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Empower to Strengthen Culturally Based Fraternal Organizations

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract

Membership in fraternities and sororities has served college students to have a sense of belonging at colleges and universities. However, students who are affiliated with culturally based fraternal organizations (CBFO) do not have a sense of belonging in the larger fraternity and sorority life community at the University of San Diego (USD). The purpose of this action research was to use my role as an advisor to guide the three CBFO to develop a Multicultural Greek Council to enhance CBFO member's experience and to have a sense of belonging in the larger fraternity and sorority life community at USD. Participants are members affiliated in Alpha Pi Sigma, Sorority Incorporated, Nu Alpha Kappa, Fraternity Incorporated, and Sigma Theta Psi, Multicultural Sorority. Through weekly meetings, focus groups, and dialogue, the participants and I were able to find how students define belonging, build community, engage in collaborative efforts, and assist in the development of the Fraternity and Sorority Multicultural Council to strengthen the CBFO community at USD.

Introduction

Believe and have hope in the possibilities that you can achieve to be successful. This is a phrase I continuously remind myself of in order to motivate me to achieve my goals or overcome challenges. As I reflect on my social identities of being a Hmong, Asian-American, male, First-Generation College Student and low-income student, I realize how much my intersectionality has impacted my lived experiences, whether good or bad. Growing up, there are more times I would think about the bad experiences, rather than the good. Those bad experiences made me doubt or give up on myself, causing me to believe at times that I will never be successful.

My lived experiences have led me to be a student affairs professional and shaped me in that role. I realized that many other individuals, especially students, may be going through challenging experiences that may prevent them from achieving certain goals due to the barriers of their social identities. It may cause self-doubt.

I believe, as a student affairs professional, it is important to empower and encourage students to believe in the possibilities so that they can be successful in their collegiate experience and after graduation. Hopefulness, mentorship, and community are my values. I see the values of hopefulness, mentorship, and community as tools to provide students during their emerging adult-and collegiate experiences. Parks (2011) mentioned that a sustaining network of belonging and hope could help students avoid excessive distancing, overwhelming anxiety, and sheer avoidance. These networks of belonging are crucial: friendships, a mentoring relationship, and a sturdy community (Parks, 2011).

The University of San Diego (USD), which is a Catholic and predominantly White institution (PWI), offers a wide variety of great opportunities for students to be connected and get involved on campus. Those opportunities are Associated Students, Torero Programming

Board, student organizations, Fraternity and Sorority Life, and others. The office of Fraternity and Sorority Life (FSL) has offered students many great opportunities for leadership development, community service, academic achievements, and brotherhood or sisterhood. Currently, at USD, there are a total of 17 recognized Greek letter organization, eight fraternities and nine sororities. Three of those organizations are culturally based fraternal organizations (CBFO). The first CBFO established at USD is the Iota chapter of Sigma Theta Psi, Multicultural Sorority (STP) in 2011. The second is the Rho chapter of Alpha Pi Sigma Sorority, Incorporated (APS), established in 2014. The third active CBFO was an interest group called Navigators of Academics, Culture, & Opportunity (NACO). Since NACO has completed their chartering requirements in the fall of 2018, it is now recognized as the Alpha Delta chapter of Nu Alpha Kappa, Fraternity Incorporated (NAK). There was Phi Beta Sigma (PBS), a historic Black Greek Letter Organization (BGLO), established in 2016. Due to no membership in PBS, there is no longer an active chapter at USD.

In the fall of 2017, I started my role as a Graduate Assistant (GA) for Leadership Initiatives and it was a unique experience. I want to acknowledged and recognize that a previous action research project recommended having a GA work directly with and support CBFO. I believe, with the previous action research and by having conversations with former GA's, my role existed to better support CBFO at USD. My role entails leadership initiatives and being the advisor for CBFO. As the advisor for this small community, I have observed and noticed a similar theme of students not feeling like they belong to the larger Greek community of Panhellenic (PHC) and Interfraternity Council (IFC) at USD. The Interfraternity council is the governing board for recognized fraternities and PHC is the governing board for recognized

women's sororities at USD. Students in CBFO expressed that they felt marginalized, not validated, and excluded in conversations when they were in spaces with IFC and PHC.

This was a concern for me because I believed FSL to be a place where students could feel connected and a sense of belonging. I realized there was not a Multicultural Greek Council (MGC) at USD and the MGC is traditionally a governing council for CBFO. I also realized that there were institutional factors in place that prevented students in CBFO from feeling connected or having a sense of belonging in the larger Greek community. According to the USD Fraternity & Sorority Life (2018), "A general fraternity or sorority desiring to become established at the University of San Diego must first meet the membership or affiliation requirements of the governing council that best meets the organization's purpose" (Fraternity & Sorority Life, 2018, p. 3). For a CBFO to be recognized by FSL, the CBFO must first be recognized by either the IFC or PHC.

However, CBFOs are not traditionally members of these governing councils due to how CBFOs are structured and how they operate compared to their counterparts. Some examples of the function and how CBFO operate are smaller chapter membership sizes, recruitment processes, onboarding of new executive board members, and the new member education process, also known as intake process. Students in CBFOs voiced their opinions on their own MGC. At that time, APS and STP were the only two functioning CBFOs, while NAK was still in the process of becoming a recognized interest group. To have a recognized council from FSL, a council must consist of three recognized chapters.

As a founding father of a local Hmong-based fraternity, Eta Mu Theta, at California State University, Chico (Chico State), which is also a PWI, I related to some of the students' experiences of not feeling a sense of belonging in the larger Greek community. When my

fraternity was established at Chico State, we quickly found our community in the MGC. The

MGC was a supportive network of other CBFO. They helped my brothers and I learn more about

the Greek culture at Chico State. I also learned how to function and operate as a new fraternity

on campus. My experience as a leader in an undergraduate CBFO alongside my experience as an

advisor have shown me the importance of a community. A community is a supportive network to

address challenges and issues collectively. This is why, I find it important to assist and advocate

for students in CBFO to establish a MGC. By having a MGC, it will help support the CBFO with

its operations and to foster a sense of community for CBFO.

   The goal of this research and project was to have a MGC that helps to govern, support,

recruit, retain members, build and foster a community, and have a system in place that will best

support CBFO at the University of San Diego.

Research Questions

   The research questions that framed this study was: *How do I advise and work effectively*

with the three culturally based fraternal organizations to develop a Multicultural Greek Council

to enhance to have a sense of belonging in the larger Greek community at USD?

Literature Review

   The first official Greek-letter organization in North America started in 1776 when Phi

Beta Kappa established at The College of William and Mary College in Williamsburg, Virginia

(Bonzo, 2014). Phi Beta Kappa was a fraternity for men. In 1851, Alpha Delta Pi sorority was

established in Wesleyan Female College to serve women because fraternities were only for men.

The rise of historically Black Greek Letter Organizations (BGLO) existed because Black

students did not fit the ideal member of the dominant White student population at a college

university. The first BGLO was Alpha Phi Alpha, Fraternity Inc., which was founded in 1906 at Cornell University, a predominately White institution (Kimbrough, 1995).

The movement of BGLO consisted of four fraternities and four sororities from the 1900s to the early 1920s: Alpha Phi Alpha, Fraternity Inc., 1906, Alpha Kappa Alpha, Sorority Inc., 1908, Kappa Alpha Psi and Omega Psi Phi, Fraternity Inc., 1911, Delta Sigma Theta, Sorority Inc., 1913, Phi Beta Sigma, Fraternity Inc., 1914, Zeta Phi Beta, Sorority Inc., 1920, and Sigma Gamma Rho, Sorority Inc., 1920. In 1963, Iota Phi Theta was established and, as a result, all of the BGLO were called the "Divine 9" or D9. Fraternities and sororities had increased on college campuses and two national associations were formed to serve as umbrella organizations (Torbenson, 2012). Those umbrella organizations are the National Interfraternity Council (NIC), which is for the White social fraternities and the National Panhellenic Conference (NPC) for White social women fraternities and sororities. In 1929, the National Pan-Hellenic Council (NPHC) was established for BLGOs because of the exclusion within NIC and NPC (Torbenson, 2012).

