

## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **INTRODUCTION**

Since the 1970s assessment has become increasingly important in higher education. More stringent demands from stakeholders and the government for institutions of higher education to demonstrate their “product” caused those constituencies to begin calling for measurements of quality and effectiveness (Upcraft & Schuh, 1996).

Historically, quality in higher education was determined by accountability to stakeholders such as faculty, government agencies, and parents for the academic experience offered. Evidence of accountability was accomplished through accreditation that focused on “inputs” relating to the institution such as library resources and number of faculty publications (Hyman, Beeler, & Benedict, 1994; Upcraft & Schuh, 1996). Additional inputs pertaining directly to students included standardized test scores of incoming students, and students’ high school academic rank (Hyman, Beeler, & Benedict, 1994; Upcraft & Schuh, 1996). These inputs were used to measure whether an institution was meeting standards.

As the focus on quality in higher education began to take root, placing attention on “inputs” led to a great deal of criticism (Woodard, Hyman, Von Destinon, & Jamison, 1991). As an alternative to measures of institutional quality focused solely on “inputs,” critics argued the usefulness of outcomes assessment as a broader measurement of quality in that it stressed what the institution produced. For example, measuring outcomes of the collegiate experience such as career placement rates better illustrate what the collegiate experience has delivered in terms of quality (Schuh & Upcraft, 2001). The focus on outcomes began to gain importance, which helped to encourage the transition from accountability to outcomes assessment.

As a result of this transition, both public and private institutions are relying more on outcomes assessment as a way to measure their success against their goals. Some general goals of higher education include educating students to be critical thinkers, preparing students for life after college, and helping students develop cognitively and psychosocially.

Most institutions conduct internal assessments of programs such as living learning communities and community development programs by surveying students in those environments to assess whether or not goals are being met. They then utilize the data received from those assessments to examine the quality of experience they provide their students (Schilling & Schilling, 1998; Woodward, et al., 1991).

Assessment of quality through the use of outcomes measurements has generally focused on either students' curricular or co-curricular involvement. Numerous assessments of curricular outcomes have examined how close students come to achieving desired results. These assessments include graduation and job placement rates, testing scores, and percentages of those who persist toward post-graduate study. Additionally, institutions measure student satisfaction with the academic experience, postgraduate achievements of students, and learning outcomes. These and other data are analyzed to assess outcomes of the curricular experiences of students (Schilling & Schilling, 1998; Schuh & Upcraft, 2001).

Student satisfaction is used as a method of outcomes assessment because it provides institutions with evidence as to students' perceptions of their academic experiences. While not a true measure of outcomes, these data enable the institution to gain the student perspective on services and programs. This information can be used, in part, to make informed decisions regarding the modification of academic programs (Schuh & Upcraft, 2001). Institutions utilize student satisfaction data to identify units that are not performing at acceptable levels versus those that are operating effectively in the eyes of students. Student perspective is not the only measure used in modifying programs. Both institutional mission and strategic plans are also important factors to consider; but student satisfaction is one form of assessment colleges and universities employ.

Another form of outcomes assessment involves postgraduate assessment. This can include a variety of measures including alumni satisfaction, but may also include measures such as career placement rates. These measures are used for evaluation and change purposes as well as for public relations purposes. Institutions use postgraduate assessment data to better understand how students fare after graduation. They can measure campus services used by former students and how those services may have helped alumni. They can also use career placement rates or percentages of alumni who pursue postgraduate education as evidence of the quality of the institution (Schuh & Upcraft, 2001).

Learning outcomes are yet another form of assessment currently used by postsecondary schools. Learning outcomes can measure complex cognitive skills, knowledge acquisition, and inter- and intra-personal development. Other outcomes measures include competence, academic achievement, and persistence. Civic responsibility is yet another outcome measured to demonstrate an added value for education. Such measures help institutions identify areas that

need to be improved or changed (Schuh & Upcraft, 2001). For example, an institution may use learning outcome data to redesign curricular or core requirements.

While a great deal of assessment has measured curricular outcomes, most college and university campuses offer an extensive array of co-curricular opportunities as well. Student affairs professionals typically manage many of these co-curricular programs and have developed an interest in measuring the outcomes associated with such activities (Woodard, et al., 1991).

Outcomes assessment, as it pertains to student affairs divisions, is primarily focused on student development. Student development can include changes in decision-making, interactions with others, awareness of the outside world, and understanding of oneself as an individual. Programming interventions are designed and implemented in an effort to promote the development of students across the cognitive, psychosocial, moral, and inter-personal realms (Evans, Forney, & Guido-DiBrito, 1998). Development of students across these areas may include promoting understanding and utilizing complex thought processes, defining oneself as an individual, ethical decision-making, and understanding and working with different group dynamics. Such programs are also created in order to promote skill development among students. As such, outcomes assessments can be focused on measuring skills students gain through co-curricular experiences (Astin, 1993; Kuh, Schuh, Whitt, Andreas, Lyons, Strange, Krehbiel, MacKay, 1991).

Co-curricular experiences that encourage student skill development can be illustrated through involvement in campus life. Astin (1993) noted that growth in autonomy, self-esteem, and communication skills are all results of increased personal development. To foster such growth, student affairs professionals provide a plethora of opportunities for students. These opportunities include involvement in clubs, organizations, and/or various leadership positions.

Clubs and organizations provide students an opportunity to become involved in campus life. These can include sports, religious, political or special interest clubs, Greek organizations, student governance bodies, military organizations, or honorary societies (Dunkle & Schuh, 1998). Students actively participating in such co-curricular activities report higher levels of leadership and communication skills. They are able to develop mature interpersonal relationships and they learn skills that can be transferred to many areas of life (Kuh, et al., 1991). Clubs and organizations offer opportunities for personal development skills to be learned, as do the leadership roles available to students who are involved in campus life. These roles can include

anything from serving as student orientation leaders, peer advisors, officers in specialized clubs, or resident assistants, to being officers in student government associations.

In their study on developmental outcomes of student leaders, Cress, Astin, Zimmerman-Oster, and Burkhardt (2001) found that the more time students spend in volunteer positions, the more likely they are to show growth in areas of leadership skills. These skills include civic responsibility, their understanding of personal and social values, and their awareness of cultural and community issues. This study was conducted on students who were part of a leadership program offered at 10 institutions. While the study examined developmental outcomes among students in a particular leadership program, the data were not analyzed to report results on leaders of any particular organization (e.g. student government leaders).

A related study was designed to examine the leadership experiences of students of color (Arminio, Carter, Jones, Kruger, Lucas, Washington, Young, & Scott, 2000). Participants consisted of student leaders from various types of organizations who were students of color. The study employed an interview protocol for data collection. Results revealed that current leadership programs are not validating experiences of student leaders of color because they focus on conventional leadership literature, which does not address students of color. While the study examined outcomes of leadership experiences, it focused only on general leadership experiences of students of color and did not specify type of leadership position or population served by the leaders.

Another group that is often studied is leaders of Greek organizations. In a 1987 study, the effects of fraternity membership on interpersonal values were studied (Hughes & Winston, 1987). Pledges, full members, and independent students participated in a two-part study in which they completed the Survey of Interpersonal Values (SIV) (Gordon, 1976). Findings indicated that fraternity membership serves to increase the interpersonal values of leadership and independence (Hughes & Winston, 1987). While the study examined outcomes of this particular type of leadership position, it focused only on experiences of fraternity members.

Orientation or peer advisors are another group of student leaders. Holland and Huba (1989) studied the personal development of orientation leaders. The data in their study indicated that orientation leaders develop more mature inter-personal relationships than their non-orientation leader counterparts. Personal development is also an outcome of this type of leadership experience. Other outcomes have been studied on other types of student leaders.

Student leaders involved in university and student governance have been examined (Moore, 1995). Moore (1991) in his research about student government involvement found that those student leaders gained knowledge of the political process and ethical and complex decision making skills. Kuh, Schuh, Whitt and Associates (1991) supported these findings and added that as students become more involved in university or departmental roles such as policy making and personnel searches, they continue to benefit.

Resident advisors (RAs) are another group of student leaders who have been studied. In their study of RA leadership practices, Posner & Brodsky, (1993) sought to examine differences in leadership practices of effective RAs. The results indicated that effective RAs participate in behaviors such as encouraging students, developing community consensus, and role modeling. While this study focused solely on effective RAs, Byrne (1998) studied the outcomes of resident advisors in general.

Findings by Byrne indicated that outcomes of the RA experience differed by size of residence hall. RAs in large residence halls reported increased opportunities for social and community development, and a greater sense of autonomy. Those RAs in medium sized halls reported a greater opportunity to participate in or lead committee meetings. Finally, RAs in small buildings reported a greater level of development of respect for others. This may have occurred because of better student/RA ratios in smaller buildings (Byrne, 1998).

The outcomes of residence students also have been studied (Astin, 1973; Blimling, 1995; Schroeder & Mable, 1994). Students living in the residence halls earn higher grade point averages than their off-campus counterparts. Further, on-campus residents have a higher rate of persistence towards degree completion. These results lead to the conclusion that on-campus residency tends to be a factor in student success.

In general, then, there is a relatively extensive body of literature on outcomes associated with leadership positions in general. Additionally there are studies related to leadership in the residence halls. That is, Astin (1973) examined the outcomes of residential living. Byrne (1998) and Posner & Brodsky (1993) conducted research on resident advisors. However resident advisors are not the only student leaders in the residence halls. Students involved in their Residence Hall Association (RHA) are also leaders who inhabit residence halls.

An RHA is designed give students the opportunity to get involved in order to improve the residence hall environment for the students living on campus. RHAs fulfill their responsibilities

by providing opportunities for community development through activities and programs. Additionally, the RHA serves as a forum for students to air issues, concerns, or questions about their living environments. In addition to direct service to the residence halls, the RHA serves as a leadership-training program through which student leaders are prepared to take on broader leadership positions around campus (Komives & Tucker, 1993).

