

Learning Communities in Greek Houses

Sean Stephen Blackburn

Thesis submitted to the faculty of

Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

MASTERS OF ARTS IN EDUCATION

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP AND POLICY STUDIES

Key Words:

Greek, Fraternities, Housing, Sororities, and Learning Communities

Dr. Steven M. Janosik, Chairperson

Dr. Cathryn Turrentine

Dr. Gerard J. Kowalski

April 22, 2003

Blacksburg, Virginia

Learning Communities in Greek Houses

Sean Stephen Blackburn

Abstract

The purpose of this study was to examine the degree to which Greeks living in Greek housing experience outcomes associated with living in a learning community.

Additionally, the study explored differences in the degree to which these outcomes were achieved by type of house (fraternity v. sorority) and type of control (university vs. private). Data were collected by administering the Learning Communities Assessment (LCA; Turrentine, 2001) to Greek students living in fraternity and sorority houses at a major research institution in the mid-Atlantic region of the U.S.

Specifically, the study was designed to address the following research questions:

1. To what extent do Greek students feel actively engaged in their communities as measured by the LCA?
2. To what extent do Greek students learn within their communities as measured by the LCA?
3. To what extent do Greek students feel a sense of community as measured by the LCA?
4. To what extent do Greek students feel their identity has been shaped by their community as measured by the LCA?
5. Are there differences in the extent to which Greek students feel actively engaged, learn, feel a sense of community, and feel their identity has been shaped by their community by type of house (sorority v. fraternity) as measured by the LCA?
6. Are there differences in the extent to which male Greek students feel actively engaged, learn, feel a sense of community, and feel their identity has been shaped by their community by type of control (university v. private) as measured by the LCA?

Table of Contents

Chapter One: Introduction	1
In-Class Learning	2
Out-of-Class Learning	2
Learning Communities	4
Greek Housing	5
Purpose of the Study	6
Research Questions	6
Significance of the study	7
Delimitations	8
Organization of the Study	9
Chapter Two: Literature Review	10
Learning Communities	10
Effects of Learning Communities	10
Discussions of Pedagogy and Educational Philosophy	11
Models and Designs of Learning Communities	11
Brower and Dettinger Model	11
Shapiro and Levine Model	14
Greek Students	15
Alcohol Consumption	15
Retention	16
Greeks and Their Communities	16
Greeks and Learning	17
Greeks and Identity	18
Chapter Three: Methods	21
Sample Selection	21
Instrumentation	24
Validity and Reliability	25
Data Collection Procedures	27
Data Analysis Procedures	28

Chapter Four: Results	30
Reliability	30
Results	30
Research Question 5	34
Research Question 6	39
Chapter Five: Discussion	46
Discussion of Results for All Greek Students	46
Research Question 5	47
Research Question 6	48
Research Observations	49
Additional Analysis	51
Conclusion	52
Future Research	55
Implications for Practice	56
References	57

Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to my future wife Sarah, who gives greater purpose to my work,
and provides me with a constant reminder of God's rich blessings.

List of Tables

Table 1: Characteristics of the Respondent Group	31
Table 2: Mean Scores and Standard Deviations for All Respondents	32
Table 3: Mean Scores and Standard Deviations by Type of House (Fraternity vs. Sorority)	35
Table 4: T-test Results for All Survey Items by Type of House (Fraternity vs. Sorority)	37
Table 5: Mean Scores and Standard Deviations for Males by Control (University vs. Private)	40
Table 6: T-test Results for Male Respondents for All Survey Items by Type of House Control (University vs. Private)	42
Table 7: Differences in Mean LCA Scores Between On-Campus Fraternity and Sorority Women	53

List of Figures

Figure 1. Brower and Dettinger Model of Learning Communities

13

List of Appendices

Appendix A: Learning Communities Assessment (LCA), (Turrentine, 2001)	60
Appendix B: Protocol Form	63

Chapter One

Introduction

The 1994 Student Learning Imperative (SLI; American College Personnel Association [ACPA]) called for many reforms to higher education. Fundamentally, it was a call for all college administrators to return the focus of the profession to student learning. Student affairs professionals and academic personnel were asked to collaborate across disciplines with the goal of forming seamless learning environments. This is not a new direction for the profession but one that has been reemphasized, most recently in the SLI (Bloland, 1996).

The SLI was developed from the American College Personnel Association President Charles Schroeder's address at the 1993 ACPA national conference. He spoke of "returning to our roots, to our espoused values, to our deeply held convictions about students and that we commit now to focusing our efforts on student learning" (Bloland, 1996, p. 6). Following the conference, Schroeder appointed a blue ribbon committee comprised of many prominent researchers in the field of student affairs to draft a document expressing this focus. Alexander Astin, Helen Astin, Paul Bloland, Patricia Cross, James Hurst, George Kuh, Theodore Marchese, Elizabeth Nuss, Ernest Pascarella, Anne Pruitt, Michael Rooney, and Charles Schroeder drafted a document to "stimulate discussion and debate on how student affairs professionals could intentionally create the conditions that enhance student learning and personal development" (Bloland, p.1).

Six main principles were proposed in the final version of the SLI.

1. The hallmarks of a college-educated person should include complex cognitive skills and a clear sense of identity.
2. The concepts of learning and student development are linked.
3. Experiences both in the classroom and out of the class contribute to learning.
4. People, physical space, and socio-cultural environments all interact to affect learning.
5. Knowledge and understanding are critical to student success.
6. Student affairs professionals are educators with a responsibility to create environments that lead to success. (Bloland, 1996)

The SLI challenged student affairs professionals at colleges and universities to develop seamless learning environments focused on student learning and academic success. These learning environments link in-class and out-of-class experiences to reinforce and enrich the academic environment and bring about greater learning (Bloland, 1996).

Alexander Astin has spent his professional career researching the effects of involvement and peer groups on students' in-class and out-of-class success. His research has found that there is no greater effect or predictor of academic and collegiate success than involvement and peer groups (Astin, 1996). Involvement and peer groups play a heavy role in both in-class and out-of-class learning.

In-Class Learning

There are many in-class activities that promote learning. Lecturing is the classic approach used in most higher education classrooms (Bonwell & Eison, 1991). Material from lectures is typically reinforced with a combination of assignments (written and oral), projects, group work, and class discussions.

These reinforcing activities have been grouped together as more active forms of learning. Current research suggests that students prefer active learning techniques and from them learn more thinking and writing skills when compared to lectures (Bonwell & Eison, 1991).

Other active learning techniques include case studies, cooperative learning, debates, drama and role-playing, and peer teaching. Regardless of the activity, student learning is improved when students read, write, discuss, solve problems, and "engage in higher-order thinking tasks of analysis, synthesis and evaluation" (Bonwell & Eison, 1991, p 2).

Lectures and active learning activities promote student learning within the classroom. As the SLI indicated, out-of-class experiences also promote student learning and development.

Out-of-Class Learning

Six different areas of out-of-class activities and their effects on student learning have been studied. These are inter-collegiate athletics, employment, faculty interaction, peer interaction, on-campus residence halls, and fraternities and sororities. These

represent the main areas of research in out-of-classroom activities (Terenzini, Pascarella, & Blimling, 1996).

Students engaged in inter-collegiate athletics experience no academic advantage over their non-athlete peers once pre-college aptitude is controlled (Terenzini et al., 1996). This finding holds true both for revenue sports that generate the majority of athletic funding and also for non-revenue sports. Some research indicates sport-specific negative effects for male athletes participating in football and basketball (Pascarella, Bohr, Nora, & Terenzini, 1995). These negative effects include a decline on measures of reading comprehension and math skills during their first year.

The effects of employment on student learning vary by type of employment (Astin, 1993). Studies have found that full-time employment has a negative effect on grade point average. Part-time employment off-campus has similar effects on grade point average as full-time employment regardless of location. However, part-time on-campus work has some positive effects on cognitive and affective growth for students. More research is needed to further differentiate these activities and their effects on student learning.

Out-of-class faculty interaction has been positively linked with student learning. Students who engage in out-of-class learning activities with faculty members self-report greater gains in many academic and cognitive areas (Astin, 1993; Wilson, Wood, & Gaff, 1974). Questions remain however, about whether successful students are drawn to more out-of-class interaction with faculty or if this experience produces academic gains in less successful students (Terenzini et al., 1996).

Peer interaction, when focused on educational or intellectual activities, generally produces academic and cognitive gains for students (Terenzini et al., 1996). These interactions can occur in many ways and settings but generally produce positive outcomes when centered on academic projects, homework, or studying. This is especially true for peer teaching and tutoring. However, not all peer interaction has been found to benefit students academically or cognitively. Time spent socializing, partying, and even doing community service has been found to affect academic success negatively (Astin, 1993).

Studies examining the relationship between student learning and living in residence halls represent the largest portion of literature on out-of-class activities. Most research, when pre-college aptitude is controlled, finds no advantage or disadvantage for students living in residence halls (Blimling, 1989; Terenzini et al., 1996). Only a small advantage develops for students living in the residence halls versus fraternity and sorority housing and off-campus. However, the majority of studies that suggest these findings fail to control for pre-college aptitude.

Current literature on learning communities within residence halls suggests some advantage for residents over off-campus students and residents of traditional residence hall programs. These advantages for learning community residents, however, are indirect and relate to retention and integration into the college environment (Terenzini et al., 1996).

The effects of fraternity and sorority membership on learning are not conclusively known, but generally lead to negative academic results such as lower GPAs (Terenzini et al., 1996). This is especially true for White males and for first year students. Women and African American males who are members of Greek organizations experience slightly less negative effects (Tripp, 1997). Retention within college is perhaps the greatest advantage academically for members of fraternities and sororities (Terenzini et al., 1996). Retention is a benefit enjoyed by students who stay in college and persist to graduation.

Learning Communities

Learning communities have been developed as an out-of-class opportunity to combine in-class and out-of-class learning. Most current research on learning communities reports positive outcomes for student participants (Pike, 1999). Students living in residential learning communities have significantly higher levels of involvement, faculty interaction, and general integration into collegiate life than do students living in traditional residence halls. These students also report making “greater gains in general education than did traditional residence halls students” (Pike, 1999, p. 280).

There are many definitions and models for learning communities. Most can be summarized into one of the following six types: (a) Freshmen Interest Groups (FIGS), (b)

Linked Courses, (c) Clusters, (d) Coordinated Studies, (e) Federated Learning Communities and (f) Residentially Based Programs (Lazar, 2002).

Freshmen Interest Groups (FIGS) are small groups of freshmen that enroll together in large classes. They meet weekly with an advisor who encourages students to provide each other with a support network throughout their first year (Lazar, 2002).

Linked Courses are two or more classes related by content or skill development with varying numbers of student participants. The common content or skill development encourages students to work together in a given academic area (Shapiro & Levine, 1999).

Clusters create cohorts of 25 to 30 students in two to four theme, issue, problem, or context related classes over a semester. This is an expanded version of linked courses (Lazar, 2002).

Coordinated Studies integrate students into specific curricular programs with block schedules, seminars, and a high degree of faculty involvement (Lazar, 2002). These tend to remain within specified academic colleges or departments.

Federated Learning Communities use three or four topic-related courses and a weekly seminar to bring students together for academic discussions. A master learner, typically a faculty member without classes, leads these discussions and encourages student learning (Lazar, 2002).

Residentially-Based Programs combine in-class activities and study within a common residence. Students participate in the same courses, area of study, or other curricular programs while living together. This creates opportunities for interaction among students both in-class and out-of-class (Shapiro & Levine, 1999).

Greek Housing

One specific type of residential setting for learning communities is Greek housing. While it often lacks a structured curricular program, most houses have academic goals, projects, and services to support their members' academic success. Co-curricular by design, these houses have not been studied widely as learning communities (K. Wooldridge, personal communication, October 11, 2002).