Additionally, more national umbrella organizations exist to support and serve CBFOs. Those national umbrella organizations are the National Association of Latino Fraternal Organizations (NAFLO), National Multicultural Council (NMGC), and the National Asian Pacific Islander Panhellenic Association (NAPA). According to the Association of Fraternity/Sorority Advisors (2009), NAFLO was formed in March of 1998 and was incorporated on August 12, 1999. NAFLO purpose is to provide support and community for Latinos on their respective campuses and in their communities (Association of Fraternity/Sororities Advisors: NAFLO Resource Guide, 2009). NAPA was formed in the summer of 2005 to promote and foster positive interfraternal relations, communications, and

development of all Asian Pacific American Greek lettered organizations through mutual respect, leadership, integrity, professionalism, academic achievement, cultural awareness, and community involvement (Association of Fraternity/Sorority Advisors: NAPA Resource Guide, 2009).

In 1998, the National Multicultural Greek Council (NMGC) was formed to support and serve Multicultural Greek-Letter Organizations (NMGC, 2018). The founding members of NMGC's vision was to create a fraternal forum to increase communications and connections amongst multicultural fraternities and sororities, thereby creating a community of organizations dedicated to the promotion of diversity and service (Association of Fraternity/Sorority Advisors: NMGC Resource Guide, 2009). This is important historical context to have as these national umbrella organizations are resources to fraternities and sororities on college campuses. Also, the national organizations of two USD CBFOs, Nu Alpha Kappa and Alpha Pi Sigma, are respected organization members of the NIC and NAFLO.

Rood (2014) discussed how ethnic minority students have the opportunity to connect and interact with their peers within ethnic minority organizations. Ethnic minority organizations essentially become a subculture that can consist of CBFOs. According to Garcia (2017), Latino Greek Letter Organizations provide space for shared values, the campus community, brotherhood, and sisterhood. CBFOs helps foster a sense of belonging for ethnic minority students at college institutions. Strayhorn (2019) defined a sense of belonging as, "a social support on campus, feeling or sensation of connectedness, and the experience of mattering or feeling cared about, accepted, respected, valued by, and important to the campus community or others on campus such as faculty, staff, and peers" (p. 4). I found this definition to be relevant to

this action research as students in CBFO at USD were seeking relationship with their peers to foster a community.

Ruiz-Agosto (2017) completed a previous action research study on CBFOs at USD. The purpose of her action research study was to see how student affairs professionals could support this student population. According to Ruiz-Agosto (2017), it is important to understand the culture of each of the organization. I believe it is important to understand the culture of how CBFOs function throughout the academic year with their recruitment process. There is not a formal recruitment process for CBFOs compared to their counterparts within the White social fraternities and sororities that are governed by IFC and PHC here at USD. The IFC and PHC help create the visibility of Greek chapters at USD. The challenge is that CBFO has its own different recruitment process and sometimes this process is not part of the IFC and PHC recruitment process. This leads to the lack of visibility for CBFOs who do not participate in IFC and PHC recruitment. By establishing a MGC, it will provide a platform for visibility and support for the CBFO recruitment process.

Terminology

Culturally Based Fraternal Organizations (CBFO) refers to culturally based fraternities and sororities.

Interfraternity Council (IFC) – The governing board that oversees all seven recognized fraternities on the USD campus.

Panhellenic Council (PHC) – The governing board that oversees all seven recognized sororities on the USD campus.

Fraternity & Sorority Multicultural Council (FSMC) – The governing board that oversees all three CBFOs, two sororities and one fraternity, on the USD campus.

National Asian Pacific Islander Panhellenic Association (NAPA) – The national

governing board for Asian Pacific Desi American Greek letter organizations and consists of 18

member organizations. NAPA serves for the needs of its member organizations and provide a

forum to share ideas and resources within its membership (National APIDA Panhellenic

Association, 2019).

National Association of Latino Fraternal Organizations (NALFO) – The national

governing board for Latino fraternal organizations, which has 16 member organizations. NAFLO

is to promote and foster positive interfraternal relations, communication and development of all

Latino fraternal organizations through mutual respect, leadership, honesty, professionalism and

education (National Association of Latino Fraternal Organizations, 2019).

National Pan-Hellenic Council (NPHC) – The national governing board for nine

International Black Greek-Lettered Organizations (BGLO) also known as the Divine Nine or D9.

NPHC promotes interaction through forums, meetings and other mediums for the exchange of

information and engages in cooperative programming and initiatives through various activities

and functions (National Pan-Hellenic Council, 2019).

National Panhellenic Conference (NPC) – Made up of 26 members organizations, the

National Panhellenic Conference is the world's largest umbrella organization specifically

charged with advancing the sorority experience (National Panhellenic Conference, 2019).

National Multicultural Greek Council (NMGC) – The umbrella council for a coalition of

11 Multicultural Greek-Letter organizations (National Multicultural Greek Council, 2018).

North-American Interfraternity Conference (NIC) – The NIC is a trade association that

represents 66 international and national men's fraternities. NIC represents a diverse range of

inter/national men's fraternities, including historically Black, multicultural, and emerging

organizations (North American Interfraternity Conference, 2018).

Context

USD had a restructure in the Student Affairs Division as part of the Envisioning 2024

strategic plan. According to USD Envisioning 2024, there are five pathway goals: enhancing

student learning & success; strengthening diversity, inclusion, & social justice; improving

structural & operational effectiveness; elevating faculty & staff engagement; and amplifying

local & global engagement and reputation (Envisioning 2024 University of San Diego, 2019).

The results of the restructure brought a new supervisor to me in the spring of 2018 and FSL was

now part of the Community Leadership Development cluster. I shared my interest in working

with CBFOs for my Action Research (AR) project coming up in the fall of 2018 with my new

supervisor. My supervisor was supportive of the idea and challenged me to be more strategic and

determine how my current GA and future AR contribute to the new strategic plan.

A few weeks into the spring semester of 2018, I was able to collaborate with the three

CBFO presidents to have a CBFO retreat. Even though this was a collaborative effort with the

presidents, I had the challenge of developing the entire program for the retreat. The goal of this

retreat is to build relationships amongst APS, NACO, and STP, identify challenges and barriers

at USD, and to develop an action plan. At the retreat, there were at least three to four members

from each organization who participated. The participants were able to identify what community

meant to them through team-building exercises. The participants discussed their challenges and

issues as being a CBFO at USD and in the larger Greek community through narratives in the

group dialogue. Some of those challenges and issues were lack of validity, visibility,

marginalization in the larger Greek community and a lack of a governing council to best support

CBFO at USD. Throughout the retreat, the participants were able to explore and identify an action plan to move the CBFO community forward by establishing a Fraternity & Sorority Multicultural Council (FSMC) at USD. Ruiz-Agosto (2017) mentioned in her research that participants creating the name of FSMC for the council was a big deal. A participant shared, "We have been wanting this for some time and now having a name makes it so real. It's exciting" (Ruiz-Agosto, 2017, p. 20). The participants at the retreat emphasized keeping the council name of FSMC, instead of changing it to MGC, because of the previous president's hard work. Also, emphasis was placed on having the words of, "Fraternity & Sorority" instead of, "Greek", to change people's perceptions of the new FSMC.

Before the end of spring 2018, my supervisor and I had a conversation about changing my graduate assistantship to be a Graduate Assistant for Fraternity & Sorority Life, starting in the fall of 2018. The role consisted of me being the advisor for FSMC and developing programs or initiatives to support student leaders in FSL. I accepted my new role and was excited to work a lot closer to the FSL staff. I was also able to work more directly with CBFO to grow and expand their community to form FSMC. During this time APS, STP, and the interest group of NAK started the process of creating a governing structure for FSMC. I felt like I was in a unique position because I had the privilege of working and will be conducting my action research with CBFO. I found this to be interesting and important because I believe that I will be in a better position to communicate with the FSL staff to see how we can collectively better support the CBFO to form the new FSMC starting in the fall of 2018.

Methodology

When I was exploring the different methodologies and what best fit for me and this action research. I was intentional about a method that will allow me to learn, think critically and

reflect on the experience, and put my reflections into actions. According to McNiff (2016), "action research is about elevating your practice to check whether it is as good as you would like it to be, identifying any areas that you feel need improving, and finding ways to improve them" (p. 8). I asked myself, "Where has my growth and learning came from?" My transformative learning and knowledge have come from experiential learning, where I was able to name and reflect on the experience. Getz (2009) mentioned that "providing capacity for reflection and analysis in the moment by examining one's practice and subsequent experiences can greatly enhance an instructor's ability to access these data in a purposeful way to contribute to the ongoing learning process" (p. 449). I found that this action research project was an experiential learning process for me of how I engaged and worked with CBFO.