Depending on the residence hall system, RHAs are structured in a variety of ways. Regardless of the internal structure, however, there is typically an executive board that is charged with overseeing the body as a whole, as well as serving as administrators of the RHA. The executive board is generally comprised of a President, Vice-President, National Communications Coordinator (NCC), Secretary, Treasurer, and an Advisor (Verry, 1993). Advisors serve an important role in that they maintain cohesiveness and help provide direction to the RHA. They work with the executive board, individuals, and the organization as a whole (Averill, 1993).

In summary, many college and universities are now using outcomes assessments as a measure of quality. Student affairs professionals have focused on promoting skill development and leadership skills are an important component of personal skill development. Much of the current literature on the topic of leadership focuses on leaders across all types of organizations (Cress, et al., 2001; Dunkle & Schuh, 1998; Kuh, et al., 1991), leaders with certain characteristics (Aminio, et al., 2000), or leaders of select organizations (Byrne, 1998; Holland & Huba, 1989; Hughes, & Winston, 1987; Kuh, et al., 1991; Moore, 1991; Moore, 1995; Posner & Brodsky, 1993). While the literature shows that students living in residence halls have greater opportunities for involvement in leadership experiences, cultural activities, and overall campus involvement (Shroeder & Mable, 1994), RHA leaders' experiences have not been studied as extensively. The present study was designed to address this gap in the existing body of literature on outcomes associated with higher education and leadership.

#### Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the present study was to examine the outcomes associated with RHA leadership experiences. Data were analyzed to determine if outcomes differed by type of position, age, sex, race, status of advisor (professional v. graduate student), and size of on-campus population (< 900 v. 1000+). For purposes of this study, residence hall leadership positions were defined as RHA President and National Communications Coordinators. These two offices were selected in that the responsibilities of their positions are similar on many

accounts and they most often work together to represent their RHA to different entities. Additionally, in defining race the term “majority” was used to describe all participants who reported being Caucasian and the term “minority” was used to describe all participants who reported being a member of the following minority groups: Asian, Black, Hispanic, Native American, or Other.

To assess outcomes, the Student Leadership Outcomes Inventory (SLOI) (Crowder, 2000) was administered to participants. This instrument asks participants to respond to a series of statements about their leadership experiences on a Likert-type scale that ranges from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree”. The items in the instrument can be divided into seven scales: critical thinking, career preparation, organization and planning, time management, development of self-confidence, diversity, and technology.

#### Research Questions

Specifically, the present study was designed to explore the following research questions.

- 1) Are there significant differences in critical thinking skills among RHA leaders by type of position, age, sex, race, professional status of advisor, and size of residential population served?
- 2) Are there significant differences in career preparation skills among RHA leaders by type of position, age, sex, race, professional status of advisor, and size of residential population served?
- 3) Are there significant differences in organization and planning skills among RHA leaders by type of position, age, sex, race, professional status of advisor, and size of residential population served?
- 4) Are there significant differences in time management skills among RHA leaders by type of position, age, sex, race, professional status of advisor, and size of residential population served?
- 5) Are there significant differences in development of self-confidence skills among RHA leaders by type of position, age, sex, race, professional status of advisor, and size of residential population served?
- 6) Are there significant differences in diversity awareness skills among RHA leaders by type of position, age, sex, race, professional status of advisor, and size of residential population served?

- 7) Are there significant differences in technology skills among RHA leaders by type of position, age, sex, race, professional status of advisor, and size of residential population served?

#### Significance of the Study

The present study had significance for both future practice and future research in student affairs. In terms of practice, several constituencies might benefit from the results of this study. For example, this study may be useful to student affairs professionals who work with RHA Leaders. The results provided them with information on skills gained through RHA leadership experiences. If the outcomes professionals hope to develop in RHA leaders are not being achieved, professionals might want to redesign the leadership and training experiences to achieve the desired outcomes.

The results of the present study might be useful to the national board members of NACURH, Inc. The results provided information on skills gained through RHA leadership experiences. If the outcomes the NACURH leaders want RHA leaders to achieve are not congruent with those reported in the data, NACURH board members might be able to work with schools to develop training experiences that will help students achieve the desired outcomes.

The results of the study may also benefit current RHA leaders. The study provided these leaders with information as to the skills gained as a result of their leadership experience. Additionally, it provided the leaders with a vocabulary to connect their leadership experiences with learning outcomes. RHA leaders might be able to use this information to market themselves in career endeavors or to encourage others to become involved in RHA leadership positions.

Finally, the present study might also benefit chief student affairs administrators. The results provided evidence as to what skills are gained through RHA leadership experiences. This information might be useful in documenting benefits accrued through leadership experiences. The results may provide evidence to justify expending valuable resources for such programs.

While the present study provided practical information to multiple constituencies, it also provided a foundation for future research. Future scholars may wish to compare the outcomes achieved by residence hall leaders with the outcomes achieved by Greek or student government leaders. The results from such a study might reveal whether outcomes differ for those who serve in different types of leadership positions.



The present study analyzed differences in leadership outcomes by type of position, age, sex, race, status of advisor, and size of residential population served. Future researchers may wish to investigate RHA leaders at various types of institutions and use the type of institution as an analytical factor. The results from such a study would expand the information available about the outcomes of RHA leadership experiences at different types of colleges and universities.

Finally, others may wish to examine the outcomes of other leadership positions within the RHA. The present study did not explore outcomes associated with serving as RHA Treasurer or Secretary for example. The results from such a study may reveal whether certain types of leadership positions within the RHA lead to different outcomes.

#### Limitations

The present study provided information for future research and professional practice. Additionally, as with all research, there were several limitations to the study.

The first limitation had to do with the instrument employed to collect the data. There are no conclusive reliability statistics on the SLOI. Without knowing if the SLOI accurately measures leadership outcomes over time or across populations, caution must be used in generalizing the results of this study.

The second limitation of the study was that it relied upon self-reported data. If participants were not forthright in their responses to the SLOI, the results may have been skewed.

Another limitation was the criteria used for selection of respondents. The definition of residence hall leader used in this study included only Presidents and NCCs of RHAs. Had other positions of leadership (i.e. Treasurer, Secretary, etc.) been included, the results may have differed.

One limitation had to do with the sample. A convenient sample was used for the present study, Respondents were self-selected to participate by attending a regional conference. By self-selecting to attend the conference and participate in the study, the results may not be representative of the total population of RHA leaders.

Finally, the study only controlled for certain characteristics of participants (e.g. not currently serving as an RA, experience in current position for at least one semester). If there were additional background variables that influenced the responses of participants (e.g. other leadership positions held), it is possible that the results may have been skewed.

Although the present study had several limitations, they did not detract from the overall contributions of the study. The present study was useful because it examined an area that other studies have not explored.

#### Organization of the Study

This study is organized around five chapters. The first contained an introduction to the study, including the purpose of the research, the research questions, the significance of the study, and the limitations of the study. Chapter Two provides a review of current literature on the topic of leadership outcomes. In Chapter Three, the methodology of the study is explained, including the sampling techniques, instrumentation, and procedures used to collect and analyze data. Chapter Four reports the results of the study, while Chapter Five contains a discussion of the results and their implications for future research and practice.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

There were several approaches the researcher might have taken to organize the literature related to the topic of RHA leadership outcomes. For example, the present study explored differences in outcomes of leadership experiences by the type of position, age, sex, race, status of advisor, and size of population served. The literature could have been organized around studies that explored these differences. However, the argument for conducting the study was based on the fact that while various types of student leaders had been examined in prior research, RHA leaders and the skills they develop had not been explored. Therefore, the researcher elected to organize the literature review around leadership on different types of student leaders. First, the outcomes of general leadership and involvement were explored. Then the current literature on specific types of student leaders was reviewed. Finally, since the study examined outcomes associated with student leaders of RHAs, the goals and purpose of NACURH are presented.

#### **Outcomes of General Leadership and Involvement**

A review of the literature on student leaders and involvement revealed research that focused on different areas of student leadership, including cognitive development, moral development, psychosocial and skill development (Astin, 1993; Cooper, Healy, & Simpson, 1994; Erwin, 1983; Howard, 1986; Kuh, 1995; Schuh & Laverty, 1983; Williams & Winston, 1985). Additionally, involvement is associated with many outcomes of leadership experience. Research supports the idea that students' co-curricular involvement in clubs, organizations and leadership roles may have lasting impacts and positive outcomes in skill development across many areas (Kuh, Douglas, Lund, & Ramin-Gyrnek, 1994).

Erwin (1983), in measuring levels of cognitive development among first year students, found that those who have been leaders in high school demonstrate higher levels of cognitive development when compared to students who were not leaders in high school. This study focused on cognitive development of leaders versus non-leaders in high school. Further the definition of "leader" employed in this study was very broad.

Other research has focused on how college leadership experiences affect cognitive development (Kuh, 1995). One study found that students' levels of cognitive growth could be attributed to involvement in leadership positions. Leadership experiences are among things to which students credit their cognitive development during their college years (Kuh, 1995).

Moral development is another area where research supports the influence of leadership. Kuh (1995) found that leadership involvement is associated with development of humanitarian and civic values. Pascarella, Ethington, and Smart (1988) support this notion in that the results of their research found that students who serve in leadership positions are more likely to believe in the value of civic involvement and humanitarian service.

Researchers have also examined psychosocial and skill development of student leaders. Psychosocial and skill development is described by increased appreciation of diversity (Crowder, 1999), organization, planning, and management (Cooper, Healy, & Simpson, 1994; Crowder, 1998; Crowder, 1999; Kuh, 1995; Schuh & Lavery, 1983; Williams & Winston, 1985), development of competence, interpersonal relationships (Kuh, 1991), and increased self-esteem (Astin, 1993).

Williams and Winston (1985) found that student organization members scored higher on psychosocial measures than their non-involved counterparts. Moreover, student leaders showed increased achievement in establishing interdependence, developing educational and career plans, and establishing mature interpersonal relationships.

Student leaders score higher on elements of Chickering's seven vectors based on their leadership experiences. Leadership experiences also seem to provide the opportunity for continued growth and development of skills (Cooper, Healy, and Simpson, 1994).