For purposes of this study, Greek housing was defined as a closed living environment (usually a house or residence hall) occupied exclusively by Greek students in the same Greek letter organization. Typically, this takes the form of a fraternity or

sorority house on campus or in the surrounding college town. These are single residences separate and detached from other structures open only to members of the particular organization and their guests.

Greek students are only one subgroup of a larger campus community engaged in academic and co-curricular activities. Many colleges and universities encourage participation in varying opportunities to enhance co-curricular activities through learning communities, student organizations, and student employment.

In summary, student learning can be promoted within the classroom (Bonwell & Eison, 1991), with out-of-the-classroom activities (Terenzini et al., 1996), and within learning communities (Pike, 1999, p. 280). The challenge issued by the SLI has led many colleges and universities to develop learning communities as one answer to combining in-class and out-of-class learning experiences to improve student learning. Many of the residential settings for learning communities have been studied, except Greek housing.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine the degree to which Greeks living in Greek housing experience outcomes associated with living in a learning community. Additionally, the study explored differences in the degree to which these outcomes were achieved by type of house (fraternity v. sorority) and type of control (university vs. private). Data were collected by administering the Learning Communities Assessment (LCA; Turrentine, 2001) to Greek students living in fraternity and sorority houses at a major research institution in the mid-Atlantic region of the U.S.

Research Questions

Specifically, the study was designed to address the following research questions:

1. To what extent do Greek students feel actively engaged in their communities as measured by the LCA?
2. To what extent do Greek students learn within their communities as measured by the LCA?
3. To what extent do Greek students feel a sense of community as measured by the LCA?

4. To what extent do Greek students feel their community as measured by the LCA has shaped their identity?
5. Are there differences in the extent to which Greek students feel actively engaged, learn, feel a sense of community, and feel their identity has been shaped by their community by type of house (sorority v. fraternity) as measured by the LCA?
6. Are there differences in the extent to which male Greek students feel actively engaged, learn, feel a sense of community, and feel their identity has been shaped by their community by type of control (university v. private) as measured by the LCA?

Significance of the Study

The present study had significance for future practice and research. In terms of practice, one group likely to benefit from the results of this study were Greek Life officers who oversee Greek housing operations. The results provided additional information about these communities to Greek Life officers. Greek Life officers might use this information to assess the degree to which their Greek housing operations are promoting the ideals of learning communities.

This study was also significant for university housing officers working with Greek students. The results of this study provided them with a greater understanding of the Greek population. University housing officers might use this information when planning new programs or services for their residents.

National fraternity officers working with local Greek houses might also be interested in this study. The results of this study provided more information about the extent to which learning occurs within fraternity and sorority houses. National fraternity officers might use this information with their chapter consultants who advise Greek students on how to operate successful houses.

This study also had significance for future research. My study looked at the ways in which Greek students felt their housing unit was a learning community. Future studies may examine other student developmental issues within Greek housing such as social or cognitive development. Such studies would broaden the base of information about Greek students living in Greek housing.

My study reviewed the ways in which Greeks were benefiting from the learning community within their houses. Future studies may examine other benefits such as retention for students living in Greek housing. Such studies would help expand the knowledge of how Greek membership affects outcomes for Greek students.

Another study might explore the issue of transition into and out of Greek housing. My study examined the extent to which a Greek student's identity was shaped by his or her community. A large part of any domicile transition for students is reflected in identity. Such a study would expand the general knowledge of Greek students and their transition into and out of Greek housing.

Delimitations

Despite great care taken when designing this research, the present study had some initial delimitations. The first dealt with the sample. This study only examined Greek students in Greek housing at one university. It is possible that Greeks on this campus differed in some way from Greeks at other campuses. If so, the results may have been affected in an unknown manner.

A second delimitation also relates to the sample of this study. The chapters were voluntary participants versus non-volunteers. It is possible that the chapters that volunteered for this study may have differed from those that did not. If so, the results may have been affected.

A third sample delimitation were students who may not have been candid in their responses to the instrument. If so, this may have affected the results of the study in some way.

The final sample delimitation was the voluntary participants within chapters versus non-volunteers. It is possible that within each selected chapter some members may not have volunteered to participate for some unknown reason. There may be a difference between participants and non-participants within selected chapters that may affect these results in some way.

Finally, the instrument used may have also carried certain limitations. It is possible that the LCA (Turrentine, 2001) did not include all the elements necessary to understand fully the phenomena of learning communities. At the time of this research, no concurrent validity or reliability studies on the LCA had been completed. This may have affected the results in an unpredictable fashion. Additionally, a factor analysis was not conducted on the instrument to show inter-section correlations between questions. The relationships of the items to one another and the constructs themselves have not been rigorously tested.

Despite these delimitations, this study was a worthwhile investigation of learning communities within Greek housing. The data produced by this study added new insight into the literature on both learning communities and fraternity and sorority houses.

Organization of the Study

This study is organized into five chapters. Chapter One introduced the study and its purpose, research questions, significance and delimitations. Chapter Two examines the literature available on the subject of learning communities. Chapter Three reviews the methodology of the study, including the data collection and data analysis techniques. Chapter Four reports the results of the study. Finally, Chapter Five discusses the results and the implications of the study for future practice, research and policy.

Chapter Two

Literature Review

To explore learning communities within Greek housing, first it was necessary to examine the literature on learning communities. Three themes emerged in this review: research on the effects of learning communities; discussions of pedagogy and educational philosophy; and literature on models and designs of learning communities.

To consider learning communities fully within Greek housing, however, it was also necessary to examine the research on Greek students themselves. While the current body of work on Greek students is large and diverse, I reviewed research relating to Greeks and their alcohol consumption, retention, communities, learning, and identity.

Learning Communities

Learning communities are a fairly new concept on college campuses. They appear in a variety of formats and names (Shapiro & Levine, 1999). The following describes some of the literature and research on learning communities in the U.S.

Effects of Learning Communities

Most current research on learning communities reports positive outcomes for student participants. Students living in residential learning communities have significantly higher levels of involvement, interaction, integration, and gains than do students living in residence halls managed in the traditional fashion. These students also report making “greater gains in general education than did traditional residence hall students” (Pike 1999, p. 280).

However, some scholars have found that living in a residentially based learning community does not directly improve academic achievement for first-year students. Indirectly, however, these students experience enhanced incorporation into college that furthers student success in other ways such as retention and persistence (Pike, Schroeder & Berry, 1997).

There is very limited research on the effects of residential learning communities on student outcomes. Most of the research involves student self-reporting and the effects have not been studied longitudinally. Before results can be generalized more research must be completed (Pike, 1999).

Perhaps there are more explanations, beyond limited and conflicting research, that drive the current discussion on learning communities. Some educators suggest that learning communities are challenging our way of looking at pedagogy and educational philosophy.

Discussions of Pedagogy and Educational Philosophy

A pedagogical debate is taking place between three philosophical models of education. The first, the teacher-centered model involves lectures by knowledgeable sources, presentations, and the giving of knowledge (Palmer, 1997). This model is supported by the knowledge-as-foundation viewpoint that suggests that there is a truth to be learned. Critics of this philosophy claim this produces passive learning and isolation (Cross, 1998).

The second pedagogical model centers on students and active learning. The student-centered model is founded around constructivism and the perspective “that knowledge is actively built by learners as they shape and build mental frameworks to make sense of their environments” (Cross, 1998, p. 5). This second perspective has been used by many as the educational philosophy behind learning communities.

Palmer (1997) suggests a third pedagogical philosophy that centers the process of learning on the subject. Subject-centered learning hopes to “bring students into a community of learning around the subject itself” (p 4). This philosophy has also been a foundation for learning communities.

Some current literature on learning communities suggests models and designs for student affairs professionals who have decided to start programmatic learning communities. These provide both designs and strategies for implementation.

Models and Designs of Learning Communities

Much of the current literature on learning communities proposes models and offers instructions for building these programs (Brower & Dettinger, 1998; Shapiro & Levine, 1999). The flexibility in these different models allows institutions to tailor programs to specific needs and current structures.

Brower and Dettinger Model

Brower and Dettinger’s (1998) model involves three program goals and three elements. The three program goals include promoting ethical responsibility, professional

responsibility, and civic responsibility. The three elements are social elements, academic elements, and physical elements. Goals are the desired outcomes of the model and elements are the different components of the learning community.

Programs that promote ethical responsibility encourage student involvement in norm building exercises and political, ideological, or social justice organizations. These activities help promote the student's development of an ethical framework and social conscience (Brower & Dettinger, 1998).

Learning communities that work to promote professional responsibility connect in-class activities to future professional behaviors. Examples of program activities include group projects on real-world problems, bringing in speakers from the field, and other ways of encouraging forward thinking about current academic studies (Brower & Dettinger, 1998).

Promoting civic responsibility is accomplished by connecting students to their living environment. Program activities include shared governance, volunteer work, and community development activities (Brower & Dettinger, 1998).

The three elements that interact with these three responsibilities within this definition of a learning community are social elements, academic elements, and physical elements. Social elements include opportunities for students to socialize and get to know one another within their community. These include planned and impromptu activities. Academic elements develop from the role of curriculum. Some programs require group registration in classes or community seminars. The physical elements are comprised of living environments, lounges, and closely located classes or buildings identified by certain fields of study (Brower & Dettinger, 1998).

These program goals and elements are merged in a three-dimensional pyramid (see Figure 1) to describe the inter-connected nature of learning communities. The program goals (ethical responsibility, professional responsibility, and civic responsibility) create the sides of the pyramid and the elements (social, academic, and physical) form the bottom corners.

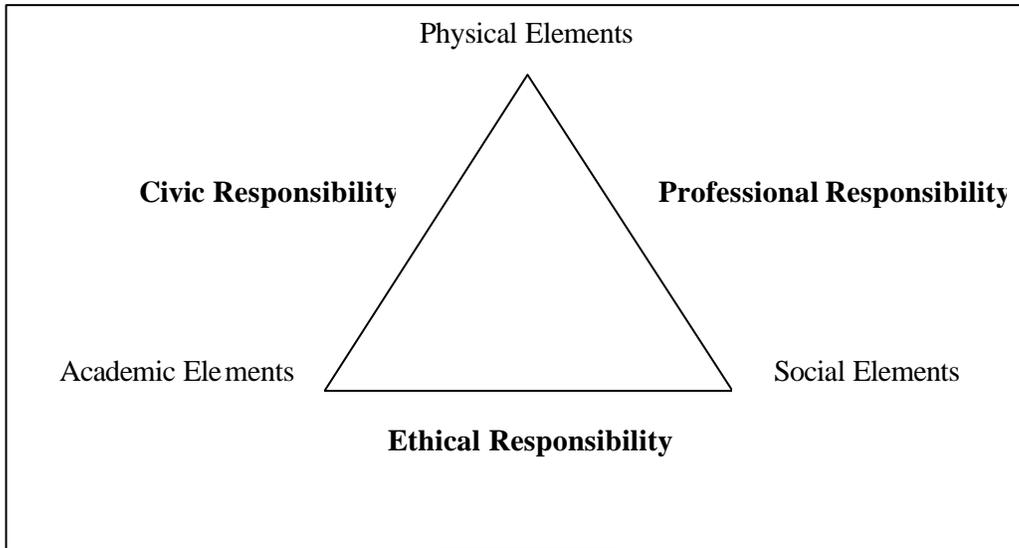


Figure 1. Brower and Dettinger Model of Learning Communities

This model has not yet been researched empirically to review student outcomes for participants. This fairly new area of student affairs will continue to be a topic of interest for programming and research.

Many student affairs personnel feel that new models and a general understanding of learning communities are crucial for proper design and function of these programs (Brower & Dettinger, 1998). The great diversity of institutions and communities also provides increased demand for varied models.

Shapiro and Levine Model

Another model or construct for learning communities involves four primary elements that are used in varying degrees that can be determined based upon program goals and institutional mission. These elements are curricular structure, faculty role, co-curricular opportunities, and opportunities for peer leadership (Shapiro & Levine, 1999).