The methodology I used was O'Leary's (2004) cycles of action research (see Figure 1). This is a cyclical process to observe, reflect, plan, and act. This methodology allowed me to better understand the change that was occurring due to my critical reflections and actions. As mentioned earlier this research project is reflective of my experiential learning. I also used Kolb's (1984) experiential learning cycle theory. The theory consists of four learning stages: having a concrete experience, observation of and reflection on the experience, analysis of what you have learned from the observation or reflections, and then trying out what you have learned (as cited in McLeod, 2013). I integrated Kolb's theory with O' Leary's reflection component of the methodology. I found this to be unique and important to enhance my practice as I will advise and work with CBFO throughout my graduate assistantship and my action research and to see how I can plan more effectively to empower students in CBFO in the dialogues, interactions, or cycles.
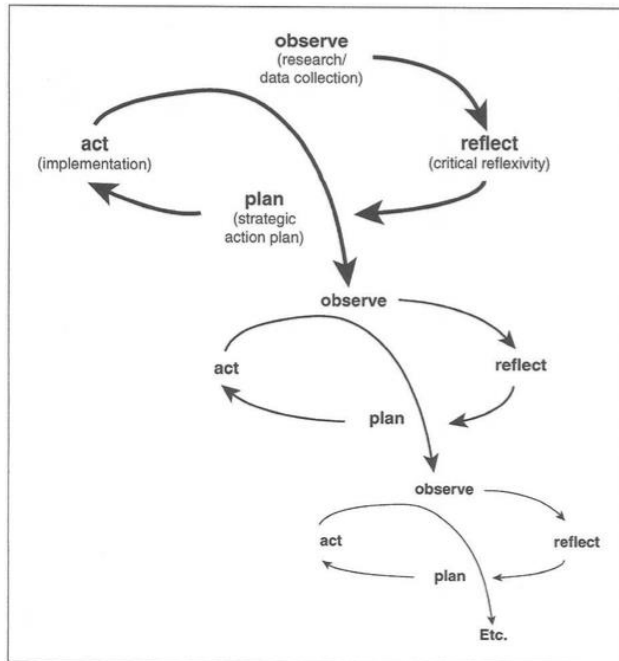
Figure 1. O'Leary's cycles of action research.

My action research cycle consisted of one pre-cycle, three cycles, and a post-cycle. The pre-cycle consisted of my observation and reflection of my first year of working with CBFO and the development of FSMC. This allowed me to effectively plan and assess CBFO to inform my cycles. Cycle 1 included my engagements with other college MGC advisors to see how their governing council built and collaborated as a community and evaluated the structure and the foundation of FSMC. This provided me the tools to effectively advise, empower, and guide CBFO to form and establish a community within FSMC. Cycle 2 consisted of a focus group with affiliated members in CBFO to see how they each defined sense of belonging and community. I also assessed how students experience their sense of belonging in different contexts, such as USD, their respected organization, the larger Greek community, and how participants can foster community within CBFO. Cycle 3 was the FSMC "Meet & Greet" event to increase CBFO and the new FSMC presence and visibility on campus. I conducted my findings at the event and with the evaluations that participants and members of the USD community filled out. The post-cycle

is a reflection of the FSMC Meet & Greet and providing resources to help the council move forward.

Needs Assessment

Before starting my action research project, I communicated with the three CBFO that I conducted my research with starting in the fall of 2018, once my IRB was approved. There was excitement from members in CBFO of being able to assist and support me in my research. I knew that this research was going to be exciting and also challenging. It was challenging due to the uniqueness of the project of me already being the advisor for CBFO and the developing FSMC. I wanted to ensure that this project was meaningful and that I am genuine throughout this project. The participants in my action research project were the members of APS, NAK, and STP. As I anticipated, a chapter would have more participants than another and only a few members in CBFO participated due to their roles in the FSMC. To protect participants' confidentiality, I used pseudonyms for each when necessary and their respected organization will not be identified (see figure 2). However, throughout my action research project, participants were able to call each other by their first name to ensure authenticity and for them to start forming a community.

1) Alpha   11) Lambda
2) Beta   12) Mu
3) Gamma   13) Nu
4) Delta
5) Epsilon
6) Zeta
7) Eta

> 8) Theta
>
> 9) Iota
>
> 10) Kappa

Figure 2. Participants pseudonyms names.

Pre-cycle

Before I planned or implemented interventions to work with CBFO and the development

of FSMC, I observed and reflected on my experiences of advising and working with CBFO in

the prior year, 2017 - 2018. I did this in order to help me formulate ideas, discussions, and to

develop cycles.

Observations

CBFO has a disconnection with the larger Greek community and has no rapport with

other FSL staff members. I would also honor and acknowledge that there was no rapport with

me, IFC, and PHC executive board members. In addition, CBFO presidents were in the process

of establishing FSMC and its foundation. They collaborated and developed a mission statement

for FSMC, which is,

> The mission of the Fraternity and Sorority Multicultural Council at the University
>
> of San Diego shall be to allow the culturally based fraternities and sororities to
>
> thrive in a safe environment that will promote inclusion and celebrate diversity.
>
> Member organizations shall be unified and will uphold the highest standards of
>
> ethics, cultural awareness, academic excellence, personal and professional
>
> development, and commitment to serving the community. The council shall
>
> emphasize respect amongst themselves, the university, and the community
>
> through guidance and empowerment in order to develop action strategies on

matters of mutual concern to the affiliate organizations (Fraternity & Sorority

Multicultural Council, 2019, p. 1).

Although the presidents in CBFO are doing an outstanding job of developing FSMC, they

are burned out with the roles they hold, such as being the president of their own organization and

developing FSMC. We had critical conversations of balancing academics, their roles in their

organizations, and their role in FSMC. We also, discussed that more members in their

organization need to help in the process of developing FSMC. The group identified that with

more membership involved in the process there would be more work being done effectively and

great opportunity of relationship building amongst members from different CBFO.

Reflections

Without a doubt, I did find my first year a challenge of navigating the spaces I was in.

The spaces I referred to are the IFC, PHC, FSMC, and lastly the FSL staff. When I am in spaces

with IFC and PHC, it was difficult to distinguish myself as an authority figure compares to my

counterparts who work with IFC and PHC directly. Also, when I'm in those spaces, I questioned

myself, "Do I find myself belong here and do students see me as an authority figure in FSL?"

This was difficult for me to navigate due to my role of working with CBFO how my counterpart,

who are GA's for Fraternity and Sorority Life, works specifically with IFC and PHC. We each

work specifically with a particular council, which I found created disparity amongst the three

advisors who work with students in FSL.

Examples of these disparities would be when all three GA's show up in the same space

with FSL students. We each would introduce our name and our role. My counterparts would

state their name and their role as GA for IFC or PHC. While I introduce my name and my role as

GA for Leadership Initiatives and I am the advisor for CBFO. As I observed the room, students

seem curious about my presence. I felt horrible with insecurities and not have a sense of

belonging as an authority figure in the larger FSL community. In addition, due to my dual role,

there would be the inconsistency of me being able to be present at certain meetings or events

hosted by IFC and PHC. These experiences prohibited my presence as an advisor and authority

figure in FSL. However, being in spaces with CBFO, I was able to connect more with my

identity as an advisor and a FSL authority figure.

Lastly, navigating the space with the FSL staff was also challenging. There were

moments of me questioning, "Am I part of the FSL team or just an advisor to CBFO." Some of

those moments are being in IFC and PHC spaces, IFC and PHC recruitment, and FSL processes

and procedures. Examples of those processes and procedures were the logistics of grade release

forms, IFC and PHC terminologies, and FSL hearing board. Of course, I soon learned about the

processes and procedures in more of a reactive approach versus learning them from a proactive

approach. While reflecting on those instances, I would say that I did not feel like I was a part of

the FSL team.

Plan

My challenges in my first year provided me tools to better advocate for myself,

engagement with student's leaders across all three councils, better collaborations with FSL staff

members, and enhanced my advising with CBFO and the developing FSMC. As I transitioned

into my new role, GA for Fraternity & Sorority Life, in fall of 2018. I told myself, "I am part of

the team and I am going to change the culture. I would not want another person, who will soon

step into my role. Feel the same way how I felt my first year. I am going to make sure that CBFO

and FSMC will be part of the larger Greek community. This is progress towards change." This

statement was my commitment to myself and the work I will be doing in the upcoming year.

First I needed to advocate for myself by expressing my observation and reflections to my new supervisors and the two GA's for IFC and PHC. I mentioned to the GA's for us to reframe how we introduced ourselves to GA's for Fraternity & Sorority Life instead of GA for IFC, PHC, or FSMC. By doing so, students would recognize our role as advisors in FSL, instead of just our specific roles and responsibilities. This allowed me to feel more secure and have the ability to be part of the FSL team.

