to their organization. Ultimately, the men seemed to grasp holistically how their specific position as New Member Educators had a clear role in influencing congruence of the behavior in the organization with the stated values of the organization and ultimately created the future of their fraternity. Dugen (2006) articulated in the literature an

increase in values-based leadership and exploration of leadership for undergraduate college men is needed. Thus, perhaps of all the findings and components put forth as being worth further inquiry and investigation, that was the most significant to seeking an understanding of various components of the fraternity experiences, but within the boundaries of this study, that of the experiences of the New Member Educator position concerning their leadership identity in relation to their organization.

In stage five of Komives et al.'s (2006) Leadership Identity Development Model, generativity, an individual's values are immersed with actions. In stage six, an individual demonstrates actions congruent with values and beliefs and a reflection on a congruent sense of self solidifies a leadership identity for an individual (Komives et al.). This component derived from this fifth finding seemed to be connected to these aspects of the Leadership Identity Development Model. Secondly, the Social Change Model of Leadership articulated that developing a conscious of self is vital for congruence (HERI, 1996), which is also connected to the findings of this study in terms of how undergraduate fraternity New Member Educators experienced and understood themselves as leaders and related it to their organization and their organization's values. While these two connections are specifically made to the conceptual frameworks used in this study, I felt there are other connections that can be made to this component and finding with current literature.

Moreover, in chapter two, the current literature related to hazing and student organizations was discussed. Allan and Madden (2008) concluded it is important to design hazing intervention and prevention programs that are based on research and whose effectiveness are assessed. This is because 47% of students who were participants in their study had experienced hazing prior to coming to college which may then play a role in their expectation of

being hazed within organizations that they join when they arrive in college (Allan & Madden, p. 38). Additionally, they recommended interventions need to be more substantial than just one-time presentations or sharing of anti-hazing policies. Instead, they proposed interventions should include many other recommendations with one being, develop the leadership skills of members who can manage change resistance within their organization (Allan & Madden, p. 39). The recommendation of developing the leadership skills of members who can manage change within their organization aligned with this component of congruence where the men sought out congruence and accountability in their leadership roles with organizational values and sought to create the future of their fraternities (organizations).

As denoted in chapter four, one of the changes the men identified that needed to be made to fraternities into the future was eliminating hazing practices within these organizations as well as other changes to make fraternities relevant into the future. Campo et al. (2005) determined a more holistic approach to addressing hazing behaviors within organizations needs to be taken than what is currently being taken.

A suggestion they made was to involve students in the process of change. This study affirmed the men in the study understood their role as New Member Educators included ultimately creating the future of their organizations and thus had a vested interest in creating change within their organizations to make them more congruent with the stated values of their fraternity. In terms of change, there are various types of literature related to change theory that can be connected and synthesized with the components and findings of this study. One change theory, Kotter (1996) is an eight-stage process for leading change and transforming organizations. This process is foundationally built upon the notion that major change within organizations does not happen easily. The eight-stage process Kotter used to describe how

organizations can lead change included the following steps: establishing a sense of urgency, creating the guiding coalition, developing a vision and strategy, communicating the vision for change, empower for broad based action (removing obstacles to change), creating short term wins, building on the change, and anchoring the change in the culture of the organization. I believed congruence is most closely tied to developing a vision and strategy for change within these organizations as the strategy and vision for fraternities, as organizations founded and promoting a certain set of values amongst members is that the leadership within these organizations should be working toward this alignment of congruent behavior with stated values of the organizations.