While research (Kuh, et al., 1994) suggests that high levels of involvement in leadership positions prepares students for life after college because of the skills and psychosocial development such involvement promotes, Kuh, Hu, & Vesper (2000) found that involvement accounts for only slightly better than average gains in skill and psychosocial development. While a large amount of the current research focuses on developmental outcomes of leadership experiences, other outcomes have also been associated with leadership experiences.

Pascarella & Terenzini (1991) conclude that students who are involved in campus organizations are more likely to be satisfied with their collegiate experience. Further, they argue that additional outcomes associated with involvement are persistence to graduation, enhanced self-confidence, and increased preparation for career development.

Increased confidence, reaffirmed professionalism and a broadening understanding of different people were noted as outcomes of leadership experiences of student affairs professionals surveyed about their leadership involvement (Renick, Terrell, & Jones, 1989).

Leadership experiences were also noted to have marked impacts on increased self-awareness, creativity, and ability to reduce levels of frustration and stress (Renick, et al., 1989).

In addition to outcomes of leadership experiences reported by current professionals, students who participate in leadership opportunities have a heightened awareness of the work world, what they can bring to a work environment and what their limitations as employees may be (Williams & Winston, 1985).

Students who participate in clubs and organizations have increased leadership and communication skills. Further, membership in such organizations leads to development of mature interpersonal relationships (Kuh, et al., 1991). Schuh and Laverty (1983) suggest that leadership experiences have a greater impact on the attainment of specific skills than specific activities. Teamwork, decision-making, planning and organization and assertiveness skills in particular are associated with serving as a leader. Additional skills that leaders reported included increased budget and finance skills, supervisory skills, and communication skills (Schuh & Laverty, 1983).

The skills associated with general leadership and involvement have been examined at length. Numerous studies look at experiences of leaders in general and some examine outcomes reported by past leaders. The present study, however, examined the outcomes associated with a particular type of leadership experience. As such, it was important to examine the current literature on specific types of leaders.

#### Literature on Types of Leaders

A review of the literature about specific types of leadership experiences rendered research focusing on Greek leaders, minority leaders, and women leaders. Student government leaders, orientation/peer advisors, and resident advisors have also been studied. This section explores the research around these areas.

Research on Greek leaders is varied and broad in scope. Studies examine academic outcomes and performance (Maisel, 1990; Pike & Askew, 1990); and general outcomes such as inter-personal and intra-personal skill development (Edison, Nora, Hagedorn, & Terenzini, 1996; Kuh & Lyons, 1990; Malaney, 1990; Pike & Askew, 1990; Posner & Brodsky, 1993).

A recent study on Greek involvement included 15,000 students and showed positive outcomes of Greek membership. Such outcomes included higher levels of satisfaction with the undergraduate experience and the ability to function in a group setting. Their experiences also

show that Greek leaders tend to get involved in more leadership experiences and service opportunities and have a higher degree of relationship building than independents. Finally, although grade point averages may be lower for Greeks than independents, Greeks exert more effort in the academic arena (Pike & Askew, 1990). This study rebuts claims made in other research that Greek life negatively affects academic outcomes negatively (Maisel, 1990).

Research conducted by Maisel (1990) argued that fraternal organizations deviate from the academic missions of colleges and universities. She adds that practices of fraternal organizations such as parties and recruitment events actually tend to be those that institutional administrators abhor. In examining missions versus actions of fraternal organizations, Maisel (1990) concluded that such organizations tend to reward complacency and ethnocentric views of the world. Kuh and Lyons (1990) support these findings in that their research found that participation in fraternal organizations tends to detract from institutional missions and encourages lower levels of inclusion, respect for difference, and heterogeneity.

Additional research on moral development of Greek leaders provides similar results. Edison, Nora, Hagedorn, and Terenzini (1996) found that joining a Greek organization had significant negative effects on areas such as openness to diversity and sense of rightness versus wrongness. Another study, however, found that Greek membership rendered no significant effect moral development (Marlowe & Auvenshine, 1982).

While a great deal of research has focused on the negative outcomes of membership and leadership in Greek organizations. Melaney (1990) found that Greek involvement had positive outcomes. Greek students gain from increased leadership opportunities and association with members who share similar values. Additionally, Greek membership increases the likelihood of participating in community service and activities outside of the Greek system. Such involvement helps students to develop an understanding of different people, and promotes civic responsibility and teamwork.

Greek Leadership is only one type of leadership experience. Other experiences include those of minority leaders. Minority leaders may lead any type of organization including Greek organizations.

Leadership in Black fraternities seems to differ from that of other Greek leaders based on the differing missions of the organizations (McKenzie, 1990). Kimbrough and Hutcheson (1998) in their study of African-American Greek leaders found that leadership experiences have

significant influence on conflict resolution skills, consensus building, ability to run cohesive meetings, and ability to plan and schedule. The data in this study also support the notion that leaders exhibit a higher level of confidence in their abilities than do non-leaders.

McKenzie (1990) adds that Black fraternal organizations are currently increasing their involvement in campus and community service. Such organizations were founded on the notion of leadership development through service. In directing their efforts toward service, the groups attempt to develop their leaders by providing opportunities for civic involvement.

Minority leaders are also involved in other organizations and clubs. In a recent study on minority leaders, Arminio, et al. (2000) suggest that minority leaders experience leadership differently than non-minorities. Research suggests that minority leaders differ in values they hold and what they hold important in leadership. Minority leaders tend to value service rather than recognition as leaders. Serving community is of great importance as is serving as a positive role model (Arminio, et al., 2000).

As a result of shared goals, minority leaders tend to become involved in clubs or organizations with other minority students (Mitchell & Dell, 1992). One major experience shared by minority leaders is the difficulty in reconciling their racial identity with their involvement (King, 1994). Leadership experiences help students to develop a sense of racial identity. As this sense of identity develops, so does the likelihood that students will participate in other leadership experiences (Mitchell & Dell, 1992). Left unchecked, this can result in students over extending themselves.

Women in leadership positions have also been studied. A review of the literature on women leaders rendered research about general experiences of women leaders. Women tend to base their leadership style on teamwork and consensus building. They tend to value people equally and to encourage active participation of all parties. Women leaders also report increased levels of political and social awareness, improved communication and organization skills, and an increased sense of self-confidence (Whitt, 1994).

Romano (1996) reported that women leaders are motivated to become involved in organizations because of their experiences with positive role models. Additionally, women learn to lead through teams. These experiences encourage development of understanding differing perspectives as well as managing group dynamics. Women leaders also report that their

experiences as leaders create difficulties for them when they try to explain to others the pressures they feel they are under (Romano, 1996).

Komives (1994) found that women leaders are less likely to participate in risk taking and confrontation behaviors than male leaders. Women's most noted practices included a desire and ability to encourage action of others through support and guidance. This suggests a strong relational orientation for women leaders.

Studies have also been conducted on student government leaders. Involvement in student governance is much less extensive than other types of student involvement (Boyer, 1987). However, for those who do get involved on this level, greater personal autonomy has been found to be an outcome. Other outcomes associated with student government leadership include management of organizational interests and development in the areas of conflict resolution, group dynamics, and management (Moore, 1995).

Kuh and Lund (1994) examined student government leaders and found that those leaders demonstrate increased moral awareness based on their leadership experiences. Increased awareness of and openness to social justice as well as attention to responsibilities as a civic leader in the community are also associated with serving as a student government leader.

Another form of involvement is participating in orientation/peer advisor programs. Holland and Huba (1989) explored the personal development of orientation leaders. The results suggest that orientation leaders develop more mature interpersonal relationships.

Involvement as a peer advisor has proven to provide students with their first experiences in understanding group processes and an awareness of the impact of being supported as individuals (Presser, Miller, & Rapin, 1984). Presser, et al. (1984) concluded that peer advisors and other paraprofessional student opportunities help students gain from service to others.

Resident advisors also serve as student leaders on campus and in the residence halls. This type of leadership experience is more on-going than some other leadership experiences in that students generally serve as RAs for an entire school year (Blimling, 1995). The RA experience provides student leaders with a variety of different opportunities to develop valuable leadership skills. These opportunities include: managing large groups of students, administrative management tasks, planning and organizing events, conducting conflict resolutions, decision-making opportunities, and developing inclusive communities (Blimling, 1995).



Posner and Brodsky (1993) studied effective RAs. They found that the RA experience provides opportunities for student leaders to hone practices such as enabling others to participate in activities, serving as a role model to residents, and serving as a resource/referral to help students through their experiences in the residence halls.

RAs also gain from the variety of their experiences (Twale & Burrell, 1994). They have the ability to learn from different people and to help others to understand and become aware of differences within their community. Additionally, their experience can include dealing with confrontations, which helps the RAs to learn to deal with conflict and develop decision-making skills.

In conclusion, there is a relatively extensive body of literature on the outcomes associated with leadership experiences in general. Moreover, certain groups of leaders, like women and minorities, have been studied in terms of outcomes. Finally, students with specific types of leadership experiences (e.g. student government leaders, orientation leaders, and RAs) have been examined with respect to outcomes of the leadership experiences. In some instances, differences in outcomes have been explored (e.g. race, sex).

There is one group of leaders, however, that has not been investigated. Leaders of Residence Hall Associations are involved in governance and programming issues in the residence halls. The present study sought to examine the outcomes associated with serving as an RHA leader and to investigate the differences in those outcomes by select demographic characteristics (e.g. type of position, age, sex, race, status of advisor, size of population served). Given the sample employed in the study, it is important to understand the goals and purposes of NACURH, Inc., the national association of RHAs.

#### Goals and Purposes of NACURH, Inc.

An understanding of the goals and purposes of NACURH is important to providing a context for the present study. NACURH is an association comprised of individual RHAs from different colleges and universities across the country. A review of the literature developed by NACURH, Inc. rendered information about its overall mission. The purpose of NACURH is “to design and facilitate programs and services to promote educational and leadership development goals of residence halls.” (NACURH, 1998 p.5) This is done through discussions, seminars, speakers, and leadership training at annual conferences and through the exchange of information throughout the academic year.