Secondly, I made it a priority of mine to build a better rapport with all executive board across all three councils. By doing this, I hope I can help bridge the gap for FSMC, IFC, and PHC. This was important to establish early on because students in CBFO and FSMC have a disconnect to both IFC and PHC. In addition, I discussed with FSL staff the importance of transparency of our interactions with students who we work closely with, involving each other in upcoming projects and initiatives, and providing professional development opportunities across different topics in FSL. An example would be me facilitating a workshop about languages and terminologies in CBFO, during a FSL staff meeting. Lastly, I needed to make sure that student in CBFO and FSMC can cohesively collaborate with each other to address their community challenges and issues and to better build relationships and foster authentic engagements amongst the three CBFO at USD.

Act

The foundation of my research is to build relationships to foster community and work cohesively amongst different stakeholders in FSL. I knew that I needed to start with specific stakeholders first, to ensure that my plan will be a success. I needed to find out who will be on my team to make sure this will be a success. I reached out and discussed with students in CBFO, the other two GA's, who worked with IFC and PHC, and lastly my current supervisor in FSL

about my project. I shared with my supervisor of my anticipation for this project is to create a

governing structure to best support and to foster a community for CBFO. Also, I asked my

supervisor if he can provide me a list of MGC advisors from different institutions, where I can

get in contact with. My intentions were to enhanced how to advised and worked, discussed

challenges and how to effectively addressed them, and lastly how to foster a collaborative

community for MGC. I was very excited to start the process of my project in the fall of 2018, see

the growth for CBFO, and the development of FSMC to foster a sense of community for CBFO

to have a greater sense of belonging in the larger Greek community at USD.

Cycle 1

After I expressed my interest in connecting with other MGC advisors, I soon started to

contact the list of advisors across different higher education institutions. My intentions for those

meetings was to enhanced my practice as an advisor for CBFO and how to foster and build a

community for FSMC.

Observations and Findings

The conversations I had was important because I learned so much and it was helpful for

me to start practicing what I have found. Some of those findings were in alignment with my

foundation and issues that CBFO identified. Examples of those findings were: advisors need to

build rapport and relationships with CBFO to build trust, CBFO need to support each other,

especially in a PWI context, visibility is your community of CBFO, need to provide space where

CBFO can come together to address issues as a community, and focused on where CBFO

community is at currently to operate versus having a traditional board.

In addition, when students in CBFO were in the process of developing a governing

structure for FSMC. I was intentional in advising and guiding the presidents to think critically on

how to engaged their membership to be part of the process of developing FSMC and helped them

assessed the work distribution amongst members of the council. This was critical to emphasized,

so the amount of work the students are doing does not impact their well-being. Some challenges

that FSMC faced were: their governing structure, how can individual CBFO get their

membership more involved, visibility of FSMC and CBFO, and the uncertainty of when FSMC

will be established when the interest group of NAK is in the process of establishing themselves.

Reflections

Although there are challenges, the group was able to identify ways to move forward to

developed FSMC. I find it practical and helpful for me to reflect after our weekly FSMC

meetings to prepared for the next following week. Also, I revisited my discussions with MGC

advisors to help me move forward in the process of supporting FSMC. I was able to prompt

questions to address challenges the community identified. Those questions were like, What

currently exists and how can we implement it to help us developed a governing structure? What

does membership involvement look like? I believed that these questions arise due to my

reflections and being more mindful of conversations I had with MGC advisors.

Due to the prompted questions, students were able to identified a structure to start the

development of FSMC. The CBFO presidents decided to have one council delegate from each

chapter to assist in the development of the council. The delegates took on one of the following

roles: finance chair, programming chair, or secretary. In addition, the presidents took on one of

the following roles and responsibilities: liaison for FSMC and preside the meeting, one who is in

charge with fundraising, and one who is in charge of accountability. The result of these

decisions, the council will consist of six total members. The council developed this collaborative

and partnership model, to ensured members in the council are collaborative and accountable for

their roles and responsibility. The model goal was designed to build relationships amongst

different members in the council and to hold each other accountable with their roles. A key

component to the model was each president will be paired with a delegate from an organization

other than their own and will carry out a specific role within the council. There were some

excitement and ownership coming from the students, who are developing the council. Iota said,

"I am really excited to see this coming together. We are moving slowly but surely. I am looking

forward to seeing what we can actually do, once we become official and established." Delta said,

"You know what, I do not know what exactly this will look like. But I'm excited to see what we

can do." Eta stated, "I like how we will get to work with other members from other organizations

so that we can build a better relationship with each other."

Although the council was slowly coming together and more members were contributing

to the development of the council. I was constantly challenging students to find alternative ways

for them to build relationships and a community outside of FSMC weekly meetings. I would use

Nevitt Sanford's challenge and support theory to advise students. This theory was critical to

challenge students to learn, grow, and step outside of them comfort zone, while making sure to

also support students to meet those challenges to be successful. I needed to keep in mind to not

challenge students too much because it can result students to not be motivated and if there are

little challenges then may not learn and grow (Guido, Patton, Quaye, & Renn, 2016).

Plan

I asked myself, "How can I help FSMC and CBFO to have more presence and visibility

on campus? What are my next steps moving forward?" As a result, with the reflections, data

being collected from my previous conversations with MGC advisors, and my advising sessions. I

developed a strategic plan to enhanced the visibility for FSMC and CBFO at USD (see Appendix

A). The strategic plan consisted of identifying where FSMC is currently, where they want to go, and how to build relationships with different campus partners. However, I planned only for spring 2019. This was critical because it provided a framework for myself and the council to see what are steps moving forward for the rest of the year. In addition, I identified that students constantly discuss building relationships with each other to create a community to enhance a sense of belonging for themselves and for CBFO, here at USD. I then developed a focus group to address what I had identified. I will address the observations and findings in cycle 2.

Act

Once the strategic plan was completed in early November. I provided and proposed the strategic plan to the council, to received feedback from the students. The council agreed with the strategic plan and was looking forward to spring 2019. Although the council agreed with the strategic plan, there is still room to improve the strategic plan moving forward. This led to the collaboration of creating the foundation, of building relationships amongst different stakeholders in FSL. The stakeholders, in this case, was the students in the three CBFO. Delta said, "You see anything is possible because we just crossed. With the strategic plan, it can help us move forward and establish FSMC more. It's possible." Eta said, "I like how there are small steps to help us where we currently are at. The Meet & Greet can help us with our visibility on campus." Iota said, "Hey its progress. We just crossed and established ourselves. Now FSMC will now be official." Nu stated, "I like it. I want to see how we can collaborate more with SSS when most of our members are part of SSS." In addition to the strategic plan the council took it upon themselves to contribute to the plan by creating FSMC Fridays. FSMC Fridays are where members in CBFO would wear their Greek letter apparels and spotlight themselves on FSMC social media to create more visibility for CBFO and FSMC.

Cycle 2

Prior to cycle 2, the interest group of NAK has been established on USD campus. Since their establishments, members in FSMC seemed to be more motivated to establishing FSMC. Cycle 2, I organized and developed a focused group to discuss how can FSMC build a community, how to best support, and enhance a sense of belonging for members who are affiliated in CBFO (see Appendix B).

Observations and Findings

There were 13 total participants and have all three CBFO represented. However, there was one participant who partakes in this cycle by himself/herself. The intentions of this focus group were to find how students in CBFO defined community building and a sense of belonging at USD. There was a collective portion at the beginning of the focus group to discussed community guidelines and then six other sections.

The community guidelines were important for the group to identify how they are going to foster their community in the spaces they are in. There were many thoughts and ideas for community guidelines. However, six emerging themes for community guidelines are: sense of family, a culture of care, authenticity, step up and step down, and vulnerability. Sense of family was an emerging theme due to the participants finding the need to create a home away from home and building relationships with one another. Gamma said, "Have a sense of family and belonging." Delta said, "Full transparency and trust each other. Sense of family like most people is calling to." Kappa said, "Around family, we must trust one another. We might come across things where you might not be comfortable or something. Just rely on others and trusting others that they are doing the right thing." Lambda said, "Having a sense of family like a lot of people

have mentioned. Reaching out when others are in need. When we see someone struggling, just being there for them."