In terms of change specific to fraternity and sorority organizations specifically, the literature determined that there was limited research focused upon member-based organizations undergoing long-term change initiatives within the fraternity/sorority movement (Reuter & Backer, 2015). Reuter and Backer (2015) reviewed the literature on organizational change theory and developed a suggested model to facilitate transformational change to be used within the context of fraternities and sororities. The model for implementing change in the fraternity and sorority movement started with identifying the opportunity and need for change within these organizations (Reuter & Backer, 2015). This literature connected to the component of congruence and the finding related to identifying the need for change as a starting point for these organizations undergoing long-term change initiatives as the New Member Educators within the study understood the need for change within fraternities and saw their role as creating the future of their organizations. Finally, I believed based on the findings in this study, it can be suggested that congruence in leadership is the fifth component to be put forward for consideration for use

within leadership practice and study in terms of how men in these organizations consider their leadership identity and relate it to their fraternity.

### **Recommendations for Future Action and Practice**

This study focused on how undergraduate fraternity New Member Educators understood and experienced their role as a leader within their organization as well as how they perceived their role in leading their organization into the future. While research on the leadership identity of members of undergraduate Greek letter organizations is limited as is that of specific positional leadership roles within fraternities, there is much to be learned through these perspectives and lived experiences with leadership and their organization shared by the New Member Educators from this study. The five components overviewed above: modeling, reflection, experience, motivation, and congruence can form a basis for areas recommended for future action and practice.

### **Greater Emphasis on the Leadership Development of Undergraduate Fraternity New Member Educators**

Due to many of the tragedies laid out in chapter one of this dissertation as well as a variety of other influences, prior to the global pandemic of 2020, there was a focus and emphasis by (inter)national fraternal organizations on new member education structure. This included the standardization of new member education, the development of pilot new member education programs, new policies and on longer term membership development programs.

This study did not examine the effectiveness of some of these shifts on hazing behavior, attitudes, the impact of these initiatives, congruence of fraternal behavior with stated values of the organizations or overall fraternal culture. However, it is recommended based on the findings of this study there should be future emphasis on the development of individual student leaders

serving in the New Member Educator role within a fraternal organization. This may include intensive support, accountability, and the offering of specific leadership development experiences.

Additionally, it is recommended that a forum for discussion, in some manner is provided for the leaders within the New Member Educator position. This forum should provide them with the opportunity to reflect on their previous leadership experiences and how that relates to this specific position within their organization. These recommendations may prove to need to in some cases be individualized, and time intensive. Yet based on the conversations with the men in the study this could have potential alongside some of the other changes that are being pursued related to new member education.

Furthermore, providing the men in fraternities who are leading new member education programs the opportunity to connect with their peers in the same position from other chapters within the same organization to discuss some of the current challenges is recommended. The participants in the study referenced their experiences at the New Member Educator Institute where they were able to engage in honest conversations related to their new member education programs and be challenged by alumni volunteers and their peers. This is recommended to provide the opportunity for New Member Educators to build coalitions toward positive change in their organizations.

Additionally, findings illustrated individual values (consciousness of self, congruence, and commitment) and group values (collaboration) were connected to the Social Change Model of Leadership Development. However, the men in this study did not ultimately move through the model to create change for a better world, society, for the self, and others as the leadership development model ascribes. It is recommended leadership development programs for men in

the New Member Educator position—as well as fraternity men in general—continue to focus on the broader roles men can play as leaders in society: the responsibility to create a greater good outside of their fraternities.

### **Development of A Process and Pipeline for Identifying Leaders Within Chapters to Serve in The New Member Educator Role**

It is recommended inter(national) organizations, chapters, and or universities develop a process for identifying a leadership pipeline for prospective leaders within a chapter to serve in whatever the New Member Educator role becomes in the future.

This study had participants whose views of new member education seemed to be in alignment with the values of the organization. It seemed they understood the importance of congruence of their programs and actions with those values. A process and pipeline for identifying leaders within the chapter to serve in the New Member Educator role can be done through emerging leadership programs, nomination processes through the chapters, or other ways to identify emerging leaders for this role. Alumni Advisors, or university fraternity advisors may work to develop plans with the chapter for the development of these leaders within these chapters.