To help meet the goals of NACURH, national and regional conferences provide great focus on leadership development programming. In addition to these conferences, continuous communication via newsletters, electronic chat rooms, and email listservs provide networking and idea sharing between conferences.

Finally, NACURH provides additional services to its member schools. One such service is realized through sharing of the Resource File Index (RFI). The RFI is an index of past programs, training sessions, and academic and social initiatives that the member schools provide have sponsored. Other services include NACURH University, a leadership training session held annually, multiple handbooks focused on how to better meet responsibilities of RHA leadership positions, and Comprehensive Resource Packets (CRPs) that provide a “one-stop-shop” of information on any of up to 25 different topics (J. Burton, Personal Communication April 15, 2001).

This overview of NACURH, Inc., coupled with the literature on leadership outcomes provides the context for the present study. The study sought to address a gap in the existing literature on outcomes of certain types of leadership experiences by exploring the outcomes of RHA leaders.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **METHODOLOGY**

The purpose of this study was to assess the self-reported outcomes experienced by Residence Hall Association (RHA) leaders. Data were analyzed to determine if reported outcomes associated with RHA leadership roles differed based on type of position held (NCC v. President), age, sex, race (minority v. majority), professional status of advisor (graduate student v. full-time professional), or size of residential population (<999 v. 1000+).

Data were collected through a survey instrument. This instrument, the Student Leadership Outcomes Inventory (SLOI)(Crowder, 2000) was designed to measure outcomes of all types of student leadership experiences. Specifically, the present study was designed to explore the following research questions.

1. Are there significant differences in critical thinking skills among RHA leaders by type of position, age, sex, race, professional status of advisor, and size of residential population served?
2. Are there significant differences in career preparation skills among RHA leaders by type of position, age, sex, race, professional status of advisor, and size of residential population served?
3. Are there significant differences in organization and planning skills among RHA leaders by type of position, age, sex, race, professional status of advisor, and size of residential population served?
4. Are there significant differences in time management skills among RHA leaders by type of position, age, sex, race, professional status of advisor, and size of residential population served?
5. Are there significant differences in development of self-confidence skills among RHA leaders by type of position, age, sex, race, professional status of advisor, and size of residential population served?
6. Are there significant differences in diversity awareness skills among RHA leaders by type of position, age, sex, race, professional status of advisor, and size of residential population served?

7. Are there significant differences in technology skills among RHA leaders by type of position, age, sex, race, professional status of advisor, and size of residential population served?

#### Sample Selection

A convenient sample was used in collection of data. Data were collected from leaders of campus-based RHAs. All of the participants' RHAs were affiliated with the National Association of University Residence Halls (NACURH), an organization comprised of Residence Hall Associations (RHAs) within the United States and Canada (Wyatt & Stoner, 1984).

The purpose of each RHA is to improve the residence hall environment for the students inhabiting the halls on that campus. In order to do this, RHAs provide activities for residents. The RHA also serves as a system to address concerns about the living environment. In addition to providing direct service to residents, the RHA serves as a leadership training ground for other leadership positions around campus (Komives & Tucker, 1993). "Training ground" in this context, means the time in which students learn the skills to lead and manage affairs of other organizations and projects. For example, an RHA President who is in charge of planning a community wide social event may gain the rudimentary skills necessary for planning a much larger campus event as a leader of the student government association.

Depending on the residence hall system, there are a variety of ways the RHA can be structured internally. Regardless of the specific internal structure, however, there is typically an executive board that is charged with overseeing the body as a whole as well as serving as administrators of the RHA. The executive board is generally comprised of a President, Vice-President, NCC, Secretary, Treasurer, and an Advisor (Verry, 1993).

In the present study the President and the NCC were chosen as the leaders to be studied because of the similarities in their functions within the RHA. However, the responsibilities of the positions differ slightly, which may lead to the development of different skills based on position type.

The President of the RHA serves as chair of the organization. S/he is responsible for presiding over meetings of the association, coordinating the executive board, establishing goals and serving as the liaison between the RHA and the rest of the college or university system. The President often works closely with the NCC to equalize the roles that they play individually to

provide a balanced experience for their RHA members (NACURH, 1997). Both the NCC and the President serve as executive board members.

The role of the NCC is to serve as the main communication link between the host institution and other colleges and universities associated with NACURH. Beyond managing communication, the NCCs serve as the voting representatives of their institution at all meetings of NACURH, Inc. They coordinate and build conference delegations comprised of other student leaders from their schools' residence halls, train incoming NCCs and ensure that affiliation with NACURH is maintained (NACURH, 1998). While the NCC serves as the coordinator for external functions of the RHA, the President serves as the internal coordinator of the organization.

The potential sample for this study included NCCs and Presidents from all schools affiliated with NACURH, Inc. There were 300 such institutions during the 2000-2001 academic year and the NCCs and Presidents were full time students living on campus at the time of data collection.

Participants were required to meet three criteria to participate in the study. First, they must have been either elected or appointed to their position as either NCC or President for their campus' RHA. This was a selection criterion because the present study was designed to explore the leadership outcomes of only NCCs and Presidents.

Second, the NCCs or Presidents must have been in their respective positions for at least one semester at the time of data collection. The requirement for time in office was necessary to ensure that the leaders had an opportunity to experience the various roles that they were responsible for and to assess the skills gained from those experiences. The researcher determined that one semester was a sufficient time period to require of participants.

Third, participants could not be serving in the position of resident advisor (RA) at the same time they were serving as NCC or President of their RHA. Many RHA officers do serve in both RHA and RA capacities. But this study was designed to explore only outcomes associated with RHA leadership. Hence, it was necessary to assure that the NCCs and Presidents involved in the study responded to the survey used to collect data from an RHA perspective only.

NACURH is organized around eight geographic regions. Each region has a Regional Director and each holds a conference during the spring semester. Potential participants were solicited through contact at these conferences held throughout the spring 2001 semester.

Potential respondents were asked to participate in a study that was designed to assess the outcomes gained from RHA leadership experiences and to complete an instrument while at a conference.

In a general session chaired by the Regional Director, potential participants were given a packet of information that included a cover letter, an incentive registration form, and the SLOI. After distributing the packets, the Regional Director asked participants to read through the cover letter and asked if there were any questions about the nature of the study. After questions were answered, the Regional Director used a screening protocol (see Appendix A) to interview potential participants to ensure that they met the criteria for participation. This screening procedure is more fully explained later in this chapter. If they did not meet the selection criteria, they were thanked for their time and further participation was not pursued. If they did meet the criteria for participation, they were asked to complete an incentive registration form and complete the inventory.

In order to promote interest in participation, an incentive was offered. All those who agreed to participate were entered into a drawing for registration fees to the 2001 Annual NACURH Conference (estimated at \$242). This incentive was selected because all the participants would be attending the conference to fulfill their duties as either President or NCC and because the cost of attending the conference was relatively high so participants might be more motivated to participate in the study.

When participants completed the SLOI, they also completed an entry form to be included in the drawing for the incentive. The drawing was held shortly after April 1, 2001 after the final inventories had been administered. The researcher notified the winning participant and awarded the incentive.

#### Instrumentation

The data for the present study were collected by administering the Student Leadership Outcomes Inventory (SLOI)(Crowder, 2000)(See Appendix C). The SLOI was designed to measure the outcomes associated with all types of student leadership positions. It is quantitative in nature and the original inventory consisted of 87 items. Of those items, 19 elicited data about demographic characteristics while the remaining 68 items yielded data about leadership outcomes.

Although the SLOI has been administered on a number of occasions in recent years, no tests of statistical significance have been run on it other than to establish internal consistency for specific skills. For example, it was possible that some of the 68 non-demographic items on the instrument could be grouped into scales, but no one had ever conducted a factor analysis on the data yielded by the SLOI at the time the present study was initiated.

For the purposes of this study, therefore, the researcher conducted a series of factor analyses on data retrieved in a previous administration of the instrument to determine if scales could be identified. In conducting the factor analysis, the researcher identified 9 possible scales for factor loading. The analysis was conducted using 9 scales and results showed that some items were not loading into any scale. The researcher then attempted to run the analysis using 6 scales. When this was done, some items from the instrument were loading into scales but no logical reasoning for the loading could be identified. Finally, the researcher conducted an analysis using 7 scales. Using 7 scales, items on the instrument seemed to load in a logical fashion. Using this number of scales, some items failed to load onto any scale. When this happened, the researcher removed that item from the instrument. The results of the final factor analysis can be found in Appendix B.

The factor analysis rendered seven scales that included 50 of the original 68 non-demographic items on the instrument. The remaining 18 outcome-related items on the instrument did not load onto any sort of scale. For purposes of the present study, and with permission of the SLOI's author, the researcher revised the instrument to include only those 50 items that could be associated with a scale. Additionally, the researcher revised the demographic items to include only those items needed for purposes of the present study (N=10).

The version of the SLOI administered in the present study, then, consisted of 60 items that were divided into two sections: the first elicited demographic information and the second asked questions regarding skills gained from leadership experiences. The second section elicited responses that could be analyzed through the seven scales.

The demographic section asked 10 questions to gain background information on the participants. For example, participants were asked to identify which RHA position they held (President or NCC), the status of their advisor (graduate student or professional), their sex and their race, among other things. The responses in this section were used to sort participants into appropriate groups when analyzing the results.

The second section of the instrument was designed to elicit data about the outcomes gained through specific experiences in the leadership position. This section included 50 items that formed the seven scales determined through the factor analysis. The scales addressed the following areas: critical thinking skills, career planning skills, organization and planning skills, time management skills, self-confidence skills, diversity awareness skills, and skills related to the use of technology.

The first scale was the critical thinking scale that included 23 items designed to elicit responses regarding how particular leadership experiences affected the way leaders made or negotiated decisions and how they helped in developing individual and group dynamics. The items in this scale asked participants about their decision-making processes and interpersonal development. For example, one item asked respondents whether or not their leadership position had helped them develop skills for making ethical decisions. Another item asked whether their leadership experience helped them in offering others constructive criticism.