Issues of curricular structure deal with how the institution chooses to organize and integrate academic courses with students' out-of-the-classroom experience to form learning communities. Some communities may involve students taking related courses, a common seminar, or block schedules where every member takes the same course load (Shapiro & Levine, 1999).

The faculty member's role plays is directly related to issues of curricular structure. Faculty members can be seminar leaders or team-teachers, or they may simply teach a related class with little contact between faculty members (Shapiro & Levine, 1999).

Questions of co-curricular opportunities describe the activities that intend to integrate in-class and out-of-class learning experiences. This includes the elements of the program that link the two and the ways the institution encourages the academic community to grow outside of the classroom (Shapiro & Levine, 1999).

Opportunities for peer leadership refer to the elements that encourage leadership development among community members. These can be officer positions within structures or activities that build leadership such as community service or leadership classes or seminars (Shapiro & Levine, 1999).

These elements change focus and structure within the following varieties of learning communities: paired or clustered courses, cohorts in large courses or FIGs,

team-taught programs and residentially based learning communities (Shapiro & Levine, 1999).

Shapiro and Levine encourage institutions to review their program goals and missions as they consider the role of each element (curricular structure, faculty role, co-curricular opportunities, and opportunities for peer leadership) with the type of learning communities (paired or clustered courses, cohorts in large courses or FIGs, team-taught programs and residentially based learning communities) that best matches their students' academic and co-curricular needs. This model allows for a great number of combinations and focus to meet individual institution missions.

Similar to Brower and Dettinger's model, this conceptualization of learning communities has not yet been tested empirically. Both however provide a good conceptual framework for administrators planning these programs.

This provides an overview of the literature on learning communities but my study examined learning communities among a certain population: student members of Greek letter social organizations. Therefore, it was also important to examine the literature on Greeks.

Greek Students

The examination of learning communities within Greek housing continues with a review of students in Greek letter organizations. Greek students are perhaps one of the most studied populations within colleges and universities. Greeks and their alcohol consumption, retention, communities, learning, and identity are the five broad themes considered in this review

Alcohol Consumption

When compared to their independent peers, the overwhelming conclusion of the literature on Greek students and alcohol consumption remains that Greek students drink more heavily and more frequently than other students (Alva, 1998; Cashin, Presley, & Meilman, 1998; Faulkner, Alcorn, & Garvin, 1989; Goodwin, 1992; Harrington, Brigham, & Clayton, 1999; O'Connor, Cooper, & Theil, 1996). Haworth-Hoepfner, Globetti, Stern and Morasco (1989) found that 47% of Greek students living in Greek housing consider themselves heavy drinkers. New members of fraternities have also

been found to drink more frequently and more heavily than their independent peers (Kuh & Arnold, 1993).

The significant question of causation develops as the dialogue on Greeks and alcohol consumption continues. Research has suggested that high school drinking patterns are a major predictor of college drinking (Goodwin, 1992). More research is needed to determine whether Greek organizations encourage heavy drinking in students who are not disposed to it, or whether students join Greek organizations who are already disposed to heavy drinking.

Retention

Retention is perhaps the greatest academic benefit of Greek membership. Greek members are more likely to stay in college and graduate. The current explanations for this phenomenon are (a) Greek organizations create a system of challenge and support structures for their members, and (b) Astin's involvement theory (Tripp, 1997).

Greek organizations create social as well as programmatic support systems for members. With mutual accountability and social pressure, Greek organizations challenge members to succeed academically (Tripp, 1997). Astin's involvement theory suggests that students who join and become actively involved in extracurricular activities are less likely to drop out because they feel connected to the institution through their Greek organizations (Tripp, 1997).

Greeks and Their Communities

Greek students report higher levels of competition, self-governance and innovation within their Greek living environments than do their independent counterparts. According to a study done at the University of North Dakota where the URES (University Residence Environment Scales) was administered to members of 11 fraternity and 8 sorority houses, Greek students felt higher levels of competition among residents than students living in other housing arrangements. Greek students also felt they played a greater role in the house's management and were innovative within that environment (Parker & Gade, 1981).

The living environments of Greek students have a profound effect on academic success (Winston, Hutson, & McCaffrey, 1980). When researchers looked at academic success in terms of housing they found significant differences based on the environment

established by the Greek organization. After controlling for different academic abilities with SAT scores of entering Greek members, Winston et al. (1980) discovered “that the social environment each fraternity created in its house had an impact on the academic achievement of its members” (p 452). Specifically, organizations that scored lower on the Independence scale, and higher on the Academic Achievement and Intellectuality scale of the University Residence Environment Scale (URES) had better grades than organizations that scored high on the Independence scale and lower on Academic Achievement and Intellectuality scales. Winston et al. (1980) found that fraternity houses with environments that promoted less individuality and more academic and intellectuality growth had students with better academic outcomes.

There are other influences upon learning for Greek students in addition to their living environments. Gender and peer influence also have a profound affect and will be explored next.

Greeks and Learning

The research on Greeks and academic achievement is extensive. However, the results are conflicting. Most studies on the topic find that Greek affiliation “neither helps nor hinders academic performance” (Kaludia & Zatzkin, 1966, p. 284). However, more recent research finds slightly more negative affects for intellectual and cognitive development for Greek students compared to their independent peers (Terenzini et al., 1996).

Research has also indicated that fraternity membership during the first year of college has a significant negative influence on cognitive outcomes for men (Pascarella et al., 1996). Within all four categories of cognitive development (reading comprehension, mathematics, critical thinking, and composite achievement), Greek men lag behind their independent colleagues. Greek women experience less of a disadvantage with reading comprehension and composite achievement than Greek men and their independent peers.

Greek men have lower cumulative grade point averages than do independents. However, Greek women have slightly higher cumulative averages than independent women. Additionally, Greek men and women self-report greater levels of academic effort than their independent counterparts and more involvement with student professional organizations (Pike & Askew, 1990).

Greeks and Identity

There is scant literature on the effects of Greek affiliation on identity. However, discussions on interpersonal values (part of identity) and Greek membership may be related to the effects Greek environments have on identity.

Fraternity men value independence less than non-affiliated men and tend to value leadership more (Hughes & Winston, 1987). Researchers asked questions that looked at independence from family and community members and the ability to make one's own choices. In this study, Greek men expressed less concern for independence and more for leadership.

In the same study, benevolence scales measured service to others, sharing things with others, and being generous (Hughes & Winston, 1987). Fraternity men tend to value benevolence less and shared a homogenous interpersonal value for independence, leadership and benevolence as compared to independent men.

Greek men change less than independent men on several scales of interpersonal values when they remain active with their organizations for four years. These scales are family independence, liberalism, and cultural sophistication. These indicate level of freedom from family, ideological preferences, and knowledge of other cultures and societies (Hughes & Winston, 1987).

Fraternity men change about the same over their four years in college as non-affiliated students in areas of peer independence and social conscience (Hughes & Winston, 1987). These scales judge independence from fellow community members and class mates. Social conscience questions relate to involvement in community and social awareness.

In conclusion, this review of the literature discussed many things including the effects of learning communities. Research has found that most outcomes for students participating in learning communities are positive even if the benefits are indirect (Pike, 1999; Pike et al., 1997).

I also reviewed the pedagogical discussions on how learning communities are challenging the way universities teach and view student learning (Cross, 1998; Palmer, 1997). These discussions will continue as the research describes the outcomes for participants.

The final part of the learning communities section discussed two models for constructing learning communities. One model describes the elements and principles that should form the goals and foundation of the program (Brower & Dettinger, 1998) and the other creates a conceptual framework for learning communities within institutional missions and needs (Shapiro & Levine, 1999).

This review also discussed Greeks and their alcohol consumption, retention, communities, learning, and identity. Greek students drink more heavily and more frequently than their independent peers (Alva, 1998; Cashin et al., 1998; Faulkner et al., 1989; Goodwin, 1992; Harrington et al., 1999; O'Connor et al., 1996). This is especially true for residents of Greek housing (Haworth-Hoepfner et al., 1989) and new members (Kuh & Arnold, 1993). The most significant academic benefit to Greek membership is retention (Tripp, 1997).

Greek students report higher levels of competition, self-governance, and innovation within their Greek living environments than do their independent counterparts (Parker & Gade, 1981). Their living environments also have a profound effect on their academic success (Winston et al., 1980).

The data on Greeks and their learning is not simple. Most research on Greeks and learning found little difference between Greeks and independents (Kaludia & Zarkin, 1966). Some research does indicate minimal negative effects especially for first year men (Pascarella et al., 1996). Pike and Askew (1990) found that Greek men have lower grade point averages (GPA) than their independent peers while Greek women have slightly higher GPAs than independent women. Retention is perhaps the greatest benefit for Greek men and women as they are more likely to graduate college than non-affiliated students (Tripp, 1997).

Fraternity men value independence less than non-affiliated men and tend to value leadership more. Greek men also tend to change less on scales of interpersonal values than independents (Hughes & Winston, 1987).

As the pedagogical discussion on teaching and student learning are a focus of academic affairs and models of learning communities are built and studied by student affairs professionals, one can not help but wonder: where to next? With a lack of empirical research on learning communities many questions are left unanswered.

With alcohol and retention the focus of most research on Greek students there is only limited knowledge of their academic, identity, and community needs. The development of the SLI by the American College Personal Association recognized many different influences upon student learning, and challenge student affairs professionals to look deeper.

The research on learning communities and Greek students establish an interesting similarity between the two. Both Greek students and first year students in learning communities benefit from increase retention and integration into college life (Pike et al., 1997; Tripp, 1997). What other similarities may exist between these two co-curricular and extra-curricular activities? This study hopes to combine these two areas of research and see what similarities might be discovered. This study will explore Greek housing as learning communities to broaden the general knowledge available about Greeks and learning communities.

Chapter Three

Methods

The purpose of this study was to examine the degree to which Greeks living in Greek housing experience outcomes associated with living in a learning community. Additionally, the study explored differences in the degree to which these outcomes were achieved by type of house (fraternity v. sorority) and type of control (university vs. private). Data were collected by administering the Learning Communities Assessment (LCA; Turrentine, 2001) to Greek students living in fraternity and sorority houses at a major research institution in the mid-Atlantic region of the U.S.

Specifically, the study was designed to address the following research questions:

1. To what extent do Greek students feel actively engaged in their communities as measured by the LCA?
2. To what extent do Greek students learn within their communities as measured by the LCA?
3. To what extent do Greek students feel a sense of community as measured by the LCA?
4. To what extent do Greek students feel their community as measured by the LCA has shaped their identity?
5. Are there differences in the extent to which Greek students feel actively engaged, learn, feel a sense of community, and feel their identity has been shaped by their community by type of house (sorority v. fraternity) as measured by the LCA?
6. Are there differences in the extent to which male Greek students feel actively engaged, learn, feel a sense of community, and feel their identity has been shaped by their community by type of control (university v. private) as measured by the LCA?

This chapter will explain the methods used in this study. The chapter is organized around five sections: sample selection, instrumentation, validity and reliability, data collection procedures, and data analysis procedures.

Sample Selection

The population of interest for this study was all undergraduate Greek students at a major research institution in the mid-Atlantic region of the U.S. These students were affiliated with Greek organizations by choice as an extra-curricular activity. The study used stratified cluster sampling followed by qualifying criteria for individuals within the selected clusters.

Selecting the sample was a two-step process, first to select Greek houses and then to select the students living in those houses. More specifically, the sample included a randomly selected group of houses (on and off campus) and then sampling those Greek men living in on-campus and off-campus houses and Greek women living in on-campus houses who met the established criteria. The institution where this research was conducted had 13 sororities (12 on-campus, 1 off-campus) and 32 fraternities (6 on-campus, 23 off-campus and 3 without houses).