### **Maximize the Opportunity for Undergraduate Fraternity Leaders to Reflect on Their Leadership Experiences**

It is recommended (inter)national organizations, universities, chapters, and alumni advisors work to find forums for undergraduate student leaders in fraternities to reflect on their previous leadership experiences. These reflections might focus on how those leadership experiences translate into and contribute to their current leadership roles. It is recommended that members of fraternities in leadership roles be given this opportunity to reflect on and make

meaning out of these experiences and be challenged to make connections amongst their understanding of leadership prior to and during their time in a leadership role within their fraternity (for example, in the New Member Educator positions).

### **Engage Undergraduate Members in Assisting with The Development of Changes Being Made to New Member Education**

The participants in this study were not in denial regarding the changes that they saw needed to be made to fraternities in order to remain relevant into the future and in many cases were on board with creating and developing change. They were able to articulate clearly what changes they saw needed to be made. They also were able to articulate why it was important to make change for the future. Yet, change often was viewed as happening to them by universities and their (inter)national organization.

Finally, it is recommended universities and inter(national) organizations engage and include undergraduate members in the development of changes and solutions related to new member education processes and programs whenever they develop new initiatives, programs, interventions, and policies that affect these students.

### **Recommendations for Future Research/Study**

The literature demonstrated most studies on leadership development focus on short-term programs instead of on the evolution and development of leadership identity and capacity to develop and change over time (Komives et al., 2005). Limited literature was found on specific leadership positions within the fraternal experience or the development of leadership identity amongst members within these organizations. This study sought to contribute research by not only focusing on building on the current research on the development of a leadership identity, but also contributing on this development of a leadership identity for a specific leadership



position within fraternities. This was done by looking at a leadership role that may have the capacity to influence change within these organizations. Additionally, this study was limited in scope and focused on a historically white organization and only studied one organization (Delta Delta Alpha). Similar to the recommendations for future action and practice, the five components overviewed above derived from the findings within this study: modeling, reflection, experience, motivation, and congruence can form a basis for areas recommended for future research and study.

### **Research on Additional Fraternal Organizations**

It is recommended additional and similar research be completed on different organizations. This study included interviews with nine participants from just one fraternity (Delta Delta Alpha). Similar studies on the experience of undergraduate fraternity New Member Educators concerning their leadership identity as it relates to their organization should be undertaken. Additional and similar studies could be completed in the same realm with other positional leadership roles within fraternal organizations. For example, the President, the Recruitment Chairman, and Alumni Advisors.

### **Longitudinal Studies on Leadership Identity Development of Undergraduate Fraternity Members**

It is recommended longitudinal studies on the leadership identity development of undergraduate fraternity members be completed. This could, perhaps, begin when individuals join the organizations through their time in their chapters and help create a broader understanding of leadership identity development. Longitudinal studies could provide additional literature and insight into the impact of the organization on the leadership identity of fraternity

men. Additional research could take place outside of college for fraternity men to examine their experiences concerning their leadership identity outside of the college environment.

### **Effectiveness on Leadership Development Interventions**

While many of the interventions fraternities have recently developed and instituted related to New Member Education may have been measured internally, it is recommended additional comprehensive research be completed on some of these leadership interventions related to New Member Education. Examples include as shortened new member education programs, leadership development programs like the New Member Educator's Institute, etc. This could add to the research and literature on undergraduate fraternities, leadership development, hazing interventions, and more.

### **Ethics and Leadership Development Regarding Fraternities**

Komives, Lucas, and McMahon (2013) defined leadership development as the process an individual goes through which involves knowing, being, and doing. Knowing is understanding yourself, the way change occurs, and how you and others view things differently. Being is becoming an ethical, principled, authentic, open, and caring individual. Doing is acting in socially responsible ways congruently and consistently in community with others related to your commitments and passions. This study did not assume participants and their organizations leadership and values were ethical. Therefore, additional research needs to be completed on ethics as they relate to the leadership development of fraternity men.