As a result of the participants wanting to create a sense of family. This lead to the next community guideline, a culture of care. Culture of care is by being able to look out and have unconditional care for one another. Zeta said, "Have respect and empathy for each other." Theta stated, "Being able to acknowledge that like if you said something that may hurt someone's feeling, that you acknowledge that and address it. So you know not to offend that person in the future."

The next community guideline was authenticity. Participants indicated by being authentic with each other, they are also being true to themselves. Alpha said, "Just like speaking out of what you actually are feeling. Not like you trying to put on a certain face so it sounds good, but being authentic of what you are actually feeling." Eta said, "So I think it's about speaking to your own experience and your own reality of what that looks like." Mu stated, "Speak from I statements. Try not to speak for other people."

During the discussion about authenticity. I challenged the group to recognize the gender dynamics between men and women in the space together. I find that it leads to the next community guidelines of being able to step up and step down. Mu said, "Step up and step down. If you talk a lot try not to dominate the conversations, allow those who may be quieter to step up and be able to contribute to and not stay silent, I guess." Eta said, "Kind of like what you are saying Koua, like the disproportionate between men and women in this room. Like what Mu was saying earlier, step up and step down and try not to dominate the conversation."

The last community guideline was a vulnerability. Participants find it important for members of the community to be vulnerable by being open-minded. By being vulnerable, they

can learn and grow with one another. Beta said, "Being open to a new perspective and challenging your own perspective. By allowing new perspective and different experiences to coincide with your experiences or from your experiences." Delta said, "Stepping outside of our comfort zone will be something really productive. Which allow us to grow and get into a new situation that were not comfortable in. So that we can be more confident and become more leaders within the community." Iota then responded, "Going with what Delta just say too. Just push yourself outside of your comfort zone and being vulnerable that there is a sense of family and care. Stepping into a phase of not comfortable."

   As a result, participants took ownership of their community guidelines by demonstrating them for the remainder of the focus group and outside of the focus group. With the remainder of the focus group, participants were given the opportunity to be their creative self and answered the six prompted questions. Those prompted questions were split into different sections on a sheet of paper and those are the following:

1) Define a sense of belonging and community?

2) What does my belonging at USD look like?

3) What does my belonging in my organization look like?

4) What does my belonging in the larger Greek community look like?

5) What does my belonging in the Fraternity & Sorority Multicultural Council look like?

6) How can you foster a sense of belonging for yourself and other members in FSMC to build a community?

Participants could draw images, symbols, or words on the sections. Also, participants added sticky notes to those six sections to address what factors may influence them to not feel belong at a certain section.

There were themes that emerged throughout the focus group, which were belonging, community, and factors that may prohibit participants sense of belonging. Even though question one prompted the participants to define a sense of belonging and community. Throughout the focus group, it was significant how students feel connected to their respected community and how it enhanced their belonging. I discuss these themes next.

Belonging. Participants discussed how feeling belonged enhances them feeling comfortable and authentic, build meaningful relationships, and have a supportive network. Mu said, "Places where we go to eat or anywhere, I feel most comfortable going around campus. Iota said, "There is a common goal we have and support that we have." Theta responded to Iota, "Belonging is having those shared experiences and shared ideas. Gamma said, "Sharing lived experiences, not just sharing them but having those experiences together. Know each other and helping each other through highs and lows. Nu said, "Belonging is a home where I can be my authentic self. Also, having a supportive network to help me overcome barriers."

These testimonials were significant to learn and hear of what contexts influence their belonging at USD, which was their respective organization and supportive network from their peers. Atkinson, Dean, and Espino (2010) mentioned MGC organizations provide unity and a sense of belonging on campus, particularly at PWI (Atkinson, Dean, & Espino, 2010). Participants discussed with shared experiences, such as their racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic identities bring them together to foster a sense of belonging at USD. Culturally based student organizations help students gain cultural familiarity with others; serve as conduits for cultural expression and advocacy; and validate students' lived experiences on campus (Museus, 2008).

Community. Participants find that having and forming a community enhances their belonging at USD. Mu said, "It's my community and I feel comfortable at home…Always be the

one to defend ourselves." Lambda said, "We are trying to establish a multicultural fraternity and that would include different religion. I would need to create that space for others to make it more accepting." Theta said, "Find people that I like to say are my friends in a sense, my family. Because of connections, we are able to make, were a community." Zeta said, "Listening to each other, look out for each other, and helping each other out by showing support through events or communicating with each other." Delta said,

> I am a firm believer that comforts inhibits growth…They step outside of the
>
> comfort zone to welcome someone and acknowledges them as an individual and
>
> dignifies them. It shows that they are creating a sense of community where
>
> everyone is welcome where we include all. All create a home for people where
>
> they feel belong.

Beta said, "Having a space that you can go to a safe space where people can understand you." These statements were fascinating to hear from the participants wanting to provide a community to foster belonging for future students. In addition, to foster a sense of community, like FSMC, to enhance a sense of belonging and meaningful relationship with CBFO.

Factors that may prohibit participants sense of belonging. Participants discussed factors that prohibit their sense of belonging and forming a community, FSMC, at USD. Mu said, "Something I said that prevents me to feel welcome, particularly White frat boys with instances I had. Um like IFC meeting people are questioning why we need a Latino fraternity on campus." Lambda said, "One thing that that disconnected is not fully into it. Not knowing everyone or other members from other organizations. I would like to get to know everyone. That part is on me to reach out to others as well." Kappa said, "Couple things that don't make me feel

belonged is the shadowing figures and feeling excluded from the campus life and feeling like
you are on your own." Iota said,

> I drew a car, that gold Mazeradi that drives around USD…I think a lot of time socio-
> economic do become a barrier where you see things on this campus that are so, seem so
> unrealistic to some of us. Especially when I grew up not having those luxuries.

Theta said,

> When I'm in IFC sometimes, I feel like the only minority in there, even though
> our president is Latino and another person of color is brown. I see that I need to
> assimilate or act a certain way to be in IFC and its not like anybody is pressuring
> me to do anything. It's evident that its not my place…They talk about studying
> aboard, doing these trips, their family going on vacation, and going to a private
> school. I didn't have any of that and that's my lack of shared experience with
> them.

Eta said,

> Things that I would feel that I don't belong is lack of empathy, respect, lack of
> representation in spaces will make me feel like I'm not supposed to be there or
> don't belong in that space…In FSMC, I would not feel belong if there is a lack of
> support and empathy.

Epsilon said,

> I don't feel belong in the larger Greek community when they don't take us serious
> as part of Greek life but more like a club or something than actual Greek. Or
> having this perception, oh they are the poor people.

Beta said, "Not seeing effort or genuine care from others…Not fostering intimate relationships or close relationships with other people." And finally, Alpha said, "Having business all the time in the organization or FSMC."

Participants statements of not feeling belonged were alarming. It also indicates that when they are in environments or interacting with IFC or PHC, they are not their authentic self. Participants identities become more or less salient as they interact with contextual influences such as family background, sociocultural conditions, current life experiences, and career decisions life planning (Jones & McEwen, 2000). Since participants are in those spaces where there are not represented, they often feel like a minority, a person of color, rather than being affiliated with their Greek letter organization. In addition, when students are alone, they do not find a sense of belonging.

Reflections

The findings from the focus group were helpful for me to gauge where the individual's members feel connected and belonged at USD. Also, assessing how FSMC can foster community to enhance a sense of belonging for CBFO. One key takeaway from the focus group was to be more intentional of how to build better relationships with members in the community.

Plan

I gathered the findings and started to develop an intentional event for members in CBFO to get together, get connected, and start building relationships with one another. This was an informal gathering with pizza and ice breakers. I made sure that the space I planned on using was the Student Life Pavilion 316, the FSL space. This was significant because I wanted students in CBFO to feel comfortable and activate the space that they are in and will be in. In addition to the findings, I asked myself, "Can the group collaborate and work cohesively with each other, if they

emphasized on building relationships with each other. Do we need to know each other to work with each other?" This was a challenge for me to challenge the students in FSMC.

During an FSMC weekly meeting, I mentioned and invited the presidents and delegates to share about the event. In addition, we discussed a potential event to collaborate and host at the beginning of the Spring 2019 semester. This event was designed as a meet and greet, where potential new members will be able to get to know FSMC and the three CBFO. Also, how this event will help assist in FSMC strategic plan to enhanced FSMC and CBFO visibility on USD campus by creating awareness and education opportunities. There were excitements but no agreement to the planning process of the event. There was no agreement because of prior commitments that have already been planned in their respective organization. However, I offered the council my assistance. I would have developed the curriculum of the event and the students were to reserved space and execute the meet and greet. We agreed on these terms and I started to develop the FSMC, Meet & Greet Event.