Once the houses for the study were selected, I identified the individual participants for the study. These individuals had to meet several criteria. Participants in each sample had to hold active member status, as described by the organization; had to be living in the house at the time of the study; and had to have lived in the house for a minimum of one semester. I determined that participants met these criteria by asking the chapter presidents if all members living in the house were active by the chapter's own internal standards and had been living in the house for at least a semester. Those individuals living within the residence who were not active, or had not lived there a minimum of one semester, were dropped from the sample.

First I requested a list of all Greek organizations from the Coordinator of Greek Life. With the Coordinator's help, I assigned each organization a designation based upon the gender and management of the house. The designations were FONC (fraternity on-campus), FOFFC (fraternity off-campus), and SONC (sorority on-campus). I did not include the one off-campus sorority house because there were insufficient respondents to warrant their participation in this study.

Organizations without houses were dropped from the list. These steps were taken to identify houses eligible to be included in each of my samples. As a result of speaking with a research faculty member, a minimum of 10 residents per house was established to

ensure that a comparable community dynamic existed between smaller off-campus houses and larger on-campus houses (J. Hirt, personal communication, June 10, 2002).

Next, from those three groups I randomly selected the sample organizations by drawing organization names from a hat. I contacted the Office of Greek Life for contact information for the president of each selected organization. I then contacted the president of each organization by phone first and then by e-mail if necessary. I asked the president how many active members lived in the house and for how long. If they had at least 10 active residents who had lived there for at least a semester, I asked that the chapter participate in my study. If they agreed to participate I made plans to survey their members. If the chapter president said no, I returned to the list to randomly select another organization and continued the process until enough groups had agreed to participate.

For on-campus houses (fraternity and sorority) the established number was four houses each. Greek on-campus housing provided 36 or 32 beds per house depending on the year the house was constructed. Considering no-shows and members who had only just moved into the residence, I estimated 25 participants per house. This allowed for a goal of 100 (4 houses x 25 members) Greek men and 100 (4 houses x 25 members) Greek women living on-campus to be surveyed.

The set number for off-campus Greek fraternity houses was 10, allowing for smaller off-campus houses, with only 10 residents each. This estimate came from the Greek Life Office and provided for a goal of surveying 100 (10 houses x 10 members) off-campus participants.

Each president was informed of a \$100.00 drawing in which his or her house would be entered if the chapter participated in my study. Each participating organization's name was placed in a container and the winner was drawn blindly. I requested a specific time to survey all the residents of the house and scheduled the appropriate place and time. If the chapter declined to participate I returned to the list and selected the next randomized chapter until I had the minimum number per category.

I ensured that participants in each sample met the selection criteria by asking for a list of members living in the house and distributed the LCA to only those members who

qualified for the study. I distributed the instrument at a chapter meeting (or house meeting) of the president's choice.

Instrumentation

For this study I used an adapted version of the Learning Communities Assessment (LCA; Turrentine, 2001). This instrument (see Appendix A) has five sections with a total of 45 questions to which participants respond on a continuum ranging from 1 (*very descriptive of my experience*) to 10 (*very unlike my experience*).

The LCA was adapted for meaning, with permission from the author. Items were designed to ask questions about fraternity and sorority activities and with language familiar to Greek students. For example, the original version asked students about a "project" completed by the group. For the purpose of surveying Greek students, the item was altered to read "chapter activities" instead. The LCA was reproduced on a double-sided Scantron® form with directions and spacing carefully considered for ease of completion.

The first section asked demographic questions of respondents such as academic college, gender, length of membership in the organization, and whether they lived in an on-campus or off-campus Greek house. The data elicited from this section were used to accomplish two goals: first to understand the demographics of participants in the study, and second to ensure the proper individuals were completing the instrument. The remaining items of the LCA were divided into sections designed to answer my research questions.

Items in the LCA were grouped into four sections by the instrument's author. These sections were Active Engagement, Learning, Sense of Community, and Identity. At the time this study was done, a factor analysis to confirm the integrity of these sections had not been completed. For purposes of this research, I have adapted the original instrument suggested by the author for convenience and acknowledge the tentativeness of my findings.

The Active Engagement section included eight items such as, "I discussed my chapter activities with others," and "I worked harder on my chapter activities than on other activities." These items were designed to measure the ways in which participants

felt actively engaged in their community and were used to answer my first research question.

The Learning section consisted of 16 questions. These questions measured the ways participants were learning within their communities and were used to answer my second research question. Items included statements such as, “I improved my assertiveness skills,” and “I improved my ability to work as a team member.”

The Sense of Community section had 12 items consisting of such statements as, “This experience felt like a community to me,” and “I got to know most of the people pretty well.” These items were designed to measure the ways in which participants felt a sense of community and to answer my third research question.

The Identity section consisted of five items such as, “I see the world differently now than I did before,” and “This experience changed me.” These items measure the ways in which participants felt their community shaped their identity. This section was used to answer my fourth research question on identity.

The LCA was chosen for this research project because it examines several associated outcomes of learning communities other than just academic achievement and academic climate. The LCA provides a new look into learning communities and Greek housing.

Validity and Reliability

Rigorous research design requires a review of the validity and reliability of the study’s instrument. Reliability establishes a confidence in the instrument’s abilities to measure the same phenomenon over a period of time and population (Schutt, 1999). The reliability of the LCA was determined by calculating the internal consistency reliability of each of the sections of the instrument as well as the complete instrument using data collected from a recent orientation leader group (N=30). The internal consistency reliability for the entire instrument was .99 (C. Turrentine, personal communication, August 12, 2002).

Validity is the test of how accurately the Instrument measures the phenomenon the researcher has chosen (Schutt, 1999). Two panels of experts established the face validity of the LCA. Experts in learning communities from academic affairs and student affairs accomplished this in two rounds with the first. Items were constructed based on

both a review of the literature and on the experts' personal experience with learning communities. Experts from other disciplines, with learning community experience, reviewed the instrument for the second round making no significant changes (C. Turrentine, personal communication, August 12, 2002). No other validity studies had been completed at the time this project was undertaken.

A version of the LCA was administered to an off-campus sorority house to pilot the instrument. This exercise proved very helpful for planning and executing the data collection process as well as providing student feedback on the questions, format, and clarity of the instrument. The most significant changes I made based on this pilot administration were to the process of collecting the data from the students.

The students were surveyed using the procedures established in the data collection section. Once the women completed the survey, they were asked the following questions.

1. Were any of the instructions confusing or unclear?
2. Were any of the survey instructions confusing or unclear?
3. Were any of the specific questions confusing or unclear?
4. Would any of your responses have been different if I only asked about your experience as a resident of the house – and not as a resident and member of the organization?
5. Do you believe you can separate experiences as a resident and experiences as a member of the organization?

The women responded “no” to the first two questions and had some general feedback about specific words used for the third. These changes were considered but there was no general agreement on poorly chosen words from the women and nothing substantial was changed on the instrument.

The women's responses for questions four and five were interesting. About 20% of women present believed that their general membership status in their sorority could be separated from their residency with ease. However, when I asked specific questions from the instrument they were less confident. The women felt they had a significant bond between roommates with one woman even commenting that they felt like a sorority within a sorority. However, question-by-question they were not able easily to answer the questions and indicated the survey would be hard to complete if they tried to consider

their status as house residents separately from their status as chapter members. Due to the lack of consensus, and the concern for further complicating the instrument, no alterations were made.

Data Collection Procedures

I sought approval to conduct the study from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) for Research Involving Human Subjects. Once I received approval I took the following five steps to collect my data. First, I arrived at each house at the pre-scheduled time with my instruments, pencils, resident list, and protocol form (see Appendix B). Specific demographic items (questions 2-5) were developed to confirm the eligibility of the respondents. All respondents were asked their sex, how long they had retained membership in their organization, if they lived in the fraternity/sorority house, and if they live off-campus or on-campus. This was designed to verify the correct sample for each category.

Second, I read the protocol form describing myself, my study, and their voluntary participation in the study. Participants were told the study was an inquiry into Greek housing and that if they felt any hesitation to begin or finish the instrument they could stop and leave.

Third, I instructed participants to read each question carefully and rate their response from 1 (*very descriptive of my experience*) to 10 (*very unlike my experience*) on the instrument provided. To simulate interval data I created this scale with a starting point (1) and an end point (10) and encouraged respondents to consider the 10 point scale as a continuum. Participants were instructed to use this continuum to best describe their responses to the questions.

Fourth, after reading the protocol (Appendix B) I began distributing the instruments to residents of the house. Each resident was given an instrument, a copy of the protocol form, and a pencil if necessary.

Fifth, I remained present in the room to answer questions until all instruments were returned. Finally, I thanked the organization's president, reminded him or her that the chapter was entered in the drawing for \$100.00, and departed.

Data were collected within a one-month period. Data collection at each house was scheduled at a time convenient to the organization within that month. Completed

instruments were sorted by house and gender and stored until it was time to analyze the data. After all houses were surveyed I drew the winning house name from a container and sent the chapter president a check for \$100.00. I sent a congratulatory e-mail to the winning chapter with a courtesy copy to all other houses.

Data Analysis Procedures

Once all the data were collected, I began the analysis by delivering the survey instruments to the university's test scoring service. I requested frequency data and received a text file containing all the data. I then imported this text file into SPSS Version 10.0. Because the test scoring service used software that encoded each response with a one-digit value (0-9), and my instrument included two-digit values (1-10), I had to recode all responses by adding one to the original so that the final data matched the actual numbers with which my participants responded. Missing data were automatically assigned a non-value response by SPSS and cases with missing data were retained.

The data were analyzed to address the research questions posed in the study. The first research question examined the extent to which Greek students feel actively engaged in their communities. To address this question, I calculated the mean scores and standard deviations for all items on the Active Engagement section for all participants. These descriptive statistics were used to paint a picture of how engaged these Greek students felt in their communities.

The second research question explored the extent to which Greek students learn within their communities. To address this question, I calculated the mean scores and standard deviations for all items of the section identified as Learning for all participants. These descriptive statistics were used to paint a picture of the extent to which Greek students learn within their communities.

The extent to which Greek students feel a sense of community was the third research question. To address this question, I calculated the mean scores and standard deviations for all items of the section identified as Sense of Community for all participants. These descriptive statistics were used to paint a picture of the extent to which Greeks students feel a sense of community.

The fourth research question examined the extent to which Greek students feel their community has shaped their identity. To address this question, I again calculated

the mean scores and standard deviations for all items of the section identified as Identity for all participants. These descriptive statistics were used to paint a picture of the extent to which Greek students feel their community has shaped their identity.

Differences by type of house (Fraternity vs. Sorority) in the extent to which Greek students feel actively engaged, learn, feel a sense of community, and feel their identity has been shaped by their community was the focus of the fifth research question. To address this question, it was first necessary to sort all responses (men on and off-campus and women on-campus) into two groups: those from members of fraternities and those from members of sororities. Then for each survey item I calculated the mean scores and standard deviations for each group. I then used an independent samples *t*-test to compare the mean score on each survey item between the two groups. For this and all subsequent analyses I set alpha at .05 and used two-tailed tests.

Finally, the sixth research question examined differences in the extent to which male Greek students feel actively engaged, learn, feel a sense of community, and feel their identity has been shaped by their community by type of control (university v. private). To address this question it was first necessary to sort all the responses into two groups: those from male Greeks in off-campus houses and those from male Greeks in on-campus houses. Then for each group I calculated the mean scores and standard deviations for each item. I then used an independent samples *t*-test to compare the mean scores on each item between the two groups.

In conclusion this chapter reviewed the methodology used in this study. The design was deemed appropriate to address the questions posed in the study.

Chapter Four

Results

In this chapter I will discuss the results of this research project. The chapter will begin with a review of the new and old reliability data and then results organized by research question.

Reliability

I re-evaluated the reliability of the LCA by calculating the internal consistency reliability (using SPSS, N=264) of each of the sections of the instrument as well as the complete instrument using the new data collected from this research project. The internal consistency reliability for the entire instrument was .98. The results of this calculation remain consistent with previous testing (.99).