There is limited literature on the connections between ethics and the leadership development of fraternity men. Nor is there research on how ethics and the fraternity experience impact the ethical and moral development of undergraduate fraternity men. This additional

research will add to the literature on the ways in which undergraduate fraternity men understand and experience their leadership identity in relation to their organizations' ethics.

### **Impact of COVID-19 on Leadership Within Fraternities**

The COVID-19 Pandemic of 2020 changed the experiences of leadership in fraternities due to how they have had to adjust operations this past year. Future research should be completed about how undergraduate fraternity men's leadership identities related to their organizations changed during the COVID-19 pandemic.

### **Conclusion**

*"I believe in the college fraternity, creator of friendships. I believe in its quick-sympathies and it's helping hand. I believe in its brave idealism, stirring every valiant emotion, rousting every potential talent. I believe in its compelling drive for sound scholarship, for genuine culture, for clear-eyed honesty, for business integrity. I believe in the college fraternity, maker of men."*

*- Arthur Priest*

This dissertation began by pointing out fraternities and sororities are organizations founded upon a set of standards and values, to be upheld by their members (Earley, 1998). The recent incidents and challenges with fraternities have demonstrated a clear disconnect between the stated values of the organizations and actions of their membership. Amidst all of this, I still truly believe the fraternity experience can be a powerful one for undergraduate college men. The journey of conducting this study, as well as the findings within the study, only reaffirmed this for me. As a novice IPA researcher, having the opportunity to listen to, interpret, and co-construct the lived experiences of the participants concerning their leadership identity in relation to their fraternity allowed me to continue to understand and explore the impact of these organizations on a fraternity man's leadership development. Utilizing IPA as a methodological approach allowed

me the opportunity to understand the ways in which these organizations can relate to the leadership identity development of undergraduate college men.

The purpose of this study was to focus on how undergraduate fraternity New Member Educators understood and experienced their roles as leaders within their organizations, as well as how they perceived their role in leading their organizations into the future. This study achieved that purpose and created a path for further research. These findings contribute to the continued investigation and examination of the leadership identity development of undergraduate fraternity men. Additionally, it is my hope there is an increased investment of time and energy into leadership development of undergraduate fraternity men by the institutions and organizations that host and guide them.

Finally, I hope this study makes a contribution to new member education within these organizations. I also hope this contribution assists these organizations to exist, thrive, evolve, change, and be increasingly relevant for future generations of undergraduate college men.

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## APPENDICES

### **Appendix A: Participant Recruitment E-Mail**

Hello, my name is Keith Lopez and I am currently a doctoral candidate in the Higher Education Leadership program at Colorado State University. I am conducting a qualitative study on the leadership identity of undergraduate fraternity New Member Educators.

My study is motivated by my passion for the undergraduate fraternity experience as well as new member education and a desire to greater understand the ways in which New Member Educators understand their own leadership identity as it relates to their role within their organization.

I will conduct my research beginning in fall 2019. For the study, I am looking for members of this organization who meet the following criteria:

- Attended the New Member Educators Institute during the summer of 2019
- Are and an initiated member of the organization
- Elected New Member Educator for their respective chapter for the fall 2019 or spring 2020 semesters
- Are third- or fourth-year level college students

As part of the research study, participants will first indicate interest in being a part of the study by responding to this e-mail. From there, interested parties will be sent a short questionnaire on their own understanding of their leadership identity development. Interest and completion of the questionnaire does not indicate acceptance into the study. Of those that indicate interest and complete the questionnaire 8-15 will be selected at random to participate in the study and participate in an approximate 90-minute individual interview.