The second scale, the career planning scale contained seven items designed to elicit responses about how respondents' leadership experiences helped them in planning for a career. For example, one item asked respondents the degree to which their leadership position helped them develop transferable career skills. Another item asked them if their leadership position helped them develop skills that will advance their career aspirations.

Third, the organization and planning scale contained six items that elicited responses about organizing and planning for groups and events. In this scale, one item asked respondents whether their leadership position had helped them in developing organizational agendas. Other items asked respondents whether their leadership positions had helped them in planning and/or marketing events and activities.

The fourth scale was called the time management scale. This scale contained five items that were designed to elicit responses regarding how leadership positions affected time management skills. The items asked about time and stress management and establishing balance. For example, one item asked respondents whether their leadership position had helped them in establishing priorities. Another item asked whether respondents' leadership positions had helped them to establish balance in personal, academic, and professional areas of their lives.

The fifth scale contained three items that elicited responses about development of self-confidence. For example, one item asked respondents whether their leadership position helped



them be assertive in their interactions with others. Another asked whether their leadership position helped them develop confidence in their abilities.

The sixth scale was called the diversity awareness scale. It contained four items that elicited responses about awareness of diversity issues. The items focused on appreciation of differences and understanding cultural perspectives. One item asked respondents whether their leadership position helped them in appreciating different perspectives while another asked respondents whether their position increased their sensitivity to people who were different from themselves.

The seventh scale, the technology skills scale, included two items that elicited responses about use of technology in leadership positions. One item asked respondents whether their leadership position helped them in using computer software while the other asked if their position helped them in locating resources using the Internet.

Throughout this second section of the inventory, participants were asked to rate items on a Likert-type scale with responses ranging from 1 to 4. A response of 1 indicated the participant strongly disagreed with the statement while a response of 4 indicated the participant strongly agreed with the statement. Participants could also select a “no response” option on each item. For each of the items, the participants assessed the degree to which their student leadership role had influenced their achievement of the competencies addressed in the item. A copy of the instrument used in the study can be found in Appendix C.

#### Validity and Reliability

When administering an instrument, standard research practice requires reporting the validity and reliability of that instrument. Validity in quantitative research refers to the appropriateness and usefulness of the inferences made from test scores. It determines the level to which the instrument measures what it was designed to measure (Gall, Borg, & Gall, 1996). Validity is concerned with how well a concept is defined by the measures of the instrument (Hair, Anderson, Tatham, & Black, 1998).

In the present study, taking two steps enhanced validity. According to the instrument’s author, the instrument was developed and pilot studies were conducted on it. Participants in the pilot studies were asked to complete the instrument and to provide comments on the clarity of the instrument’s items and instructions. Comments from participants in the pilot studies were used to revise items and instructions. This process enhanced the face validity of the SLOI.

Second, conducting factor analyses to determine if patterns were present enhanced the validity of the SLOI. Factor analysis is used to examine relationships between large numbers of variables to determine if information can be condensed into more manageable components (Hair et al., 1998). This process served to enhance validity in that it determined existing relationships among items on the instrument and responses of participants. These relationships illustrate a connection between the questions posed by the SLOI and what the SLOI is designed to measure.

Reliability in quantitative research indicates the extent to which an instrument measures similar phenomena regardless of time or population (Gall et al., 1996). If a high degree of reliability is present, multiple measures will be very consistent in their values (Hair et al., 1998).

While complete reliability statistics for the SLOI have not been reported, some preliminary results for internal consistency do support that the SLOI is reliable internally. Internal consistency examines whether individual responses to different questions that ask for similar information are consistent (Gall et al., 1996). Cronbach's alpha coefficients for the SLOI ranged from .84 to .94 for internal consistency (M. Crowder, personal communication, October 6, 2000). These findings support the contention that the SLOI is a reliable instrument.

#### Data Collection Procedure

The present study was conducted with the endorsement of NACURH, Inc. Under such auspices and because the research presented no risk to the participants, it was not necessary for the researcher to obtain permission from the Institutional Review Board on Research Using Human Subjects at the researcher's institution. The researcher did, however, obtain written endorsement of the project from NACURH, Inc. (see Appendix D).

Within NACURH, Inc. there are eight regional affiliates. Each of the regional affiliates holds a spring conference between February and April every year. Presidents and NCCs of NACURH member schools attend their regional conference so that regional business can be conducted. Data for the present study were collected using a convenient sample of those present at these regional conferences with the Regional Directors serving as facilitators of the data collection process.

A session was set aside to collect data at each regional conference. At the start of that session, all potential participants were given a packet that included a cover letter from the researcher, a copy of the SLOI, an opscan (response) form, and an incentive registration form.

The cover letter (Appendix E) included information about the researcher and the purpose of the study. It described the incentive for participation, eligibility requirements, responsibilities of participants, and other pertinent details about the study. Finally, the letter asked the students to participate in the study.

At each data collection session, the Regional Director asked all potential participants to read the cover letter. Then, the Director asked a series of three questions to ensure that only eligible participants completed the SLOI. First, the Director asked those who were not either an RHA President or NCC to leave the session. Next, the director asked those who had not served in their RHA leadership position for at least one semester to leave the session. Finally, the Director asked those who were serving as RAs as well as RHA officers to leave the session. This ensured that those potential participants still remaining in the session met all three criteria for participating in the study. The Director then asked the eligible participants to complete the SLOI instrument and incentive registration form.

The incentive registration form served as the entry for the drawing of the incentive. The form asked the participant for contact information (i.e. name, phone number and email address) so that the winner of the incentive could be notified.

After the completed inventories had been returned to the Regional Director, the Director photocopied each inventory to provide a back up and mailed the original inventories along with the incentive registration forms to the researcher within five days of the conference.

In order to ensure confidentiality, the researcher separated incentive registration forms from the SLOIs upon receiving them. This ensured that all participants who completed the SLOI were entered into the drawing for the incentive while also assuring that the confidentiality of information provided by the participants was maintained.

#### Data Analysis Procedures

Once data were collected, the researcher began to analyze those data. Data were analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) (Kellough, 1985).

First, the mean scores for each scale of the instrument were calculated for all respondents. This allowed the researcher to determine the range of mean scores and to look for any outlying responses in the data.

Next, the researcher sought to answer the research questions posed in the study. For example, the first question explored whether there were significant differences in the critical

thinking scores of participants by type of position, professional status of advisor, size of residential population served, race or sex. To respond to this question, the researcher calculated the mean score of the 23 items that loaded onto the critical thinking scale for each of 13 groups (e.g., NCCs, Presidents, males, females). Next, the researcher conducted a series of ANOVAs to examine if there were significant differences in mean scores among groups (e.g., Presidents v. NCCs, male v. females). The researcher then conducted an ANOVA to determine if there was an interaction effect between professional status of advisor and size of population. Tests for interaction effects were run because it was possible that larger institutions employed full-time professionals as advisors more often than smaller institutions which might have had an impact on the findings. All ANOVAs were conducted at the  $p < .05$  level of significance.

This process was repeated to respond to the remaining six research questions posed in the study. In each case, the mean score for each group was calculated for each scale. Those mean scores were subjected to ANOVAs to look for significant differences between and/or among groups.

In conclusion, a 60-item instrument utilizing a Likert-type scale was employed to examine the outcomes reported by RHA leaders. The results were analyzed to examine differences by type of position, age, sex, race, status of advisor, size of population, and interactions between professional status of advisor and size of population served. The methodology described in this chapter was deemed sufficient to enable the researcher to answer the research questions posed in the study.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **RESULTS**

The purpose of this chapter is to report the findings of the present study. The chapter begins by describing changes to the data collection procedures. This is followed by a description of the sample. Finally, the data analyses, which are organized around the seven research questions presented in this study, are reported.

#### Changes in Data Collection Procedure

There was one change in the collection of data from that which was described in Chapter Three. The present study utilized a convenient sample of participants attending one of NACURH's eight regional spring conferences. Prior to each conference the researcher mailed instruments to each of the conference sites. In one instance, the North East conference, the package containing the instruments was not received in time to collect data. Thus, data were collected at only seven of the eight spring conferences.

It is also important to note that the number of participants who identified as "President" was less than anticipated and was less than would normally be expected at the spring conferences. The researcher suspects that the number of Presidents eligible to participate in the study was limited because a large number of Presidents were also serving as RAs, a fact that eliminated them from participating in the study. Moreover, the national NACURH conference was being held on the west coast in the spring of 2001. Anecdotal evidence suggests that fewer Presidents attended their spring regional conferences in order to have sufficient funding to attend the national conference. As a result, fewer Presidents were eligible to participate in the study, a fact that may have had an effect on the results of the study.

#### Description of the Sample

The demographic characteristics of the participants are summarized in Table 1. A total of 266 respondents completed the SLOI. The characteristics of the respondents are reported according to type of position, tenure in position, sex, age, class standing, ethnicity, prior training received, status of advisor, size of on-campus population, and regional affiliate.

One hundred ninety-five (73.3%) of the respondents were National Communications Coordinators (NCCs) and 71 (26.7%) of the participants were Presidents. Among participants, 140 (52.6%) had served in their respective positions for one academic term; 84 (31.6%) had

Table 1

Demographic Characteristics of the Sample (N = 266)

Characteristic	n	%N
Type of Position		
NCC	195	73.3
President	71	26.7
Tenure in Position		
< 1 academic term	0	-
1 academic term	140	52.6
2 academic terms	84	31.6
3 academic terms	21	7.9
> 3 academic terms	21	7.9
Sex		
Male	105	39.5
Female	161	60.5
Age		
Younger than 18	0	-
18-19	77	28.9
20-21	145	54.5
22-24	42	15.8
25+	2	.8
Class Standing		
Freshman	27	10.2
Sophomore	76	28.6
Junior	92	34.6
Senior	65	24.4
Graduate Student	6	2.3
Race		
Majority	202	75.9
Minority	64	24.1
Prior Training		
Yes	186	69.9
No	80	30.1

Status of Advisor		
Full-time	228	85.7
Graduate Student	38	14.3
Size of on-campus population		
999 or less	38	14.3
1000 or greater	228	85.7
Regional Affiliation		
CAACURH	30	11.3
GLACURH	47	17.7
IACURH	49	18.4
MACURH	22	8.3
NEACURH	0	-
PACURH	55	20.7
SAACURH	37	13.9
SWACURH	26	9.8

---

served for two terms; 21 (7.9%) had served three terms, and 21 (7.9%) reported serving more than three academic terms.