Results

During one month of data collection a total of 101 Greek women from four on-campus sorority houses, 100 Greek men from four on-campus fraternity houses, and 63 Greek men from nine off-campus fraternity houses were surveyed for this research project. All 164 participants met the selection criteria and were retained for data analysis.

The first five questions on the instrument asked for the demographic information of college, sex, duration of membership within the organization, if the respondent lived in the house, and whether the respondent lived on or off campus. These results can be seen in Table 1.

The first four research questions ask to what extent Greek students feel actively engaged, learn, feel a sense of community, and feel their identity has been shaped by their community as measured by the LCA? The means and standard deviations for all questions were calculated and are presented in Table 2. These descriptive statistics paint a picture of the extent to which Greek students feel actively engaged, learn, feel a sense of community, and feel their identity has been shaped by their community as measured by the LCA

Table 1

Characteristics of the Respondent Group

Characteristic	Number	Percentage
College		
Business	71	27
Arts & Sciences	51	19
Engineering	42	16
Human Resource and Education	42	16
Agriculture & Life Sciences	32	12
University Studies	10	4
Architecture and Urban Studies	9	3
Natural Resources	6	2
Graduate Studies	0	0
Veterinary Medicine	0	0
Sex		
Male	163	62
Female	101	38
Duration of Membership in Organization		
2 or 3 semesters	92	35
4 or 5 semesters	115	44
6 or more semesters	57	22
Live in the fraternity/sorority house		
Live in the house	264	100
Location of house		
On-campus	201	76
Off-campus	63	24

Note. Some percentages may not total 100 percent due to rounding.

Table 2

Mean Scores and Standard Deviations for All Respondents

Item	Mean	SD
Active Engagement		
I think about my chapter activities even on my own time.	2.76	2.42
I discussed my chapter activities with others.	3.15	2.61
I worked harder on my chapter activities than on other activities.	3.89	2.59
I felt like my chapter activities belonged to me.	3.33	2.44
I did my very best on my chapter activities.	2.90	2.21
I cared about the outcome of my chapter activities.	2.54	2.34
My chapter activities engaged my interest & imagination.	2.86	2.33
My chapter activities were intense.	3.26	2.50
Learning		
I learned some basic information that was useful.	3.33	2.35
I learned to think in practical ways about things I already knew.	3.70	2.41
I learned to use what I already knew in practical ways.	3.56	2.23
I improved my writing skills.	5.93	2.87
I learned to think critically.	4.43	2.63
I improved my time management.	3.43	2.65
I improved my assertiveness skills.	3.14	2.27
I improved my ability to work as a team member.	2.84	2.20
I improved my ability to lead a team.	3.04	2.39
I improved my ability to speak to a small group.	3.07	2.45
I improved my ability to speak in public.	3.31	2.53
I improved my ability to make a formal presentation.	3.91	2.59
I improved my ability to plan events.	3.24	2.37
I improved my ability to solve problems.	3.47	2.36
I improved my ability to work with people who are very different from me.	3.01	2.30
I learned about the ethical treatment of others.	3.69	2.47

Table 2 (con't)

Mean Scores and Standard Deviations for All Respondents

Item	Mean	SD
Sense of Community		
This fraternity/sorority experience felt like a community to me.	2.54	2.37
I got to know most of the people pretty well.	2.39	2.29
Everyone knew who belonged to our fraternity/sorority.	2.78	2.43
We talked about ourselves in terms of this fraternity/sorority.	2.78	2.29
We developed our own ways of doing things.	3.07	2.16
We developed inside jokes, shared stories, etc.	2.23	2.17
We developed our own way of speaking to one another.	3.04	2.47
When we were apart for a while it didn't take us long to get going again.	2.54	2.21
As a group, we pretty well know what will work.	2.77	2.09
I know everyone else's strengths and weaknesses.	3.25	2.20
I can identify things that remind me of this experience.	2.89	2.33
We look at the world a little differently than other people.	3.47	2.34
Sense of Identity		
I see strengths and weaknesses in myself now that I didn't know I had.	2.91	2.13
This experience caused me to examine my values.	3.62	2.57
I relate to people differently now than I did before.	3.51	2.30
I see the world differently now than I did before.	3.83	2.37
This fraternity/sorority experience changed me.	2.71	2.33

Research Question 5

Are there differences in the extent to which Greek students feel actively engaged, learn, feel a sense of community, and feel their identity has been shaped by their community by type of house (sorority v. fraternity) as measured by the LCA was the fifth research question. Table 3 shows the means and standard deviations for each survey item by type of house. Table 4 shows the results of independent samples *t*-test comparing mean responses for fraternities and sororities.

There were 2 of 16 items within the Learning Section with significant differences between Greek students living in fraternity compared to sorority housing. These were: (a) I improved my writing skills, and (b) I learned to think critically. In both cases, the Greek students living in fraternity housing were significantly more likely to rate these statements as very descriptive of their experiences than Greek students living in sorority houses. That is, Greek men in this study were more likely than Greek women to believe that their writing and critical thinking skills had been improved by their participation in their Greek organization.

There were also 2 of 12 items within the Sense of Community Section that showed a significant difference between men and women. These were: (a) Everyone knew who belonged to our fraternity/sorority, and (b) We developed our own ways of doing things. Again, on both of these items Greek students living in fraternity houses were significantly more likely to rate these statements as descriptive of their experiences than Greek students living in sorority houses.

Table 3

Mean Scores and Standard Deviations by Type of House (Fraternity vs. Sorority)

Item	Fraternity		Sorority	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Active Engagement				
I think about my chapter activities even on my own time.	2.83	2.48	2.65	2.33
I discussed my chapter activities with others.	3.23	2.56	3.02	2.70
I worked harder on my chapter activities than on other activities.	3.93	2.48	3.82	2.77
I felt like my chapter activities belonged to me.	3.38	2.47	3.23	2.42
I did my very best on my chapter activities.	2.91	2.23	2.87	2.19
I cared about the outcome of my chapter activities.	2.56	2.31	2.51	2.40
My chapter activities engaged my interest & imagination.	2.86	2.31	2.86	2.38
My chapter activities were intense.	3.18	2.51	3.39	2.49
Learning				
I learned some basic information that was useful.	3.25	2.36	3.47	2.34
I learned to think in practical ways about things I already knew.	3.57	2.41	3.90	2.41
I learned to use what I already knew in practical ways.	3.47	2.20	3.69	2.29
I improved my writing skills.	5.53	2.84	6.57	2.83
I learned to think critically.	3.82	2.35	5.41	2.77
I improved my time management.	3.20	2.44	3.79	2.93
I improved my assertiveness skills.	2.97	2.20	3.41	2.37
I improved my ability to work as a team member.	2.71	2.12	3.05	2.33
I improved my ability to lead a team.	2.92	2.26	3.23	2.59
I improved my ability to speak to a small group.	2.98	2.35	3.23	2.62
I improved my ability to speak in public.	3.15	2.35	3.57	2.81
I improved my ability to make a formal presentation.	3.77	2.45	4.14	2.79
I improved my ability to plan events.	3.10	2.09	3.47	2.77
I improved my ability to solve problems.	3.28	2.14	3.78	2.64

Table 3 (con't)

Mean Scores and Standard Deviations by Type of House (Fraternity vs. Sorority)

Item	Fraternity		Sorority	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
I improved my ability to work with people who are very different from me.	3.12	2.34	2.83	2.24
I learned about the ethical treatment of others.	3.71	2.53	3.64	2.40
Sense of Community				
This fraternity/sorority experience felt like a community to me.	2.50	2.17	2.61	2.66
I got to know most of the people pretty well.	2.19	2.18	2.71	2.43
Everyone knew who belonged to our fraternity/sorority.	2.53	2.23	3.17	2.69
We talked about ourselves in terms of this fraternity/sorority.	2.70	2.25	2.90	2.36
We developed our own ways of doing things.	2.85	2.02	3.43	2.35
We developed inside jokes, shared stories, etc.	2.22	2.08	2.24	2.32
We developed our own way of speaking to one another.	2.89	2.30	3.29	2.71
When we were apart for a while it didn't take us long to get going again.	2.57	2.10	2.49	2.39
As a group, we pretty well know what will work.	2.72	1.95	2.85	2.30
I know everyone else's strengths and weaknesses.	3.06	2.12	3.56	2.30
I can identify things that remind me of this experience.	2.99	2.40	2.74	2.21
We look at the world a little differently than other people.	3.30	2.25	3.74	2.47
Sense of Identity				
I see strengths and weaknesses in myself now that I didn't know I had.	2.95	2.05	2.84	2.27
This experience caused me to examine my values.	3.61	2.41	3.63	2.83
I relate to people differently now than I did before.	3.40	2.13	3.68	2.56
I see the world differently now than I did before.	3.68	2.22	4.08	2.60
This fraternity/sorority experience changed me.	2.82	2.33	2.53	2.33

Table 4

T-test Results for All Survey Items by Type of House (Fraternity vs. Sorority)

Item	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>
Active Engagement			
I think about my chapter activities even on my own time.	0.61	259	0.55
I discussed my chapter activities with others.	0.62	259	0.53
I worked harder on my chapter activities than on other activities.	0.33	259	0.75
I felt like my chapter activities belonged to me.	0.48	259	0.63
I did my very best on my chapter activities.	0.16	259	0.87
I cared about the outcome of my chapter activities.	0.17	259	0.87
My chapter activities engaged my interest & imagination.	0.02	259	0.99
My chapter activities were intense.	-0.66	256	0.51
Learning			
I learned some basic information that was useful.	-0.72	262	0.47
I learned to think in practical ways about things already knew.	-1.08	262	0.28
I learned to use what I already knew in practical ways.	-0.78	262	0.44
I improved my writing skills.	-2.90	262	0.00
I learned to think critically.	-4.97	262	0.00
I improved my time management.	-1.76	261	0.08
I improved my assertiveness skills.	-1.52	262	0.13
I improved my ability to work as a team member.	-1.21	262	0.23
I improved my ability to lead a team.	-1.02	261	0.31
I improved my ability to speak to a small group.	-0.81	262	0.42
I improved my ability to speak in public.	-1.33	262	0.18
I improved my ability to make a formal presentation.	-1.14	262	0.26
I improved my ability to plan events.	-1.22	262	0.22
I improved my ability to solve problems.	-1.68	262	0.09
I improved my ability to work with people who are very different from me.	0.98	262	0.33
I learned about the ethical treatment of others.	0.22	262	0.83
Sense of Community			

Table 4 (con't)

T-test Results for All Survey Items by Type of House (Fraternity vs. Sorority)

Item	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>
This fraternity/sorority experience felt like a community to me.	-0.39	260	0.70
I got to know most of the people pretty well.	-1.81	262	0.07
Everyone knew who belonged to our fraternity/sorority.	-2.08	262	0.04
We talked about ourselves in terms of this fraternity/sorority.	-0.68	259	0.50
We developed our own ways of doing things.	-2.12	259	0.04
We developed inside jokes, shared stories, etc.	-0.09	260	0.93
We developed our own way of speaking to one another.	-1.28	260	0.20
When we were apart for a while it didn't take us long to get going again.	0.30	260	0.77
As a group, we pretty well know what will work.	-0.48	260	0.63
I know everyone else's strengths and weaknesses.	-1.81	260	0.07
I can identify things that remind me of this experience.	0.84	259	0.40
We look at the world a little differently than other people.	-1.46	259	0.15
Sense of Identity			
I see strengths and weaknesses in myself now that I didn't know I had.	0.42	258	0.68
This experience caused me to examine my values.	-0.06	256	0.95
I relate to people differently now than I did before.	-0.93	258	0.35
I see the world differently now than I did before.	-1.31	258	0.19
This fraternity/sorority experience changed me.	0.99	257	0.33

Research Question 6

The sixth research question asked whether there are there differences in the extent to which male Greek students feel actively engaged, learn, feel a sense of community, and feel their identity has been shaped by their community by type of control (university v. private) as measured by the LCA.