Upon being selected for the study, the informed consent process will commence which will outline in detail the timeline, confidentiality, and process for this study for you. After completion of all the interviews, participants will receive a \$40 gift certificate to the [Delta Delta Alpha] Store as a small token of my appreciation for your participation. Please do not hesitate to contact me via email, [lopez.keith@gmail.com](mailto:lopez.keith@gmail.com) and/or my cell at XXX-XXX-XXXX if you have any questions about this study or your participation therein.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,  
Keith T. Lopez

## **Appendix B: Initial Participant Questionnaire**

The initial participant questionnaire will consist of the following questions:

1. Define leadership as it relates to yourself.
2. When in your life did you realize you were a leader?
3. On a scale of 1-10, rate yourself as a leader and explain why.

## **Appendix C: Informed Consent**

Consent to Participate in a Research Study

Colorado State University

**TITLE OF STUDY:** LEADERSHIP IDENTITY: AN INTERPRETIVE PHENOMONOLOGICAL ANALYSIS OF HOW UNDERGRADUATE FRATERNITY NEW MEMBER EDUCATORS UNDERSTAND AND EXPERIENCE LEADERSHIP

**Principal Investigator:** Linda Kuk, Ph.D., Higher Education Leadership in the School of Education, XXX-XXX-XXXX, Email: Linda.Kuk@colostate.edu

**CO-Principal Investigator:** Keith Lopez, Doctoral Student, Higher Education Leadership in the School of Education, Telephone: XXX-XXX-XXXX, Email: lopez.keith@gmail.com

### **WHY AM I BEING INVITED TO TAKE PART IN THIS RESEARCH?**

You are being asked to participate in this study because you meet the following criteria for participation in the study:

- Attended the New Member Educators Institute during the summer of 2019
- Are and an initiated member of the organization
- Elected New Member Educator for their respective chapter for the fall 2019 or spring 2020 semester
- Are third or fourth year level college students

### **WHO IS DOING THE STUDY?**

I along with my doctoral advisor will be conducting this research as part of my doctoral program dissertation requirements.

### **WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THIS STUDY?**

The purpose of this study will focus on how New Member Educators understand and experience their role as a leader within their organization as well as how they perceive their role in leading their organization into the future. Overall, the overarching question of this study is the following: What is the experience of undergraduate fraternity New Member Educators concerning their leadership identity in relation to their organization?

### **WHERE IS THE STUDY GOING TO TAKE PLACE AND HOW LONG WILL IT LAST?**

If you agree to participate in this study, your participation will commence in spring 2019. Your participation will require approximately 3 hours in total. Your participation will consist of an initial, brief online questionnaire and one interview via an online video conference. After the 90-minute interview has been transcribed, the co-principal investigator will send the transcript to the participants to verify the data and to ensure that their perspective and meaning-making has been accurately portrayed. This includes checking with the participants on the context of the interview



and what was said in the interview. At this point, after sending them the transcript, the co-principal investigator will follow up to verify the accuracy of the data via a phone call in the case that they do not hear back from the participants.

### **WHAT WILL I BE ASKED TO DO?**

If you agree to participate in this study, the co-principal investigator will ask you to participate in the following activities:

- Have completed the initial questionnaire in order to indicate interest in participating in the study
- Participate in (1) recorded, video individual interview: Approximately 90 minutes in length. (Each participant will need to have access to a computer with a camera in order to participate in the video interviews.)
- Review transcript of interview to ensure that answers to questions, data and meaning making have been captured accurately

All interviews will consist of a series of open-ended questions that focus on your experiences with leadership as a New Member Educator within your fraternal organization. All of the interviews will be recorded and transcribed and you will have the opportunity to clarify, expand or edit any of your responses during the review process. Should you not want to be recorded or wish to stop recording, you may say so at any time and opt to submit written answers instead with the condition that the PI or co-PI can contact you for further clarification or questions.

### **WHAT ARE THE POSSIBLE RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS?**

The study poses minimal risks. Individual participants will not be identified, individual, organizational, and institutional identities will remain explicitly confidential unless the research participant provides consent to publish identifying characteristics.