The sample consisted of 105 (39.5%) males and 161 (60.5%) females. Ages ranged from 18 years to 25 plus years. Seventy-seven (28.9%) were from 18 to 19 years of age; 145 (54.5%) were from 20 to 21 years of age; 42 (15.8%) were from 22 to 25 years, and 2 respondents (.8%) reported being 25 years or older.

In terms of racial make-up, the sample included 202 (75.9%) participants who identified themselves as members of the racial majority. The remainder, 64 (24.1%) identified themselves as members of a minority racial group. The sample included 186 (69.9%) students who had participated in training prior to holding their current office and 80 (30.1%) who had not participated in such training.

Finally, 228 (85.7%) of the respondents reported having a full-time professional as their advisor and the remaining 38 (14.3%) reported having a graduate student as their primary advisor. Size of on-campus population was also examined. Thirty-eight (14.3%) respondents reside on campuses where the on-campus population is 999 or less and the remaining 228 (85.7%) reside on campuses with populations exceeding 1,000. Among participants regional affiliation was reflected as follows: CAACURH, 30 (11.3%); GLACURH, 47 (17.7%); IACURH, 49 (18.4%); MACURH, 22 (8.3%); PACURH, 55 (20.7%); SAACURH, 37 (13.9%); SWACURH, 26 (9.8%).

#### Results Regarding the Critical Thinking Scale

The first research question posed in the study examined whether there were differences by type of leader, age, sex, race, status of advisor, and size of residential population served related to the 23 items asked in the critical thinking scale. Seven ANOVAs were conducted to test six main effects and one interactive effect. Significant differences were revealed in one of the seven tests. The results of the seven ANOVAs regarding this scale are reported in Table 2. The one significant difference was revealed in one main effect: sex. Female respondents reported a higher mean score (3.5) than male respondents (3.3).

#### Results Regarding the Career Preparation Scale

In reference to the seven questions that loaded into the career preparation scale, seven ANOVAs were run to examine the differences reported by type of leader, age, sex, race, status of advisor, and size of residential population served. One significant difference was revealed related



Table 2

ANOVA Results on Critical Thinking Scale (N = 266)

Characteristic	n	%	M	sd	df	F	Sig
Type of position					1	3.056	.082
NCC	195	73.3	3.4	.54			
President	71	26.7	3.4	.51			
Sex					1	9.951	.002*
Male	105	39.5	3.3	.54			
Female	161	60.5	3.5	.35			
Age					3	.569	.636
18-19	77	28.9	3.5	.52			
20-21	145	54.5	3.4	.37			
22-24	42	15.8	3.4	.52			
25+	2	.8	3.1	.47			
Race					1	.129	.719
Majority	202	75.9	3.4	.39			
Minority	64	24.1	3.4	.58			
Status of Advisor					1	.561	.454
Full-time	228	85.7	3.4	.45			
Graduate student	38	14.3	3.3	.37			
On-campus Population					1	.003	.954
999 or <	38	14.3	3.4	.34			
1000 or >	228	85.7	3.4	.46			
Status of Advisor and On-campus Population					1	.047	.829
Full-time 999 or <	34	12.8	3.4	.34			
Full-time 1000 or >	194	72.9	3.4	.47			
Graduate 999 or <	4	1.5	3.4	.38			
Graduate 1000 or >	34	12.8	3.3	.37			

\* = significant at the .05 level

to sex of participants. The results of the seven ANOVAs calculated for this scale are reported in Table 3. Females reported a higher mean score (3.7) than did male respondents (3.5).

#### Results Regarding the Organization and Planning Scale

The third research question posed in the study examined whether there were differences by type of leader, age, sex, race, status of advisor, and size of residential population served related to the six questions asked in the organization and planning scale. Seven ANOVAs were conducted to test six main effects and one interactive effect. Significant differences were revealed in one of the seven tests. The results regarding this scale are reported in Table 4. The one significant difference was revealed in one main effect: sex. Female respondents reported a higher mean score (3.5) than the male respondents (3.3).

#### Results Regarding the Time Management Scale

Research question four examined the differences in the time management scale reported by type of leader, age, sex, race, status of advisor, and size of residential population served. Seven ANOVAs were conducted to test six main effects and one interactive effect. A significant difference was revealed in one of the seven tests. Table 5 reveals contains the results of the ANOVAs calculated regarding this scale. In terms of sex, female respondents reported a higher mean score (3.5) than did their male counterparts (3.4).

#### Results Regarding the Self-Confidence Scale

In reference to the three items that loaded onto the development of self-confidence scale, seven ANOVAs were run to examine the differences reported by type of leader, age, sex, race, status of advisor, and size of residential population served. Two significant differences were revealed related to type of position and sex of participants. The results of the seven ANOVAs calculated for this scale are reported in Table 6. In terms of type of position, RHA Presidents reported a higher mean score (3.6) than did NCCs (3.5). In regards to sex, the mean score for females (3.6) was higher than that reported by males (3.5).

#### Results Regarding the Diversity Awareness Scale

Research question six examined the differences in the diversity awareness scale reported by type of leader, age, sex, race, status of advisor, and size of residential population served. Seven ANOVAs were conducted to test six main effects and one interactive effect. A significant difference was revealed in one of the seven tests. Table 7 reveals contains the results regarding

Table 3

ANOVA Results on Career Preparation Scale (N = 266)

Characteristic	n	%	M	sd	df	F	Sig
Type of position					1	.151	.445
NCC	195	73.3	3.6	.53			
President	71	26.7	3.6	.43			
Sex					1	4.161	.042*
Male	105	39.5	3.5	.57			
Female	161	60.5	3.7	.45			
Age					3	1.127	.338
18-19	77	28.9	3.6	.58			
20-21	145	54.5	3.6	.48			
22-24	42	15.8	3.7	.53			
25+	2	.8	3.0	.83			
Race					1	.947	.331
Majority	202	75.9	3.6	.45			
Minority	64	24.1	3.6	.65			
Status of Advisor					1	.188	.665
Full-time	228	85.7	3.6	.52			
Graduate student	38	14.3	3.6	.43			
On-campus Population					1	2.579	.110
999 or <	38	14.3	3.7	.36			
1000 or >	228	85.7	3.6	.53			
Status of Advisor and On-campus Population					1	.166	.684
Full-time 999 or <	34	12.8	3.7	.36			
Full-time 1000 or >	194	72.9	3.6	.54			
Graduate 999 or <	4	1.5	3.7	.46			
Graduate 1000 or >	34	12.8	3.6	.44			

\* = significant at the .05 level

Table 4

ANOVA Results on Organization and Planning Scale (N = 266)

Characteristic	n	%	M	sd	df	F	Sig
Type of position					1	1.065	.303
NCC	195	73.3	3.4	.64			
President	71	26.7	3.5	.39			
Sex					1	10.334	.001*
Male	105	39.5	3.3	.57			
Female	161	60.5	3.5	.57			
Age					3	.134	.940
18-19	77	28.9	3.4	.81			
20-21	145	54.5	3.4	.44			
22-24	42	15.8	3.5	.53			
25+	2	.8	3.6	**			
Race					1	.272	.602
Majority	202	75.9	3.4	.60			
Minority	64	24.1	3.5	.54			
Status of Advisor					1	.841	.360
Full-time	228	85.7	3.5	.60			
Graduate student	38	14.3	3.4	.45			
On-campus Population					1	.281	.596
999 or <	38	14.3	3.4	.49			
1000 or >	228	85.7	3.4	.60			
Status of Advisor and On-campus Population					1	2.787	.096
Full-time 999 or <	34	12.8	3.5	.44			
Full-time 1000 or >	194	72.9	3.5	.63			
Graduate 999 or <	4	1.5	2.9	.67			
Graduate 1000 or >	34	12.8	3.4	.40			

\* = significant at the .05 level

\*\* 7.071E-02

Table 5

ANOVA Results on Time Management Scale (N = 266)

Characteristic	n	%	M	sd	df	F	Sig
Type of position					1	.518	.472
NCC	195	73.3	3.5	.56			
President	71	26.7	3.5	.48			
Sex					1	4.201	.041*
Male	105	39.5	3.4	.60			
Female	161	60.5	3.5	.50			
Age					3	.506	.678
18-19	77	28.9	3.5	.59			
20-21	145	54.5	3.4	.50			
22-24	42	15.8	3.5	.59			
25+	2	.8	3.4	.28			
Race					1	.177	.674
Majority	202	75.9	3.5	.53			
Minority	64	24.1	3.4	.56			
Status of Advisor					1	.291	.590
Full-time	228	85.7	3.5	.55			
Graduate student	38	14.3	3.5	.48			
On-campus Population					1	.119	.730
999 or <	38	14.3	3.5	.44			
1000 or >	228	85.7	3.5	.56			
Status of Advisor and On-campus Population					1	.991	.320
Full-time 999 or <	34	12.8	3.5	.43			
Full-time 1000 or >	194	72.9	3.4	.57			
Graduate 999 or <	4	1.5	3.3	.53			
Graduate 1000 or >	34	12.8	3.5	.48			

\* = significant at the .05 level

Table 6

ANOVA Results on Self-Confidence Scale (N = 266)

Characteristic	n	%	M	sd	df	F	Sig
Type of position					1	4.476	.035*
NCC	195	73.3	3.5	.56			
President	71	26.7	3.6	.41			
Sex					1	5.520	.020*
Male	105	39.5	3.5	.62			
Female	161	60.5	3.6	.44			
Age					3	.506	.678
18-19	77	28.9	3.5	.55			
20-21	145	54.5	3.6	.49			
22-24	42	15.8	3.7	.55			
25+	2	.8	3.2	1.18			
Race					1	1.421	.234
Majority	202	75.9	3.6	.49			
Minority	64	24.1	3.5	.62			
Status of Advisor					1	.271	.603
Full-time	228	85.7	3.6	.53			
Graduate student	38	14.3	3.5	.51			
On-campus Population					1	.135	.713
999 or <	38	14.3	3.6	.48			
1000 or >	228	85.7	3.5	.53			
Status of Advisor and On-campus Population					1	.262	.609
Full-time 999 or <	34	12.8	3.6	.49			
Full-time 1000 or >	194	72.9	3.5	.54			
Graduate 999 or <	4	1.5	3.4	.42			
Graduate 1000 or >	34	12.8	3.5	.53			