Table 5 displays the means and standard deviations for all survey items by house control. Table 6 shows the results of independent samples t-test for each item between these two groups. 10 out of the 16 questions in the Learning Section resulted in a significant difference by the type of housing management for Greek men living in fraternity housing. These were: (a) I learned some basic information that was useful, (b) I learned to think in practical ways about things I already knew, (c) I learned to use what I already knew in practical ways, (d) I learned to think critically, (e) I improved my time management, (f) I improved my ability to work as a team member, (g) I improved my ability to lead a team, (h) I improved my ability to plan events, (i) I improved my ability to solve problems, and (j) I learned about the ethical treatment of others.

In all 10 cases, Greek men living in privately managed houses (off-campus) were significantly more likely to rate statements about their learning as very descriptive compared to Greek men living in university managed housing. That is, in this study men in off-campus Greek houses reported learning more from their Greek living experience than men in on-campus houses.

Table 5

Mean Scores and Standard Deviations for Males by Control (University vs. Private)

Item	University		Private	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Active Engagement				
I think about my chapter activities even on my own time.	3.16	2.64	2.31	2.11
I discussed my chapter activities with others.	3.18	2.50	3.31	2.68
I worked harder on my chapter activities than on other activities.	4.08	2.46	3.68	2.50
I felt like my chapter activities belonged to me.	3.58	2.36	3.06	2.62
I did my very best on my chapter activities.	3.27	2.32	2.34	1.97
I cared about the outcome of my chapter activities.	2.90	2.45	2.00	1.94
My chapter activities engaged my interest & imagination.	3.14	2.33	2.42	2.23
My chapter activities were intense.	3.50	2.57	2.66	2.34
Learning				
I learned some basic information that was useful.	3.75	2.26	2.46	2.31
I learned to think in practical ways about things I already knew.	4.06	2.34	2.79	2.32
I learned to use what I already knew in practical ways.	3.95	2.07	2.71	2.20
I improved my writing skills.	5.82	2.86	5.08	2.77
I learned to think critically.	4.16	2.29	3.29	2.38
I improved my time management.	3.56	2.41	2.65	2.40
I improved my assertiveness skills.	3.16	2.01	2.67	2.44
I improved my ability to work as a team member.	2.98	2.13	2.29	2.04
I improved my ability to lead a team.	3.21	2.33	2.46	2.09
I improved my ability to speak to a small group.	3.19	2.21	2.63	2.53
I improved my ability to speak in public.	3.33	2.26	2.86	2.47
I improved my ability to make a formal presentation.	3.82	2.26	3.68	2.74
I improved my ability to plan events.	3.38	2.09	2.65	2.01
I improved my ability to solve problems.	3.70	2.08	2.62	2.10

Table 5 (con't)

Mean Scores and Standard Deviations for Males by Control (University vs. Private)

Item	University		Private	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
I improved my ability to work with people who are very different from me.	3.37	2.24	2.71	2.45
I learned about the ethical treatment of others.	4.11	2.59	3.08	2.31
Sense of Community				
This fraternity/sorority experience felt like a community to me.	2.81	2.30	1.98	1.83
I got to know most of the people pretty well.	2.52	2.35	1.67	1.78
Everyone knew who belonged to our fraternity/sorority.	2.58	2.17	2.46	2.33
We talked about ourselves in terms of this fraternity/sorority.	2.84	2.24	2.49	2.27
We developed our own ways of doing things.	3.17	2.08	2.33	1.81
We developed inside jokes, shared stories, etc.	2.50	2.29	1.76	1.61
We developed our own way of speaking to one another.	3.24	2.43	2.32	1.97
When we were apart for a while it didn't take us long to get going again.	2.97	2.29	1.94	1.55
As a group, we pretty well know what will work.	3.08	2.04	2.15	1.65
I know everyone else's strengths and weaknesses.	3.56	2.18	2.24	1.76
I can identify things that remind me of this experience.	3.39	2.37	2.34	2.31
We look at the world a little differently than other people.	3.80	2.27	2.50	1.98
Sense of Identity				
I see strengths and weaknesses in myself now that I didn't know I had.	3.27	2.06	2.44	1.94
This experience caused me to examine my values.	3.62	2.21	3.59	2.72
I relate to people differently now than I did before.	3.68	2.12	2.97	2.10
I see the world differently now than I did before.	3.96	2.05	3.24	2.43
This fraternity/sorority experience changed me.	3.17	2.42	2.25	2.07

Table 6

*T-test Results for Male Respondents for All Survey Items by Type of House Control
(University vs. Private)*

Item	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>
Active Engagement			
I think about my chapter activities even on my own time.	2.16	160	0.03
I discussed my chapter activities with others.	-0.31	160	0.76
I worked harder on my chapter activities than on other activities.	1.01	160	0.32
I felt like my chapter activities belonged to me.	1.30	160	0.20
I did my very best on my chapter activities.	2.63	160	0.01
I cared about the outcome of my chapter activities.	2.45	160	0.02
My chapter activities engaged my interest & imagination.	1.94	160	0.05
My chapter activities were intense.	2.09	159	0.04
Learning			
I learned some basic information that was useful.	3.51	161	0.00
I learned to think in practical ways about things I already knew.	3.37	161	0.00
I learned to use what I already knew in practical ways.	3.62	161	0.00
I improved my writing skills.	1.63	161	0.11
I learned to think critically.	2.34	161	0.02
I improved my time management.	2.33	160	0.02
I improved my assertiveness skills.	1.40	161	0.16
I improved my ability to work as a team member.	2.06	161	0.04
I improved my ability to lead a team.	2.08	160	0.04
I improved my ability to speak to a small group.	1.48	161	0.14
I improved my ability to speak in public.	1.26	161	0.21
I improved my ability to make a formal presentation.	0.35	161	0.73
I improved my ability to plan events.	2.20	161	0.03
I improved my ability to solve problems.	3.22	161	0.00
I improved my ability to work with people who are very different from me.	1.75	161	0.08
I learned about the ethical treatment of others.	2.58	161	0.01

Table 6 (con't)

*T-test Results for Male Respondents for All Survey Items by Type of House Control
(University vs. Private)*

Item	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>
Sense of Community			
This fraternity/sorority experience felt like a community to me.	2.38	159	0.02
I got to know most of the people pretty well.	2.47	161	0.01
Everyone knew who belonged to our fraternity/sorority.	0.33	161	0.74
We talked about ourselves in terms of this fraternity/sorority.	0.95	159	0.35
We developed our own ways of doing things.	2.61	159	0.01
We developed inside jokes, shared stories, etc.	2.23	160	0.03
We developed our own way of speaking to one another.	2.50	160	0.01
When we were apart for a while it didn't take us long to get going again.	3.14	160	0.00
As a group, we pretty well know what will work.	3.05	160	0.00
I know everyone else's strengths and weaknesses.	4.02	160	0.00
I can identify things that remind me of this experience.	2.77	160	0.01
We look at the world a little differently than other people.	3.72	160	0.00
Sense of Identity			
I see strengths and weaknesses in myself now that I didn't know I had.	2.56	160	0.01
This experience caused me to examine my values.	0.08	159	0.94
I relate to people differently now than I did before.	2.07	159	0.04
I see the world differently now than I did before.	2.02	159	0.05
This fraternity/sorority experience changed me.	2.48	158	0.01

10 out of the 12 questions in the Sense of Community Section resulted in a significant difference between private and university management of fraternity housing. These were: (a) This fraternity/sorority experience felt like a community to me, (b) I got to know most of the people pretty well, (c) We developed our own ways of doing things, (d) We developed inside jokes, shared stories, etc., (e) We developed our own way of speaking to one another, (f) When we were apart for a while it didn't take us long to get going again, (g) As a group, we pretty well know what will work, (h) I know everyone else's strengths and weaknesses, (i) I can identify things that remind me of this experience, and (j) We look at the world a little differently than other people. Again, in all 10 cases, Greek men living in privately managed houses were significantly more likely to rate statements about their sense of community as very descriptive of their experiences as compared to Greek men living in houses managed by the university. Men in off-campus Greek houses reported a stronger sense of community than men in on-campus Greek houses as measured by the LCA.

Four out of the five questions in the Sense of Identity Section yielded significantly different responses for Greek men living in privately versus university managed fraternity housing. These were: (a) I see strengths and weaknesses in myself now that I didn't know I had, (b) I relate to people differently now than I did before, (c) I see the world differently now than I did before, and (d) This fraternity/sorority experience changed me. In all four cases, Greek men living in privately managed housing were significantly more likely to rate these statements as very descriptive of their experience than Greek men living in university managed housing. That is, men in off-campus Greek houses were more likely to report that their identities were shaped by their Greek experiences than were their counterparts in on-campus Greek houses.

Five of the eight questions in the Active Engagement Section resulted in significant differences between Greek men living in privately managed houses versus university managed houses. These were: (a) I think about my chapter activities even on my own time, (b) I did my very best on my chapter activities, (c) I cared about the outcome of my chapter activities, (d) My chapter activities engaged my interest & imagination, and (e) My chapter activities were intense. As in the previous sections, on all five of these items, Greek men living in privately managed houses were significantly

more likely to rate these statements about active engagement as very descriptive of their experiences than Greek men living in university managed housing. These results suggest that Greek men off-campus feel more actively engaged by their communities than Greek men living on-campus.

In conclusion, the data were analyzed successfully and results were present for review. The results produced important discussion points that will be described in Chapter Five.

Chapter Five

Discussion

In this chapter I will discuss the results of this study. The chapter will begin with results for all Greek students, followed by results for research questions five and six, some research observations, additional analysis conducted, and finally, considerations for future research.

Discussion of Results for All Greek Students

Participants were asked to respond to each question on a continuum ranging from 1 (very descriptive of my experience) to 10 (very unlike my experience). While participants had the full range of 1 to 10, the mean responses were between 5.93 and 2.23. This places the mean responses on the lower and more positive side of the continuum.

The first four research questions ask to what extent do Greek students feel actively engaged, learn, feel a sense of community, and feel their identity has been shaped by their community as measured by the LCA? Table 2 contains the means and standard deviations for each question.

The first research question asks to what extent do Greek students feel actively engaged by their communities as measured by the LCA? Four of the eight items in this section had mean scores below a 3.0, and three out of the remaining four were at or below 3.33, suggesting that many Greek students feel these statements are fairly descriptive of their experiences. These questions could be compared to literature on retention that suggests Greek students feel a greater sense of involvement within their collegiate experience than independent students and that this keeps them in school (Tripp, 1997). Participants in this study agreed that they were actively engaged in their chapters.

The second research question asks to what extent do Greek students learn within their communities as measured by the LCA? 2 out of 16 questions in this section had a mean score above a 4.0 (the highest mean scores of all the questions) and only one of the remaining 14 fell below a 3.0 suggesting that students saw these statement as less descriptive of their experience than other sections like active engagement, identity, and sense of community. These findings mirror much of the literature on Greeks and academic achievement that tends to suggest negative effects for Greeks when compared

to their independent peers (Terenzini et al., 1996; Pascarella et al., 1996; Pike & Askew, 1990). Greek students in this study did not generally describe their Greek chapters as sources of learning.

The third research question asks to what extent do Greek students feel a sense of community as measured by the LCA? Eight out of 12 questions in the sense of community section have a mean score of less than 3.0, suggesting that Greek students feel these statements are very descriptive of their experiences. These findings suggest that their sense of community is the most positive effect Greek life has on the experience of these students as measured by the LCA.