Since NAK establishment, I reached out to my supervisor to see what are the next steps to recognized FSMC in the Spring 2019 semester. Some technical solutions were needed, such as registering FSMC as a student organization, have a constitution and bylaws, have an advisor, and Associated Students (AS) will need to recognize the new student organization. Also, specific positions, like the president, vice president, secretary, and a treasure. However, the challenge to this was that the secretary and treasure have already been appointed. But neither the president and vice president is appointed because of the structure of FSMC with its position. This was an issue that needed to be addressed but the students were headed off to winter break.

Act

The informal gathering was set up and I was excited to see the turn out of the event. However, I did anticipate that not a lot of members in the community will show up, due to the event being at an evening time. However, there were eight members who showed up. There was at least one member from each organization who showed up. Even though there weren't that many participants, it was a success. The event was a success because of how students was able to connect with each other. Kappa said, "This is great. How can we do more events like this together with everyone? We can always collaborate on socials or even philanthropic events." Iota responded, "Yea I agree with Kappa. Even though there aren't many of us here today. We can continue to build relationships by doing this more often." Eta said, "We can have more social events together to get to know each other." Nu said, "Finding time and it can also be informal settings for us to connect."

Members in the community were connected, laughed, and planned potential events in the future. Some of those planned were to collaborate more social or philanthropic events, an FSMC retreat, and to build better relationships with each other. This was excited to hear and see the willingness to build a better relationship with one another. Essentially, this would be the foundation of FSMC establishing their community.

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Cycle 3

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Cycle 3 was the FSMC Meet & Greet but the event did not happen. At the beginning of the new year, I followed up with FSMC in regards to the matters of FSMC registering as a new organization and FSMC, Meet & Greet. There were no responses from members in FSMC. I did acknowledge that it was winter break, so students needed to step away from academics and extra-curricular activities.

Observations and Findings

However, within one week before the Spring semester started, I met with a member to discuss their organization and FSMC matters. I find out, students were communicating with FSMC matters, but no action was being taken. There seems to be the lack of desired to get work done for FSMC. During my meeting, the student expressed his frustration with members in the community of not following through with what was agreed on. Also, he expressed how there are only a few members in the council doing the work and the students not feeling motivated. I shared with the student that we need to assess and revisit the purpose of FSMC and the community guidelines of accountability. Also, I shared with the student that FSMC has come a long way to stop the momentum now. I showed the name tags that will be provided to FSMC. Those name tags have the student's name, their affiliated organization, and them representing FSMC. The student was really excited and stated, "Wow! FSMC has come a long way. Our hard work had paid off and now it's like official. Okay, I'll contact the group and well need to get to work."

FSMC was registered and is in the process of being recognized by AS. The FSMC, Meet & Greet event did not happen and it was pushed back, until another date. The purpose of it was to have the council planned the event collectively. Even though the event did not happen, the council was eager to start operating and plan new initiatives to USD campus. Throughout the semester, we revisited the strategic plan to enhance FSMC and CBFO visibility on campus. FSMC participated in Greek Week as a council, to enhance FSMC within the larger Greek community. However, only members from NAK participated in Greek Week. Also, planned to have the FSMC, Meet & Greet event in April (see Appendix C). Throughout the planning

process for the Meet & Greet, there was the inconsistency of who is taking on what role and individuals taking up on more responsibilities.

Consequently, the Meet & Greet did not happen in April as there were many challenges that have arrived throughout the semester up to the planning process of the Meet & Greet. Those challenges were: lack of communication between the council leadership and chapter membership of what and why things were being done by FSMC, individual chapters' issues, members in FSMC were taking up additional roles in the council, little follow through with initiatives, chapter membership burn out, and council leadership was burnt with multiple roles they were holding for their organization, the council, and being a student. Their roles and responsibility have impacted their well-being.

Reflections

My absence is a challenge that occurred in the Spring 2019 semester and impacted these results. Throughout the semester, there were conferences that I attended like The Placement Exchange (TPE) and the annual NASPA conference. However, this is not an excuse for me to not follow up with individual members and FSMC tasks and responsibilities. Even though these events happened, I have learned a whole lot from it.

Instead of me planning the FSMC, Meet & Greet. I should have effectively guided and advised the council to plan the event, so they can have more ownership of their event. This was a great learning opportunity for me to reflect on how to better advise, guide, and empower the students in FSMC. In addition, I needed to revisit the foundation of the council, which is to build relationships with members in CBFO. I found that we did not accomplish that. Instead, we went into the operation of the council of planning and coordinating events.

I think back to my question, "Can the group collaborate and work cohesively with each other, if they emphasized on building relationships with each other? Do we need to know each other to work with each other?" I can honestly say, this was a challenge for me to admit but these students in CBFO needed to build that relationship and rapport first to best support each other here at USD. Essentially, I need to dive deeper of who, the students, am I serving and advising. Students identified either as, First-Generation college student, students of color, low-socioeconomic classes, affiliated in CBFO, and are Generation Z (Gen. Z). I find that Gen Z emphasizes meaningful connections with their peers. Grace and Seemiller (2016) found that Gen. Z students prefer friends they can relate to: shared values and shared hobbies are the most important factors for them in making friends and sustaining friendship.

Plan

As I headed into AFLV West conference in late April, I was intentional of how to better support CBFO and then FSMC. AFLV West conference is held in conjunction with the National Cultural Greek Leadership conference, specifically geared to provide a forum for multicultural fraternity/sorority members to network and dialogue on topics that impact them (Association of Fraternal Leadership & Values, 2019). As a result, I reflected on the experienced at AFLV West and find that membership drives CBFO and then CBFO drives FSMC. Without the membership, there are no CBFO and no FSMC at USD.

Shortly after the conference, I was motivated and excited to share to FSMC my takeaways from the conference. As we met, I expressed shifting gears from community development to individual chapter development and how we need to first address individual chapters' issues as a collective. Due to how CBFO has developed their membership

academically, personally, and socially leads to FSMC discussing individual chapter issues and

need. The findings are as follow:

1) FSMC is not on the individual chapter priority list.

2) Chapter membership has different priorities and commitments.

3) Chapter members and leadership are picking up the slacks. They are doing more

   work.

4) Business vs Brotherhood/Sisterhood.

Eventually, this leads me to rethink how to best support CBFO at an individual level and needed

to provide them with resources. I identify that membership drives CBFO. I asked the question,

"How do they recruit new members into their organization?" As a result, I developed a CBFO

recruitment workshop (see Appendix D).

Act

I knew that my graduate assistantship and action research project is coming to an end.

However, I did not just want to make recommendations and move on. I wanted to make sure my

work is meaningful and that I am committed to strengthening CBFO here at USD.

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Post Cycle

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The post cycle consisted of me facilitating the recruitment workshop I had developed for

CBFO even though there were only three participants in the workshop. It was a success because

students were able to walk away with practical tools to enhance their recruitment workshop.

Observations and Findings

Some of those takeaways were the social excellence framework, the five-step process of

recruitment, and how to market themselves. Also, the participants have shared on the evaluation

sheet that they would like to have more workshops like this one and on other topics like building

relationships with community partners, new members educational process/intake process, marketing and knowing how to approach potential new members. After the workshop, a student shared, "After today's workshop, it had to change my perspective of recruitment. Building a relationship first before introducing them to my organization. This workshop was super helpful. Thank you Koua."

Reflections, Plan, and Act

A key takeaway for me was that students in CBFO only know what they do know. As their advisor, I should not expect that students know how to operate their organization, 100%. Instead, asked question with curiosity and provide them with resources to help their organization grow and thrive here at USD. As a result, for the remainder of the semester, well be focusing on individual chapter issues and addressing them collectively. I knew that this work and action research project is a process and it will come with challenges. Indeed, it challenged me a whole lot to be okay to shift gears to best support and to strengthen their CBFO.

Limitations

Although I know this action research project can help assist FSL to best support CBFO in the future, there were some limitations to this research. First, even though there were thirteen participants in this research. Engaging with all thirteen was difficult since most of my interactions were with chapter presidents and delegates. Most of the participates participated due to the rapport that was built. In Cycle 2, the limitation of the focus group is that participants answered question one, but focused on either sense of belonging and community. It would be helpful to have prompted students to define both belonging and community. Also, due to time, participates did not share all six section. In addition, there were also no follow up if FSMC did foster a sense of community and belonging for CBFO. Lastly, FSMC discussed about creating

more visibility on USD campus. Although we were able to identify what visibility is, which was

presence on campus. We needed to explore and be more specific of what presence look like on

campus and how the institution may help with the presence for CBFO.