\* = significant at the .05 level

Table 7

ANOVA Results on Diversity Awareness Scale (N = 266)

Characteristic	n	%	M	sd	df	F	Sig
Type of position					1	.048	.827
NCC	195	73.3	3.4	.54			
President	71	26.7	3.4	.51			
Sex					1	12.909	.000*
Male	105	39.5	3.3	.62			
Female	161	60.5	3.5	.44			
Age					3	.526	.665
18-19	77	28.9	3.4	.64			
20-21	145	54.5	3.4	.44			
22-24	42	15.8	3.5	.59			
25+	2	.8	3.3	.35			
Race					1	.654	.420
Majority	202	75.9	3.4	.49			
Minority	64	24.1	3.4	.65			
Status of Advisor					1	1.147	.285
Full-time	228	85.7	3.4	.54			
Graduate student	38	14.3	3.3	.46			
On-campus Population					1	.059	.808
999 or <	38	14.3	3.4	.49			
1000 or >	228	85.7	3.4	.54			
Status of Advisor and On-campus Population					1	.001	.975
Full-time 999 or <	34	12.8	3.4	.48			
Full-time 1000 or >	194	72.9	3.4	.55			
Graduate 999 or <	4	1.5	3.3	.66			
Graduate 1000 or >	34	12.8	3.3	.45			

\* = significant at the .05 level

this scale. In terms of sex, female respondents reported a higher mean score (3.5) than did their male counterparts (3.3).

#### Results Regarding the Technology Scale

In reference to the three questions that loaded into the technology scale, seven ANOVAs were run to examine the differences reported by type of leader, age, sex, race, status of advisor, and size of residential population served. One significant difference was revealed related to the status of advisor. The results are reported in Table 8. In regards to advisor status respondents having a full-time advisor reported a higher mean score (3.2) than those who had graduate students as advisors (2.8).

In summary, the researcher conducted 49 ANOVAs (7 on each of 7 scales) of which 8 revealed significant difference. These differences, and their implications for future practice and research are discussed in the final chapter of this study.



Table 8

ANOVA Results on Technology Scale (N = 266)

Characteristic	n	%	M	sd	df	F	Sig
Type of position					1	3.125	.078
NCC	195	73.3	3.2	.80			
President	71	26.7	3.0	.95			
Sex					1	.635	.426
Male	105	39.5	3.1	.94			
Female	161	60.5	3.2	.78			
Age					3	.655	.581
18-19	77	28.9	3.1	.93			
20-21	145	54.5	3.1	.82			
22-24	42	15.8	3.3	.81			
25+	2	.8	3.5	.00			
Race					1	1.671	.197
Majority	202	75.9	3.2	.80			
Minority	64	24.1	3.0	.96			
Status of Advisor					1	6.232	.013*
Full-time	228	85.7	3.2	.84			
Graduate student	38	14.3	2.8	.80			
On-campus Population					1	.018	.892
999 or <	38	14.3	3.1	.81			
1000 or >	228	85.7	3.1	.85			
Status of Advisor and On-campus Population					1	.171	.680
Full-time 999 or <	34	12.8	3.2	.83			
Full-time 1000 or >	194	72.9	3.2	.85			
Graduate 999 or <	4	1.5	2.6	.48			
Graduate 1000 or >	34	12.8	2.8	.84			

\* = significant at the .05 level

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **DISCUSSION OF RESULTS**

The focus of this study was to examine the outcomes achieved by RHA officers based on their leadership experiences. These outcomes were explored on the seven scales of the SLOI: critical thinking skills, career preparation skills, organization and planning skills, time management skills, self-confidence skills, diversity awareness skills, and technology skills.

This chapter presents a discussion about the study, its results, and their implications for future practice and research and is organized around five sections. First, the chapter provides a description of the relationship of the findings to prior research. The next section describes the results of the study. This is followed by the implications for future practice and research. The fourth section discusses the limitations of the study. Finally, some conclusions about the study are drawn.

#### **Relationship of Findings of Prior Research**

When the results of the present study are compared with prior studies, two patterns emerge. In most cases, the present findings support prior research. In other instances, the results contradict those of prior studies.

There have been several studies conducted that the results of this study support. The present study reveals that RHA leaders achieve outcomes related to critical thinking skills. These results support research on the effects of leadership experiences. Leadership involvement was found to have a positive effect on cognitive development and the ability to reason critically (Kuh, 1995).

The findings related to career preparation skills revealed that outcomes achieved include positive effects on career preparation. These findings support prior research on leadership experiences. Students who participate in leadership positions report increased achievement in career planning and preparation for career development (Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991; Williams & Winston, 1985). Further, Kuh, et al. (1994) found in their study of student leaders that involvement in leadership activities prepares students for careers and life in the world outside of college.

In terms of organization and planning skills, the present findings suggest that leadership experiences play a role in outcomes achieved in organization and planning skills. This supports other research on the effects of leadership experiences on organization and planning skills.

Student leaders report increased levels of organization and planning skills as a result of their leadership experiences in a study conducted by Schuh and Laverty (1983). Student leaders also show growth in tasks as planning agendas and managing multiple tasks (Cooper, et al., 1994).

The results of the self-confidence skills scale indicate that outcomes achieved in the area of self-confidence can be attributed to leadership activities, especially in the areas of type of position held and sex of the leader. In general, these findings support prior research in that student leadership experiences have led to increases in self-esteem and confidence levels (Astin, 1993). Pascarella and Terenzini (1991) discuss the role leadership involvement has demonstrated in terms of developing a sense of self and a sense of self-confidence. Additionally, student leadership experiences have been linked to increased levels of confidence in abilities and strengths (Renick, et al., 1989).

Finally, the results of the present study indicate that RHA leadership experiences can have demonstrable outcomes in the area of diversity awareness. This supports prior research conducted on this topic. Student leadership experiences have been shown to broaden student leaders' understanding of different people and cultures (Renick, et al., 1989). Whitt (1994) discussed the findings of her research on female leaders and reported that women leaders tend to have a better understanding of political and social awareness that includes diversity issues. The findings of the present study support this contention in that female respondents showed significantly higher achievement in the diversity awareness arena than their male counterparts.

The results of one study pertaining to race are not supported by the present study. In their qualitative study of minority leaders, Arminio, et al. (2000) found that minority leaders experience leadership and outcomes associated with leadership experiences differently than their majority counterparts. Although the data for the present study were quantitative versus qualitative, this finding is not supported by the present study in that the present results show no significant differences in outcomes achieved on any of the seven scales based on race.

Given this overview of the findings in terms of prior studies, it is interesting to examine the results of this study in their own right. To do so, it was important to examine the findings in light of the research questions posed in the study.

#### Discussion of the Results

In the present study 49 ANOVAs were run to test for significant differences. Based on this number of tests it would be expected that 2-3 significant results would be revealed. The

present study found 8 significant differences so it can be suggested that factors other than mere chance were at play. Perhaps most important to note was that 6 of those 8 significant differences all related to sex of participants. It is reasonable to suggest that there is a pattern of differences in leadership outcomes by sex of the leader and that women report greater outcomes across the board.

Before discussing the results in regards to the research questions posed in the study, it should be noted that most mean scores on all items reported by all groups fell between 3.0 and 3.7. In fact, there were only 3 items for which the mean score reported by any group was less than 3.0. The scale utilized by the SLOI ranges from 1-strongly disagree to 4-strongly agree. This suggests that RHA leaders report some degree of positive outcomes achievement in all seven scales examined by the SLOI.

The variables in which mean scores were less than 3.0 were that from respondents with graduate student advisors on the Technology scale (2.8) and that of the interaction of graduate student advisor and small institutional population on two scales. In the Organization and Planning scale the mean score was 2.9 and on the Technology scale the mean score was 2.6. Overall, it would seem that RHA leaders are achieving positive outcomes from their leadership experiences.

The first research question posed in this study explored whether there are significant differences in critical thinking skill outcomes by type of position, race, sex, age, professional status of advisor, and size of residential population served. The results indicate that females (3.5) report significantly greater effects on critical thinking skills than did males (3.3).

One possible explanation for the findings related to sex is that greater numbers of women are serving in advisory capacities to RHAs. Indeed, greater numbers of women are employed in the student affairs profession in general. As a result, female student leaders may have more role models available to them or may be more encouraged to develop critical thinking skills.

Another explanation may relate to the numbers of females actively involved in RHA leadership experiences (approximately 60%). Their greater numbers may encourage women to feel better supported in their efforts to make sound decisions, which can lead to development of critical thinking skills.

The next research question explored whether there are significant differences in career preparation skill outcomes achieved by type of position, race, sex, age, professional status of

advisor, and size of residential population served. Results indicate that mean scores for females (3.7) were higher than those of males (3.5) in regards to career planning skills.

This result is somewhat interesting in that often times in the past it was male students who received more attention with respect to developing career goals and plans. It is possible that the results that surfaced in this study did so because it is now more common to try to provide equitable opportunities to males and females alike. Some believe that in order to right past wrongs, more attention should be given to the group that had not received the support historically. If this is the case, female students may be receiving more attention than males in regard to developing career planning and preparation skills.

Organization and planning skills were the subject of the next research question. The question examined whether there are significant differences in outcomes achieved by type of position, race, sex, age, professional status of advisor, and size of residential population served. The results reveal that females (3.5) report greater outcomes in terms of organization and planning skills than do males (3.3).