The fourth research question asks to what extent do Greek students feel their communities as measured by the LCA have shaped their identity. This section is a bit divergent. Two out of the five questions have a mean score of below 3.0, but the remaining three have a mean score of 3.5 or higher. This suggests that Greek students feel that some of these statements are very descriptive of their experiences and others are only somewhat descriptive. These results might also suggest that questions in this section might be less connected to each other than other sections of the instrument.

Overall, it is not a surprise that the mean score for Greeks students on active engagement, sense of identity and sense of community items are relatively close to 1 (*very descriptive*) suggesting that many Greek students feel statements about each of the three areas are at least somewhat descriptive of their experiences. It is also not a surprise that questions on learning for Greek students tend to have a higher mean score than the other sections. These findings are mirrored in the literature, which suggests that Greek students as a whole experience no academic benefit through their participation in fraternities and sororities (Pike & Askew, 1990). Additionally, lower mean scores on active engagement, sense of identity, and sense of community items may reflect the benefits of involvement (Parker & Gade, 1981) and retention (Tripp, 1997) found in the available literature on Greeks.

Research Question 5

The fifth research question ask whether there are differences in the extent to which Greek students feel actively engaged, learn, feel a sense of community, and feel their identity has been shaped by their community by type of house (sorority v. fraternity)

as measured by the LCA. The literature on learning and academic success suggests that Greek men fall behind their female and independent (regardless of sex) peers in many academic areas (Pike & Askew, 1990). Additionally, practical experience from staff members of the Office of Greek life at the institution in this study suggests that Greek men on this campus regularly achieve less academic success (as measured by GPA) than their female counterparts (K. Wooldridge, personal communication, February 17, 2003). Considering the current literature available on Greek students and the practical experience of staff members in the Office of Greek Life, one would expect to see significant differences in the learning questions with Greek women living in sorority houses as more likely to rate statements as descriptive of their experiences than men living in fraternity housing. Unexpectedly, however, 2 out of 16 statements in the learning section and 2 out of 12 statements of the sense of community section were found significantly different with men living in fraternity housing more likely to rate these statements as very descriptive of the experiences than women living in sorority housing.

The significant differences on the learning statements were surprising. Based on previous literature and practical experience, one would expect to see the women rating the learning statements as more descriptive of their experiences than the men on most of the questions. The results however show two questions with significant difference in favor of the men. In this study, Greek men were more likely than Greek women to report that they learned from their Greek membership.

One possible explanation for this inconsistency between results and the literature comes from my sampling methodology. Current literature (Pike & Askew, 1990) and practical experience of those on the campus where the study was competed (K. Wooldridge, personal communication, February 17, 2003) suggest that new fraternity members suffer the most academic distress while first joining their organizations. My limitation on length of time lived in the house as well as length of time as a member of the organization (see Table 2), systematically eliminated newer members, thereby potentially artificially increasing the learning scores for men.

Research Question 6

Research question six asked whether there are differences in the extent to which male Greek students feel actively engaged, learn, feel a sense of community, and feel

their identity has been shaped by their community by type of control (university v. private) as measured by the LCA. Again, the results for this research question are unexpected and warrant discussion.

Practical experience on the campus studied would have suggested that Greek men living on-campus would rate their experiences as more descriptive of the statements in each of these sections than men living off-campus (K. Wooldridge, personal communication, February 17, 2003). However, this was not the result in this study, where a large majority of questions in all five sections of the LCA yielded a significant difference in favor of men living off-campus. 10 out of the 16 questions in the Learning Section, 10 out of the 12 questions in the Sense of Community Section, four out of the five questions in the Sense of Identity Section, and finally, five of the eight questions in the Active Engagement Section show significant differences with men off-campus rating these statements as more descriptive of their experiences than men on-campus.

One possible explanation may come from a bias represented within my participants. It is possible that a Greek students' satisfaction with their individual fraternity or sorority at the time the data were collected may have affected their answers in an unknown fashion. Perhaps, the farther a fraternity house is removed from campus, the more freedom and personal control fraternity men feel within their chapters, providing an increased positive regard. That positive regard may have influenced the ratings of off-campus fraternity men. However, my observations during data collection suggest another explanation, which I describe in the next section.

Research Observations

For several weeks I followed my data collection procedures precisely as outlined in Chapter Three. Throughout this experience I observed certain consistent differences in behaviors across my three core groups; on-campus women, on-campus men, and off-campus men. These observations related to seriousness of task, reception of outsiders, and condition of the house.

Greek women (on-campus) were consistently more serious with the task of completing the survey than the other two groups. Rarely did behaviors such as talking, shouting, laughing, and horse play occur as the women completed the LCA. Men on-campus were consistently more likely than the women to participate in these distracting

activities. Men off-campus participated in these activities the most of all three groups. Women also took the longest to complete the survey, with men on-campus the next longest. Off-campus men completed the survey in the shortest time of the three groups.

From the very beginning, women (on-campus) were much more receptive to me as an outsider than the other groups. They were quicker to assist my research by correcting and updating my list of sororities, addresses, phone numbers of presidents, etc. The men responded very sluggishly to these requests if at all. This pattern continued as I made personal contacts to set up surveying appointments. The women were more likely to return e-mails and calls and provided greater flexibility with the scheduling. Sororities were also more likely to remember their appointments, greet me warmly, and present a serious consideration of my presence. Men on-campus were less likely to display these behaviors than women, and the off-campus men were even less likely to show such consideration.

House observations included how clean the houses were, the presence of smoke and alcohol paraphernalia, and symbols of Greek identity. The women's houses were all clean, free of smoke and alcohol paraphernalia, and full of symbols of their sorority identity (e.g., mascots, crests, mottos, etc.). The on-campus men's houses were less clean but were similarly free of smoke and alcohol paraphernalia. These houses had some symbols of their Greek identity, but they displayed fewer of these symbols than the women's houses. The off-campus men's houses were often unclean and smoky and displayed alcohol paraphernalia and very few symbols of Greek identity.

The first two themes suggest that the women took this research more seriously and I believe this affected the results of the study. The men appeared to have taken the questions and research less seriously and this may manifest in some of the inconsistencies between results and literature or practical experience. The third theme adds to the practical assumptions of professionals that off-campus fraternity houses may be less physically healthy (smoke and alcohol paraphernalia) and may exhibit less concern for ritual, academics, and personal growth. Greek students and educators use symbols as a way of reminding members of their organizations principles, ritual, and expectations. While the effectiveness of this strategy is unknown, professionals see the effort as important.

I believe that Greek men in general and off-campus men in particular may have given non-genuine responses to my survey. Some respondents might have chosen not to be serious and take the time required to truly reflect on their experience and accurately report their feelings on many of the statements of the LCA. In an act of ambivalence or perhaps self-preservation, I believe that many might have chosen to simplify their answers in the affirmative and this has skewed my results. Some off-campus men may even have given intentionally false answers in order to sabotage this study.

Additional Analysis

Having concern that off-campus Greek men may have skewed the results by reporting non-genuine responses, I conducted two additional analyses of the data. First, concerned that monotonous responses by some of the participants may have affected the results of this study in favor of men off-campus, and with the advice of Cathryn Turrentine, I performed an additional data analysis. Using a copy of the raw data, I removed any case where the participant had answered every question with the exact same response ($n=3$). I then re-ran each of the calculations and searched for differences. This analysis yielded no change in either significant differences or direction of differences so I returned to the original data and calculations.

Second, I removed off-campus men for my gender analysis to see if those significant differences remained between on-campus men and on-campus women (see Table 7). Only one of the original four statements remained significant without the off-campus men. On-campus men were still significantly more likely to respond that they learned to think critically because of the Greek experience than on-campus women. However, the three other previous differences are no longer significant. Those were: (a) I improved my writing skills, (b) Everyone knew who belonged to our fraternity/sorority, and (c) We developed our own ways of doing things.

Two new statements became significant with women on-campus more likely to respond that their experience changed them and that they could identify things that remind them of their experience than men on-campus. These findings are more consistent with the previous literature than my original analysis, and because they are consistent with my own observations during data collection, they suggest that the off-campus men's responses were not genuine and should be regarded with great suspicion.

Conclusion

Do Greek students living in Greek housing experience outcomes associated with living in a learning community? More specifically, do Greek students experience active engagement, learning, feel a sense of community, and feel their community has shaped their identity? The answer to this question is slightly complicated. Yes, Greek students feel actively engaged by their community. Yes, they feel a sense of community and feel that their community has shaped their identity. However, they do not necessarily self report that they are learning within their community. I conclude that Greek houses at the institution studied by this research are communities, but not *learning* communities.

Are their differences by type of house (fraternity vs. sorority) and management of house (on-campus vs. off-campus) in the extent to which Greek students feel active engaged, learn, feel a sense of community, and feel their identity has been shaped by their community? Yes, sorority houses are more likely to report outcomes associated with learning communities than fraternity houses. Also, on-campus houses are more likely than off-campus houses to report outcomes associated with learning communities. While the overall results suggest that these communities are not learning communities, the women who live in on-campus houses report the most learning, followed by on-campus fraternities and then lastly, off-campus fraternities.

Should the off-campus men's responses be considered trustworthy for the final analyses of this research? I believe that they were not genuine responses for the reasons previously outlined and for the final conclusion have been rejected. Without the off-campus men's responses this changes the results from chapter four. Greek women are more likely to report experiences consistent with outcomes from learning communities than Greek men.

Table 7

Differences in Mean LCA Scores Between On-Campus Fraternity and Sorority Women

Item	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>
Active Engagement			
I think about my chapter activities even on my own time.	1.46	197	0.15
I discussed my chapter activities with others.	0.43	197	0.67
I worked harder on my chapter activities than on other activities.	0.71	197	0.48
I felt like my chapter activities belonged to me.	1.03	197	0.31
I did my very best on my chapter activities.	1.26	197	0.21
I cared about the outcome of my chapter activities.	1.15	197	0.25
My chapter activities engaged my interest & imagination.	0.84	197	0.40
My chapter activities were intense.	0.30	195	0.76
Learning			
I learned some basic information that was useful.	0.88	199	0.38
I learned to think in practical ways about things I already knew.	0.48	199	0.64
I learned to use what I already knew in practical ways.	0.84	199	0.41
I improved my writing skills.	-1.88	199	0.06
I learned to think critically.	-3.48	199	0.00
I improved my time management.	-0.62	198	0.53
I improved my assertiveness skills.	-0.79	199	0.43
I improved my ability to work as a team member.	-0.22	199	0.83
I improved my ability to lead a team.	-0.05	198	0.96
I improved my ability to speak to a small group.	-0.11	199	0.91
I improved my ability to speak in public.	-0.68	199	0.50
I improved my ability to make a formal presentation.	-0.89	199	0.38
I improved my ability to plan events.	-0.25	199	0.81
I improved my ability to solve problems.	-0.25	199	0.81
I improved my ability to work with people who are very different from me.	1.70	199	0.09
I learned about the ethical treatment of others.	1.33	199	0.19

Table 7 (con't)

Differences in Mean LCA Scores Between On-Campus Fraternity and Sorority Women

Item	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p.</i>
Sense of Community			
This fraternity/sorority experience felt like a community to me.	0.56	199	0.58
I got to know most of the people pretty well.	-0.57	199	0.57
Everyone knew who belonged to our fraternity/sorority.	-1.71	199	0.09
We talked about ourselves in terms of this fraternity/sorority.	-0.19	196	0.85
We developed our own ways of doing things.	-0.83	198	0.41
We developed inside jokes, shared stories, etc.	0.80	198	0.43
We developed our own way of speaking to one another.	-0.14	198	0.89
When we were apart for a while it didn't take us long to get going again.	1.45	198	0.15
As a group, we pretty well know what will work.	0.75	198	0.46
I know everyone else's strengths and weaknesses.	0.00	198	1.00
I can identify things that remind me of this experience.	2.01	197	0.05
We look at the world a little differently than other people.	0.19	197	0.85
Sense of Identity			
I see strengths and weaknesses in myself now that I didn't know I had.	1.41	196	0.16
This experience caused me to examine my values.	-0.03	195	0.98
I relate to people differently now than I did before.	0.00	196	1.00
I see the world differently now than I did before.	-0.37	196	0.72
This fraternity/sorority experience changed me.	1.92	196	0.06

Future Research

As with all research, this study had limitations in addition to the caveat about responses of off-campus male students just described. My research was conducted using an instrument that involved self-reporting. Perhaps future research could study the same questions in a different way as to control some of the biases self-reporting may have had on the results of this study.