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Recommendations

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Through reflections from the action research project, my graduate assistantship, and

interactions with students in CBFO, I have come up with some recommendations for future

research, students in CBFO and FSMC, the office of Fraternity & Sorority Life, and campus

partners.

Recommendations for future research

First, I believe that the institution would benefit to study how CBFO developed their

members and enhance a sense of belonging for students at USD. In addition, focus on the

identity development for students who are affiliated in CBFO, of how their social identities are

salient to different contexts they are in. This can be beneficial for the institution and campus

partners to best provide resources and support students who are affiliated in CBFO.

Recommendations for students CBFO & FSMC

First, it is important for students in CBFO to identify their individual challenges and

issues. Then collectively as a community, FSMC, be able to help assist and support each other.

Second, if students in CBFO are seeking to build meaningful relationships with each other. They

need to be intentional of getting together of either eating meals together, studying together, or

collaborate on events on campus. Also, in terms of creating visibility and presence on campus.

CBFO need to continue to wear their Greek apparels throughout the week and not just on

Fridays. CBFO should find events and programs that are hosted by USD, and attend those events

with the intentions of recruiting potential new members through relationship building.

FSMC governing structure was not effective due to the multiple roles the presidents hold in their organization and the council. I would suggest that presidents can be part of FSMC, however be more in a supportive role to the delegates and the delegates drives the council through decision making and planning. Also, make sure there are representation from all three organizations. FSMC should focus on relationship building, but also to create an accountability system to ensure work is being done within the community. Lastly, FSMC should attend AFLV West, as it will provide the council an opportunity network with other MGC and learn new tools to enhance their community.

Recommendations for Fraternity & Sorority Life

First, FSL should continue to have a GA to work directly and support CBFO and FSMC. Students in CBFO have mentioned that having a staff member work and support them directly has helped shaped their organization to operate differently and assisted in an establishment of a new chapter to USD campus. The GA does not need to be affiliated with a CBFO, but someone who is willing to learn more and build rapport with CBFO. Also, the be able to collaborative with students and with FSL staff.

Second, I would recommend the office of FSL provide orientations in regards to, FSMC, IFC, PHC, and the FSL offices structures, recruitment, policy, and procedures. This can allow FSL staff members answer any questions in regards to the office, FSMC, IFC, and PHC. Also, have once a month meeting with all councils or council president to build better rapport and address council challenges. Even though FSMC does not have an appointed president, it is important to provide a space where all members in the community can be present and attend to feel connected and belonged.

FSL should develop ways to engage and interact with students in CBFO to build better relationship. FSL should host a welcome back event for all council members, allow all members in CBFO to be present due to students feeling more a sense of belonging with their peers. This welcome back event can allow all council members to get to know each other and for FSL staff members get connected with all council members. I found that I was able to build relationships if IFC and PHC by attending their meetings, events, and serving as the lead staff for Greek Week. FSL staff members would need to go to where students in CBFO are at to foster relationships. Lastly, help CBFO and FSMC with a year round recruitment by co-hosting the Meet & Greet, provide workshops in topics like recruitment, marketing, and active tabling. Also, highlight CBFO and FSMC on the FSL website, PHC recruitment, and IFC recruitment.

Recommendations for Campus Partners

Recommendations for campus partners is to get to know the culture and understand the operations of the three CBFO. This can really help CBFO have a sense of belonging with shared and common languages. Campus partners should reach out and build relationships with students in CBFO. In particular, students in CBFO often times feel like they are not represented or safe going to the fourth floor, The Commons. Students expressed that there this tension between non-Greek affiliated organization and Greek-letter organizations. Campus partners should collaborate with FSL staff to bridge gaps between culturally based student organizations and CBFO.

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Conclusion

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In conclusion, this action research project has been a great experience for me to learn more about myself and ways to improve my practice as a FSL advisor and Student Affairs Professional. I have learned that this work is a process of where I need to be engaged intentionally to actively gain knowledge while working with students. I also learned how to

advocate for students while navigating through institutional barriers and providing them

resources to thrive. In addition, I learned how to effectively collaborate with different

stakeholders to achieve a common goal to create a community. I hope this project will be a

resource for the FSL staff to best support CBFO and to enhance their sense of belonging in the

larger FSL community.

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Appendix A:

Strategic Plan

Vision: Enhance the visibility of culturally based fraternity and sororities here at USD.

Where are we now?
- Three Culturally Base Greek Organizations:
  - Alpha Delta Chapter of Nu Alpha Kappa Fraternity, Inc.
  - Iota Chapter of Sigma Theta Psi, Multicultural Sorority
  - Rho Chapter of Alpha Pi Sigma, Latina Sorority
- Developing a Fraternity and Sorority Multicultural Council (FSMC)
  - <u>Mission Statement:</u> The mission of the Fraternity and Sorority Multicultural Council at the University of San Diego shall be to allow the culturally based fraternities and sororities to thrive in a safe environment that will promote inclusion and celebrate diversity. Member organizations shall be unified and will uphold the highest standards of ethics, cultural awareness, academic excellence, personal and professional development, and commitment to serving the community. The council shall emphasize respect amongst themselves, the university, and the community through guidance and empowerment in order to develop action strategies on matters of mutual concern to the affiliate organizations.

Where are we going?
- Enhance the visibility of the three Culturally Based Greek Organizations
- Increase membership sizes within the community.
- Maintain healthy chapter membership sizes.
- Collaborative efforts among chapters in the community and campus partners.

How will we get there?
- Short-term goals/priorities/initiatives
  - Operation of FSMC
    - Constitution/Bylaws
  - Meet your Culturally Based Greeks Organizations (Meet & Greet)
    - Beginning of the semester. (Make sure this is low-cost due to the community budget.)
  - SSS Summer Bridge Program
  - First-Generation Welcoming
  - Residential Life
  - What other areas we can market the community to at the beginning of the semester?
- What campus resources/stakeholders to get involve with.
  - Reaching out to organizations advisors to see how to best collaborate and help organizations with these challenges…

What would I like to see happen?
- Creating a capacity with campus partners, levels of engagements with CBFO.
- Thinking of spaces where students can engage in. UFMC, BSRC, Commuter Students, SSS.

- What opportunities that the office does that can help create the visibility of the organizations?

Spring 2019:
- Building and developing collaborative efforts with Interfraternity & Panhellenic council.
  - How are we going to do this?
  - What do the student need?
  - Engage with two GA's to discuss this.
- Identify individual chapters priorities and issues.
  - Council to help assist and support.
  - What are they?
- Create a foundation of the council.
  - Constitution/By-laws
  - What else?
- Presence/visibility on campus
  - Wearing letters on campus? How come we don't wear our letters?
  - Activate spaces on campus. Where are the students?
  - Participate in Greek Week as a council.
- Campus partners support
  - Who are students campus partners?
  - Can student identify who are there campus partners?
- Meet & Greet
  - Invite potential new members, IFC, & PHC.
  - Introduce the new governing council.
  - Inviting campus partners to this event.
    - Intentions are to educate campus partners of the culture and organization.
  - Presence on campus.

Fall 2019:
- Foundation of the council
  - Building relationship with each other to increase collaborative efforts.
  - Focus on chapter memberships.
    - Recruitment
    - Chapter growth & development
    - Retaining current & potential new members.
  - New member orientation
    - New members and older members build relationship.
  - Relationship building:
    - Need to be intentional to build relationship: Study together, have dinner together, & informal social gatherings.
- Building Relationship amongst CBFO chapters, IFC, PHC, & FSL Staff members
  - SMART Goal development.
  - Monthly meeting with IFC & PHC.
  - FSL staff engagements with programming early on with FSMC, IFC, & PHC.
    - Have all CBFO present.
  - FSL staff help assist with campus partners and relationship building.
- How can the council assist & support individual chapters?
  - What are our organization challenges?

- The council implement initiatives to support the chapter's challenges & issues.
- Be intentional of supporting chapter's membership.
    - Pulling data from the FSL office of member's class status
        - How many first years, sophomore, junior, and seniors?
    - Develop intentional programs to support chapter's memberships.
        - These can be collaborative efforts from council to campus partners.
        - Example) If all chapters have graduating seniors. FSMC should collaborate with the Career Development to help assist of translating graduating seniors FSL experience to their resume.

Appendix B

Cycle 2, Focus Group, "Defining sense of belonging among Culturally Base Greek Organizations & Fraternity and Sorority Multicultural Council.