It is not possible to identify all potential risks in research procedures, but the researcher(s) have taken reasonable safeguards to minimize any known and potential, but unknown, risks.

### **ARE THERE ANY BENEFITS FROM TAKING PART IN THIS STUDY?**

Participation in this study will result in positive contributions to the study of leadership identity of undergraduate fraternity New Member Educators that potentially will lead to continued research on positional leadership within undergraduate fraternal organizations as well as additional research in the area. Additionally, completing the initial questionnaire and completing the interview will provide the participants the opportunity to complete some in-depth reflection and meaning making of their own leadership and make connections and reflections with the experience serving as a New Member Educator for their fraternity

### **DO I HAVE TO TAKE PART IN THE STUDY?**

Your participation in this research is voluntary. If you decide to participate in the study, you may withdraw your consent and stop participating at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

### **WHO WILL SEE THE INFORMATION THAT I GIVE?**

We will keep private all research records that identify you, to the extent allowed by law.

For this study, we will assign a pseudonym to your data (provide example) so that the only place your name will appear in our records is on the consent and in a researcher notebook that identifies participants. Only the research team will have access to the link between you and your data. The only exceptions to this are if we are asked to share the research files for audit purposes with the CSU Institutional Review Board ethics committee, if necessary. When we write about the study to share with other researchers, we will write about the combined information we have gathered. You will not be identified in these written materials. We may publish the results of this study; however, we will keep your name and other identifying organizational information private.

### **WILL I RECEIVE ANY COMPENSATION FOR TAKING PART IN THIS STUDY?**

After completion of all the interviews, participants will receive a \$40 gift certificate to the online store for your fraternal organization as a small token of my appreciation for your participation.

### **WHAT IF I HAVE QUESTIONS?**

Before you decide whether to accept this invitation to take part in the study, please ask any questions that might come to mind now. Later, if you have questions about the study, you can contact Keith Lopez at [lopez.keith@gmail.com](mailto:lopez.keith@gmail.com) or via cell: XXX-XXX-XXXX. If you have any questions about your rights as a volunteer in this research, contact the CSU IRB at: [RICRO\\_IRB@mail.colostate.edu](mailto:RICRO_IRB@mail.colostate.edu); 970-491-1553. We will send you a copy of this informed research consent form.

### **WHAT ELSE DO I NEED TO KNOW?**

Your signature acknowledges that you have read the information stated and willingly sign this consent form. Your signature also acknowledges that you have received, on the date signed, a copy of this document containing 3 pages.

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Signature of person agreeing to take part in the study

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Date

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Printed name of person agreeing to take part in the study

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Name of person providing information to participant

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Date

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Signature of Research Staff

## **Appendix D: Interview Protocol**

### **Interview**

Approximately 90 minutes

The interview will be semi-structured and in-depth. The following questions will be asked of all participants in the interview. Follow-up questions not on this list will be asked in reference to anything the participants say for clarification purposes.

1. Tell me about yourself and why you chose to join a fraternity.
2. In what ways would you describe yourself as a leader?
3. How would you describe how you came to know yourself as a leader?
4. Please share one or two personal experiences with leadership both within and outside of your fraternity.
5. Tell me about why you chose to be and the process for becoming the New Member Educator for your fraternity chapter.
6. How would you describe your role as New Member Educator?
7. Tell me about your growth and development as a leader in the New Member Educator role.
8. Tell me about the values of your fraternity and what they mean to you.
9. Through holding a position within your chapter, in what ways (if any) do you relate to the stated values of your organization?
10. Thinking about your role as a leader, how do you view the stated values of your fraternity as related to the behavior of members within the organization or within your own fraternity experience?
11. How would you describe how the values of the organization relate to your role as New Member Educator?
12. How would you describe the purpose of new member education?
13. As a New Member Educator, what do you see as your role in leading the future of your chapter?
14. What changes (if any) do you think need to be made within your fraternity or fraternities in general moving forward?