While this study was only able to compare men off-campus to men on-campus, perhaps future research could be conducted at an institution with enough off-campus women to add to the depth of information uncovered by this study. With more participants from women, these results might be more generalizable.

My study was conducted with predominately white fraternities and sororities only. Perhaps another research project could study Greek students in traditionally African-American or multi-cultural fraternities and sororities. These groups have not been adequately studied and could provide an additional depth of knowledge with Greek housing.

In this study Greek students were asked to reflect on their experiences as residents of their fraternity/sorority house and members of their organization. This may have presented some students with conflicting feelings or complicated the instrument unnecessarily. Future research may ask about only their residential experiences or organization membership. Perhaps a control group of non-residents could be used to consider how these seemingly different roles affect our Greek students collegiate experiences.

For this study, duration of membership in the organization as well as length of residency in the fraternity and sorority houses was carefully controlled to establish a minimum influence of the house and organization on the Greek student. This however, skewed the results towards older Greek students. Future research may use this instrument to study new members of houses and organization to broaden the general knowledge of new Greek students.

My study only represents a snapshot in time of the perceptions Greek students have of their experiences. Future research could be conducted to take a longitudinal approach to this research and measure these students at the beginning of their experience,

at a mid-point and then after graduation. This additional data could provide more depth and perspective to the results.

Implications for Practice

This study provided a few implications for practice. Greek students in this study did not generally describe their Greek chapters as sources of learning. Greek Affairs professionals at the institution this study was conducted, as well as other professionals should consider the role Greek organizations play in re-enforcing the learning objectives and climate of the institution. These results could be indicative how far many organization and drifted from their founding principles as scholarly organizations.

Many observations were made of Greek living environments at the institution this study was conducted. With concern for cleanliness, general health (smoke and alcohol paraphernalia), and the presence of items of Greek identity, Greek Affairs professional should consider conducting health audits of Greek housing. This information could prove valuable to Advisors and Greek Affairs professional as they plan for future programmatic (health or value based) interventions with Greek students.

The researcher also made observations of how serious some of the respondents reacted to this study. Greek Affairs professionals may consider these attitudes when planning future educational interventions. Other activities or programs may also be confronted with similar attitudes. Planning for these or even choosing ways to challenge these attitudes may improve the Greek community.

References

- Alva, S. (1998). Self-reported alcohol use of college fraternity and sorority members. *Journal of College Student Development, 39*, 3-10.
- American College Personnel Association. (1994). *The student learning imperative: Implications for student affairs*. Washington, DC: Author.
- Astin, A. (1993). *What matters in college? Four critical years revisited*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Astin, A. (1996). Involvement in learning revisited: Lessons we have learned. *Journal of College Student Development, 37*, 123-133.
- Boland, P. (1996, March). Understanding ACPA's student learning imperative. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American College Personnel Association, Baltimore, MD. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED404598)
- Blimling, G. (1989). A meta-analysis of the influence of college residence halls on academic performance. *Journal of College Student Development, 30*, 298-308.
- Bonwell, C., & Eison, J. (1991) *Active learning: Creating excitement in the classroom*. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED3402572)
- Brower, A., & Dettinger, K. (1998, November-December). What is a learning community? *About Campus, 15-21*.
- Cashin, J., Presley, C., & Meilman, P. (1998). Alcohol use in the Greek system: Follow the leader? *Journal of Studies on Alcohol, 59*, 63-70.
- Cross, K. (1998, July-August). Why learning communities? Why now? *About Campus, 4-10*.
- Faulkner, K., Alcorn, J., & Garvin, R. (1989). Prediction of alcohol consumption among fraternity pledges. *Journal of Alcohol & Drug Education, 34*, 12-20.
- Goodwin, L. (1992). Alcohol and drug use in fraternities and sororities. *Journal of Alcohol & Drug Education, 37*, 52-63.
- Harrington, N., Brigham, N. & Clayton, R. (1999). Alcohol risk reduction for fraternity and sorority members. *Journal of Studies on Alcohol, 60*, 521-527.
- Haworth-Hoepfner, S., Globetti, G., Stern, J., & Morasco, F. (1989). The quantity and frequency of drinking among undergraduates at a Southern university. *The International Journal of the Addictions, 24*, 829-857.

- Hughes, M., & Winston, R., Jr. (1987). Effects of fraternity membership on interpersonal values. *Journal of College Student Personnel*, 28, 405-411.
- Kaludia, G., & Zatkan, G. (1966). Anatomy of a pledge class. *Journal of College Student Personnel*, 7, 282-284.
- Kuh, G., & Arnold, J. (1993). Liquid bonding: A cultural analysis of the role of alcohol in fraternity pledgship. *Journal of College Student Development*, 34, 327-334.
- Lazar, M. (2002). *An examination of outcomes for participation in learning communities at Virginia Tech*. Unpublished independent study, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA.
- O'Connor, R., Jr., Cooper, S., & Thiel, W. (1996). Alcohol use as a predictor of potential fraternity membership. *Journal of College Student Development*, 37, 669-675.
- Palmer, P. (1997, November-December). Teaching and learning in community. *About Campus*, 4-13.
- Parker, D., & Gade, E. (1981). Fraternity and sorority perceptions of their residence environment. *Journal of College Student Personnel*, 22, 358-361.
- Pascarella, E., Bohr, L., Nora, A., & Terenzini, P. (1995). Intercollegiate athletic participation and freshmen year cognitive outcomes. *Journal of College Student Development*, 34, 216-220.
- Pascarella, E., Edison, M., Whitt, E., Nora, A., Hagedorn, L., & Terenzini, P. (1996). Cognitive effects of Greek affiliation during the first year of college. *NASPA Journal*, 33, 242-259.
- Pike, G. (1999). The effects of residential learning communities and traditional residential living arrangements on educational gains during the first year of college. *Journal of College Student Development*, 40, 269-284.
- Pike, G., & Askew, J. (1990). The impact of fraternity and sorority membership on academic involvement and learning outcomes. *NASPA Journal*, 28, 12-19.
- Pike, G., Schroeder, C., & Berry, T. (1997). Enhancing the educational impact of residence halls: The relationship between residential learning communities and first-year college experiences and persistence. *Journal of College Student Development*, 38, 609-621.

- Schutt, R. (1999). *Investigating the social world*. Boston: Pine Forge Press.
- Shapiro, N., & Levine, J. (1999). *Creating learning communities*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Terenzini, P., Pascarella, E., & Blimling, G. (1996). Students' out-of-class experiences and their influence on learning and cognitive development: A literature review. *Journal of College Student Development*, 37, 149-160.
- Tripp, R. (1997). Greek organizations and student development: A review of the research. *College Student Affairs Journal*, 16, 31-39.
- Turrentine, C. (2001). *Learning Communities Assessment*. Blacksburg, VA: Virginia Tech.
- Wilson, R., Wood, L., & Gaff, J. (1974). Social-psychological accessibility and faculty-student interaction beyond the classroom. *Sociology of Education*, 47, 74-92.
- Winston, R., Jr., Hutson, S., & McCaffrey, S. (1980). Environmental influences on fraternity academic achievement. *Journal of College Student Personnel*, 21, 449-455.

Appendix A

Learning Communities Assessment (LCA), (Turrentine, 2001)

1. My college is:

(1) Agriculture & Life Sciences	(6) Engineering
(2) Architecture & Urban Studies	(7) Graduate Studies
(3) Arts & Sciences	(8) Human Resources & Education
(4) Natural Resources	(9) University Studies
(5) Business	(10) Veterinary Medicine
2. I am:

(1) Male
(2) Female
3. I have been a member of this fraternity/sorority for:

(1) only this semester	(3) four or five semesters
(2) two or three semesters	(4) six or more semesters
4. I live in the fraternity/sorority house:

(1) yes (2) no

5. I live:

(1) on-campus (2) off-campus

Please answer the following questions using this scale:

(1) **Very descriptive** of my experience as a resident of this house and fraternity/sorority **TO** (10) **Very unlike** my experience as a resident of this house and fraternity/sorority.

6. I learned some basic information that was useful.
7. I learned to think in practical ways about things I already knew.
8. I learned to use what I already knew in practical ways.
9. I improved my writing skills.
10. I learned to think critically.
11. I improved my time management.
12. I improved my assertiveness skills.
13. I improved my ability to work as a team member.
14. I improved my ability to lead a team.

15. I improved my ability to speak to a small group.
16. I improved my ability to speak in public.
17. I improved my ability to make a formal presentation.
18. I improved my ability to plan events.
19. I improved my ability to solve problems.
20. I improved my ability to work with people who are very different from me.
21. I learned about the ethical treatment of others.
22. This fraternity/sorority experience felt like a community to me.
23. I got to know most of the people pretty well.
24. Everyone knew who belonged to our fraternity/sorority.
25. We talked about ourselves in terms of this fraternity/sorority.
26. We developed our own ways of doing things.
27. We developed inside jokes, shared stories, etc.
28. We developed our own way of speaking to one another.
29. When we were apart for a while it didn't take us long to get going again.
30. As a group, we pretty well know what will work.
31. I know everyone else's strengths and weaknesses.
32. I can identify things that remind me of this experience.
33. We look at the world a little differently than other people.
34. I see strengths and weaknesses in myself now that I didn't know I had.
35. This experience caused me to examine my values.
36. I relate to people differently now than I did before.
37. I see the world differently now than I did before.
38. This fraternity/sorority experience changed me.
39. Our fraternity/sorority met its own goals for this experience.
40. I met my own personal goals for this experience.
41. If I had a chance to do something like this again, I would definitely do it.
42. I would recommend this experience to others who are at the same point in their lives as I was.
43. I think about my chapter activities even on my own time.
44. I discussed my chapter activities with others.

45. I worked harder on my chapter activities than on other activities.

46. I felt like my chapter activities belonged to me.

47. I did my very best on my chapter activities.

48. I cared about the outcome of my chapter activities.

49. My chapter activities engaged my interest & imagination.

50. My chapter activities were intense.

Thank You for Your Participation!

Please double check your answers for accuracy and **return the survey to the researcher.**

Learning Communities Assessment (LCA), (Turrentine, 2001)

Collected by Sean S. Blackburn, Master's Candidate for Educational Leadership & Policy
Studies

Appendix B
Protocol Form

Good (morning, afternoon, evening). My name is Sean Blackburn. I'm a graduate student in higher education and student affairs. First off, let me thank you for allowing me to speak to you and take up some of your precious time.

I'm doing a study on Greek housing and would like to have members of this house fill out my survey.

You will record your response on a 1 to 10 scale with 1 meaning this is "*very descriptive of my experience as a resident of this house and fraternity/sorority*" and 10 meaning this is "*Very unlike my experience as a resident of this house and fraternity/sorority*."

For example: if the question is: "*I have learned many things this year*" and you feel this is very true and descriptive of your experience please respond with a 1. If this is not very true and descriptive of your experience please respond with a 10. You may use all the numbers in between to accurately describe how true these statements are of your experience.

This survey will, in effect, ask you to reflect on your "total" or "overall" experience as a resident of this house and member of your fraternity/sorority. Consider all that you have experienced from the beginning until now as a resident and as a member when answering these questions.

Only members of this fraternity/sorority who live in this house should fill out this survey. I will read the names aloud and begin passing out the survey. If you have any questions, please feel free to ask me.

Remember that your participation is voluntary. If you would like to stop at any point, please feel free to do so. Thank You.