Description for Focus Group:

Participants will participate in two focus group discussions. The first focus group will focus on how does the Fraternity & Sorority Multicultural Council builds a community and how to best support and enhance a sense of belonging for members who are affiliated in culturally based Greek organizations. The second focus group will follow up on how did members in the community foster and community after the first focus group. Also, to see if their definition of sense of belonging changed. Participants will be informed about their names being in pseudonyms, will be audiotaped, and also receive a journal for reflections after the group discussions.

Focus Group 1:

- At the beginning of the first focus group, I would say, "Hello everyone, thank you for participating in my Action Research, Empowering and Strengthening Culturally Based Greek Organizations. Before we begin I want to make sure that everyone is aware and know that your name will be addressed by pseudonyms. You can see that on the consent form that you have signed before participating in today's group dialogue."
- I would have a sheet of paper and ask the participants to identify community guidelines.
  - I would first give the participants five minutes on their own to come up with at least three community guidelines that can help foster community, support, and collaboration.
  - After five minutes, I will bring the participants into a group for them to share their individual's Community Guidelines.
  - As a group, participants will need to identify collectively their community guidelines.
- After community guidelines, participants will be given markers and a blanks sheet of white paper. This will be called, "Draw My sense of belonging."
  - Participants will be asked to draw five sections. They can use different colors, use symbols, or phrases.
    - Section 1: Define a sense of belonging and community?
    - Section 2: I will ask the participants, "What does my belonging at USD look like?"
    - Section 3: I will ask the participants, "What does my belonging in my organization look like?"
    - Section 4: I will ask the participants, "What does my belonging in the larger Greek community look like?"
    - Section 5: I will ask the participants, "What does my belonging in Fraternity and Sorority Multicultural Council like?"
    - Section 6: How can you foster a sense of belonging for yourself and other members in FSMC to build a community.

- o Ask the group to use sticky notes to identify by listing what are influences that may cause them to not feel belonging to the images that were drawn. That can people, places, or things.
- After the participants are done with their drawing, we will engage in group dialogue.
  - o I would ask the participants:
    - Share two or three images that were drawn.
    - What were you processing as you were drawing the images?
    - What sections of the drawing did you feel that was most salient to you and why?
    - Looking at your peer's images what are common themes or differences?
- After the group share, asking the group to identify how can FSMC foster a sense of belonging and community for Culturally Base Greek Organizations at USD.
- The last piece of the focus group is a reflection journal.
  - o I would ask the participants to reflect on their journal about what they think about the focus group, the community guidelines, their images, and what they are taking away from the focus group.

Appendix C

Cycle 3: FSMC Presents, "Meet & Greet"

<u>Meet and Greet</u>

Purpose:
- Enhance the visibility of the governing Fraternity & Sorority Multicultural Council and the three Culturally Based Fraternal Organizations, Alpha Pi Sigma, Nu Alpha Kappa, and Sigma Theta Psi.
- Provide campus partners, students, and potential new members the opportunity to engage and learn more about the Fraternity & Sorority Multicultural Council and the three culturally based fraternal organizations.

Program Detailed:
- Emphasize the community of FSMC with the three-affiliated organizations in the council.
- The purpose of FSMC and what it serves.
- Being part individual organization, your also part FSMC, and FSL.
- Organizations cultures & Traditions
- Narratives and Experiences of affiliations at USD.
- Q&A (What does this look like)

Program Evaluation: (Evaluation form is important to assess the event if we met our purpose/outcome. Also to improve for future/similar events.

<u>Meet and Greet Evaluation</u>

Are you a faculty, staff, or student?
_____

I feel like was able to have a better understanding of the Fraternity & Sorority Multicultural Council at today's event.

Strongly Agree   Agree   Strongly Disagree   Disagree

Please provide examples:
_____

I feel like I was able to have a better understanding of Alpha Pi Sigma, Nu Alpha Kappa, and Sigma Theta Psi at today's event.

Strongly Agree   Agree   Strongly Disagree   Disagree

Please provide examples:
_____

I feel like today's event benefits the USD community?

Strongly Agree   Agree   Strongly Disagree   Disagree

Please provide examples:

_____

How did you hear about today's event?

_____

What other types of event you would like to see the Fraternity & Sorority Multicultural Council host?

Please leave any additional comments.

Appendix D

CBFO Recruitment Workshop

Learning Outcomes:
- Articulate and apply social excellence to organization recruitment process.
- Learn practical tools to enhance organization recruitment process.
- Identify chapter audiences and how to target audiences for recruitment.
- Identify marketing strategies to enhance visibility on USD campus.

Program Overview:
- Social Excellence
- Recruitment
    - Who is your audience?
    - 5 step process of recruitment
- Marketing = Visibility of your chapter on campus
- Year round Recruitment

Social Excellence:
Phired Up. (2019). Social Excellence: The "Art" of Fraternity and Sorority Grwoth. Retrived from: http://blog.phiredup.com/?s=social+excellence+to+recruitment
Social excellence is:
- *A state of perpetual generosity, curiosity, positivity, and openness to limitless possibility.*
- *A desire to intentionally connect with others. The ability to engage in deep, meaningful conversation.*
- *Acting in a responsible and respectable manner, with high expectations of others. Being authentic and living everyday with integrity as the best version of oneself.*
- *Being confident and vulnerable. Being fun and compassionate. Being open, kind and bold.*
- *The deepest level of societal participation and contribution.*

Social excellence is about being authentic to others and yourself. Engage in meaningful conversations to build connections with potential new members. Social excellence was a framework used for CBFO recruitment Presentation.

Recruitment:
- Who is your audience?
    - Participants will need to identify 2-3 audiences and identify where their audiences are at. It is important for participants to identify, specifically who is their audience and where they are at. Example) First year students and resident life.
    - This will allow participants to know how to spend their time and energy to recruit new members.
- 5 Step process of Recruitment
    - 1) Handshake: Recruitment first started with the handshake and introduction.

- o 2) Conversation: Then engage in meaningful conversations by using social excellence. Authentic, meaningful conversations, to enhance connections with potential new members.
- o 3) Build and Foster relationship: Continue to build and maintain relationship with PNM by getting to know them more.
- o 4) Introduce them to their organization: This is a critical component as it helps potential new members get to know other members in your organization.
- o 5) Ask them to join: Lastly if you find potential new members fitting to your organization, ask them to join. CBFO end up not asking potential new members to join. Some obstacles of not asking because of pride or getting rejection.

Marketing: Marketing is creating visibility for their chapter on campus. Marketing is about selling themselves and who they are towards their audiences.
- Chapter need to keep their brand simple, say something special about their organization, avoid shields because all shields are similar, spell out their organization name because their audiences do not read Greek letters, and use common languages with potential new members.
- When chapter members are marketing towards their audiences:
  - o They need to describe their chapter in one to two sense of who they are.
    - Emphasis for them to not share their national information.
  - o They'll need to use social excellence to capture their experience and story.
- They'll need to utilize themselves, chapter members, alumni and campus partner to helps market them to audiences.
  - o Campus partners can do testimonies and direct students to organizations.

Year round Recruitnemtn:
- Year round recruitment is important for CBFO to bring new members to the organization, retain members who is currently in the new members educational process, and retain their current chapter membership.
- Ultilize the social excellence to recruit year round.
- Participants need to identify their recruitment structure, which is social events, talbing, and informational sessions.
  - o This will allow the chapter to strategically identify programs that they may attend and recruit while at those events.

CBFO Recruitment Evaluation

I find today's workshop was beneficial and helpful for my organization and myself.

Strongly Agree   Agree   Strongly Disagree   Disagree

I feel like I understand and can apply social excellence to my organization recruitment process.

Strongly Agree   Agree   Strongly Disagree   Disagree

Please define social excellence and how you would apply it to your organization recruitment process.

Which practical tools did you find most helpful in today's presentation? Please rank 1 – 3. (1 is most helpful, 2 helpful, 3 not helpful.) You may have the same score for each category.

Social excellence ____   Recruitment (Who is your audience? & 5 Step process of recruitment) ____

Marketing ____   Year Round Recruitment ____

Please explain your response above. Why or why not? (Please feel free to use the back of this sheet).

I feel like there should be more workshops like today's presentation for CBFO.

Strongly Agree   Agree   Strongly Disagree   Disagree

What topics/workshops you find will be helpful and beneficial for you and CBFO here at USD?

Please leave any other feedbacks or comments on the back of this sheet.