These results may be related to gender socialization. Often, females tend to take on roles prescribed for them by society based on defined gender roles. These experiences include detail oriented administrative work that can be associated with organization and planning tasks. It is possible that past socialization experiences or gender expectations led female participants in this study to report higher scores in the area of planning and organization skills

The fourth question posed in this study explored whether there are significant differences in time management skill outcomes achieved by type of position, race, sex, age, professional status of advisor, and size of residential population served. The results suggest that females (3.5) report significantly greater effects on time management skills than do males (3.4).

This finding may be explained through reasons similar to the reasons for the previous finding. In order to manage the multiple administrative and detail-oriented tasks that go along with organization and planning of events, meetings, and related activities, time management skills are essential. If women are socialized to handle planning and organization tasks more efficiently than men, it is possible that those skills lead to better time management skills on the part of women.

Self-confidence skills were the subject of the next research question. The question explored whether there are significant differences in outcomes achieved by type of position, race,

sex, age, professional status of advisor, and size of residential population served. The results reveal that Presidents (3.6) report significantly higher levels of self-confidence than NCCs (3.5). Additionally, females (3.6) report significantly greater effects on self-confidence skills than males (3.5).

Presidents are the leaders of their campus RHAs while the leadership opportunities provided to NCCs are more frequently on a regional or national level. It is possible that this difference has an effect on the development of self-confidence skills. Although many of the tasks that those in the two positions complete are similar, the President serves as the leader of the group on campus. The President, therefore, receives the recognition and prestige from others on campus. The NCC, on the other hand, may receive recognition on a regional or national level, but that recognition comes from others who do not see or work with the NCC on a daily basis. It is possible that daily recognition by people who know one may affect self-confidence to a greater degree than recognition from others on a more infrequent basis. If so, this might explain the Presidents' significantly higher score on self-confidence as measured by the SLOI.

A final explanation for the differences between Presidents and NCCs might relate to location of actions. Presidents are more active on a local level and NCCs are more active regionally or nationally. This may have an impact of confidence felt by Presidents and NCCs. Additionally, Presidents and NCCs have differing areas of control (local for Presidents, regional/national for NCCs). If, based on position, the locus of control for Presidents is greater; this may lead to a greater sense of self-confidence on the part of Presidents.

In terms of sex in this case, females reported higher degrees of self-confidence skills than their male counterparts. It is possible that this could be a result of more attention being given to female leaders to encourage their involvement in such activities and roles. Providing higher levels of attention to one sex over the other may have a direct impact on the self-confidence scores reported by both sexes.

The sixth research question posed in this study explored whether there are significant differences in diversity awareness skill outcomes achieved by type of position, race, sex, age, professional status of advisor, and size of residential population served. The results indicate that females (3.5) report significantly greater effects on diversity awareness skills than males (3.3).

It is not overly surprising that females report more diversity awareness skills than their male counterparts. For many years, females were a minority group in higher education. Although

they are no longer in the minority in postsecondary institutions, women continue to be underrepresented in many professions and in national leadership roles. College women are well aware of these discrepancies by sex. Their experiences as minorities may help them to better understand the challenges and needs of other underrepresented groups.

Finally, the seventh question posed in this study explored whether there are significant differences in technology skill outcomes achieved by type of position, race, sex, age, professional status of advisor, and size of residential population served. The results suggest that professional status of advisor plays a role in skill development in this arena. RHA leaders who work with full-time advisors (3.2) report significantly higher outcomes achieved in the technology arena than do those who work with graduate student advisors (2.8). Interestingly, there was no significant difference on the technology scale based on sex of the participants. This is a point of interest in that some literature suggests that males tend to perform better than females in the technological arena.

An interesting point to note is that this is the only area where status of advisor had any significant effect. This could be a direct reflection of the resources afforded to specific organizations. That is, RHAs with professional advisors are paying more money to those advisors and probably feel a need to provide more support in other areas like technology to those advisors. If the professional advisor has technology support, it is more likely that advisor is exposing his/her RHA leaders to technology. Additionally, it is possible that having a professional staff advisor enables student leaders more opportunity to learn about technology based on the issue of time. Professional advisors may have more time to show leaders how to use technology than do graduate advisors who have classes and other commitments to juggle.

Overall, then, significant differences were revealed on all seven scales of the SLOI. In most instances these differences related to sex. In one case, however, the difference was due to type of type of position and in another case the difference was based on status of advisor. The results rendered some interesting findings as well as implications for future practice and research.

#### Implications for Future Practice and Research

The present study has implications for both future practice and future research. In terms of practice, several constituencies may benefit from the results of this study. For example, the findings may be useful to residence education administrators. The results indicate that some

outcomes achieved by females differ significantly from those gained by males. This information may help residence education administrators develop strategies for training of male leaders to help further develop outcomes achieved by male leaders. For example, training retreats or session that cater only to male students could be planned. Such sessions may include programs that aim to develop specific skills such as time-management or diversity awareness. Additionally, regular “brown bag” discussion sessions for male leaders may be planned to provide those leaders an opportunity to develop skills in a peer group. Planning and execution of such programs should be approached cautiously so as not to violate Title IX or other such regulations.

The results of the study may also be useful for the national board members of NACURH, Inc. The results of the study indicate that RHA Presidents' outcomes in regard to self-confidence skills differ significantly from those of NCCs. With the NCC being the primary institutional representative for NACURH, Inc. the Board may use the results to develop new leadership development programs for NCCs to help develop their self-confidence skills. For example, the national board of NACURH may implement a program of continuous recognition specifically aimed at NCCs and their accomplishments. This program would broaden the methods of recognition currently in place. Press releases for local newspapers and other media entities may be submitted to further highlight the NCCs accomplishments.

Another possibility may include the structure of NACURH being utilized differently to allow NCCs more opportunity to serve as leaders on the regional and national level. Such a program could include allowing NCCs to run meetings, make important decisions, or teach leadership training sessions. Any or all of these initiatives may provide more attention to NCCs and help to develop their self-confidence.

Finally, RHA leaders may find the results of this study useful. The results indicate statistically significant differences in outcomes achieved by female leaders. This may be useful in recruiting female students to become involved. RHA leaders could utilize the results from this study to develop promotional materials directed toward females to encourage their involvement. RHA leaders can also utilize the results of the present study to reframe and organize their training for female leaders to in order to show potential leaders what skills they can gain and what skills the RHA is continually trying to develop.



Further, the results may provide an impetus for student organizations to examine leadership experiences of males and to explore ways to help strengthen the development of male leaders within their organizations. It is possible that RHA leaders can design specific training sessions or leadership opportunities for male leaders to develop skills in presenting information, planning events, understanding differences, or managing time. Such opportunities may help male leaders to gain experiences that will help them to develop skills in these areas. Again, such programs should be planned with caution to account for any regulations such as Title IX that may govern such programs.

While the study presents implications for practice with respect to multiple constituencies, it also has implications for future research. For example, the present study examined outcomes of RHA leaders who serve in voluntary leadership capacities. There are other leadership opportunities in which students are paid for their work. These opportunities include such positions as Resident Advisor and Orientation Leader. Future scholars may wish to examine the differences in outcomes achieved by paid and volunteer student leaders. The results of such a study might provide insight into whether or not being paid effects the outcomes achieved by student leaders.

The present study examined differences in outcomes achieved by RHA leaders by sex and differences by professional status of advisor. Future researchers may wish to investigate differences in outcomes achieved by RHA leaders based on sex of advisor and sex of student leader. Results of such a study might reveal whether sex of RHA advisor influences outcomes achieved by RHA leaders.

Finally, future researchers may desire to examine the outcomes of RHA student leaders who were organizational leaders in high school. The present study only examined outcomes achieved by RHA leaders based on their experience in higher education. Future research may reveal impacts from high school involvement on outcomes achieved by college leaders.

#### Limitations of the Study

The present study provided implications for both future practice and for future research. Additionally, as with all research, several limitations were present in the study.

The first limitation had to do with the data collection procedure. Regional Directors were provided with a protocol for administering the SLOI to the participants. If there were

inconsistencies in the ways different Regional Directors administered the survey, the results of the study may have been affected.

Another limitation concerned the instrument. The items in the SLOI asked participants to rate the degree to which a particular skill was enhanced by their leadership experience. If respondents interpreted the statements differently than intended the results of the study may have been skewed.

The use of self-report data was another limitation of the present study. Through self-report, females may report higher scores because females are often more open to sharing their experiences. If this was the case, the results might have been affected.

Finally, there was another limitation concerning the instrument. The possible responses for the present study included a Likert-type scale with one meaning strongly disagree and four meaning strongly agree. Additionally, respondents could have selected a “not applicable” response. It is possible that these response options did not provide respondents with all the choices needed to adequately measure leadership outcomes. If this occurred, the results might have been influenced.

Although the present study had several limitations, these limitations did not detract from the overall contributions of the study. The study was useful in that it expanded the body of literature regarding outcomes achieved by student leaders in general and initiated research on the outcomes achieved by leaders of RHAs.

### Conclusion

In conclusion, the findings of the present study reveal that females reported higher levels of achieved outcomes than males on six of the seven scales of the SLOI. Additionally, Presidents reported significantly higher outcomes achieved in the self-confidence scale than did NCCs. Finally, students with full-time professional advisors reported higher levels of achieved outcomes on the technology scale than did those with graduate student advisors. The results indicate that sex of participants has the most effect on the outcomes achieved by RHA leaders, whereas type of position or status of advisor has less influence.

These results suggest that women leaders are experiencing significantly greater levels of development through their RHA leadership experiences than their male counterparts. Since women were historically underrepresented in higher education until recently, many may applaud these findings. However, the decline in enrollment among men in higher education has received

increasing attention in recent months. Findings like those revealed in this study suggest that residence hall staff may want to pay more attention to their male leaders and what skills they are or are not developing.

Finally, it is important to realize that research on RHA leaders is scant and increased attention to this type of leadership experience will not only expand the body of literature, but will also help in understanding the experiences and achievements of leaders not often in the forefront of campus leadership programs. By looking at this specific group of student leaders, scholars and administrators may better be able learn how to improve experiences or outcomes associated with student leadership in general, but more specifically with leadership in residence hall environments.