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**LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT AND INVOLVEMENT: A STUDY OF THE  
2015 PEER REFERRAL AND ORIENTATION STAFF AT ROWAN  
UNIVERSITY**

by

NaQuan D. Redd

A Thesis

Submitted to the  
Department of Educational Services and Leadership  
College of Education

In partial fulfillment of the requirement

For the degree of

Master of Arts in Higher Education

at

Rowan University

May 23, 2016

Thesis Chair: Burton Sisco, Ed.D.

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## **Dedication**

I would like to dedicate this thesis to all of my Chamberlain Student Center family members throughout my time here at Rowan. Each one of you has taught me everything I needed to know to make it this far and to succeed.

## **Acknowledgments**

I would like to express my deepest appreciation to Dr. Burton Sisco for his extreme patience and willingness to guide me through the process of completing a thesis. At the start of this graduate program I would have never imagined that I could complete this caliber of work and you helped me to believe in myself. Thank you for helping me to “dive in the deep end.”

I would also like to thank my Rowan family, this includes my supervisors, co-workers, employees, and cohort members. Every single one of you made me feel as if I was exactly where I needed to be in life. Your constant support made it clear that I was going into the correct career.

I would like to give my mentor Vinnie Surace the deepest thanks. You took a chance on someone who desperately needed it. You saw something in me that I didn't see in myself and helped me to bring it to the surface. You have been a mentor, supervisor, confidant, and most importantly a dear friend. I hope to be half of the professional that you are.

Lastly, I would like to thank my girlfriend, Sarah. In a time of my life that was riddled with uncertainty, you were the light that kept me on track. There was not a day where you didn't express your confidence in me. You helped me to be the person I am today and I truly appreciate everything that you have done for me in our time together.

## **Abstract**

NaQuan Redd

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT AND INVOLVEMENT: A STUDY OF THE 2015 PEER  
REFERRAL AND ORIENTATION STAFF AT ROWAN UNIVERSITY

2015 - 2016

Burton R. Sisco, Ed.D.

Master of Arts in Higher Education

The purpose of this mixed method study was to (a) assess the Peer Referral Orientation Staff (PROS) program at Rowan University, (b) assess if PROS members identify themselves as leaders on campus, (c) assess if other students identify the PROS members as leaders on campus, and (d) assess PROS member's beliefs that the program helped them to develop and identify as leaders. A total of 36 subjects took part in the survey portion of the study which helped to assess the above areas. Out of the 36 subjects, four agreed to be participants in the interview process. To give the best perspective of the program, two of the participants chosen were new PROS members, while the remaining two members were returning PROS members. Interviews were transcribed and content analysis was used to analyze the data.

The study found that the PROS program does have value as it pertains to developing leadership in students. PROS members articulated how they have personally developed due to their involvement in the PROS program. PROS members reported being able to be more confident in their leadership. They reported very insightful gains in their own development. They also reported increases of awareness in other perceptions of them as leaders and also increases in their own perceptions themselves as leaders.

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## **Chapter I**

### **Introduction**

Orientation leader programs have become popular on many college and university campuses recently. The role of the orientation leader encompasses many tasks and roles that students have to undertake, one of which is the peer mentor role. Peer mentor positions are utilized in many ways throughout higher education, with many campuses using students as tutors to further the academic progress of their peers. One example of an orientation leader program that utilizes its members as peer mentor is the Peer Referral Orientation Staff (PROS) program at Rowan University. Positioned under the Department of Orientation and Student Leadership Programs, the PROS have responsibilities to help transition both freshman students and transfer students to their college experience at Rowan University.

#### **Statement of the Problem**

The PROS program at Rowan University started in 1984. Originally taken from the general knowledge of the position of orientation leader, the program believed that new students arriving at a higher education institution would feel more comfortable interacting with someone in their peer group during the transitional period (PROS). Along with giving transitioning students a chance to interact with members of their peer group, the PROS program gives students involved opportunities to develop their leadership skills by becoming peer mentors to a diverse group of students, acting as resources and pseudo-advisors for students, and guiding transitioning students through the beginning phases of life at the institution. Students involved in PROS program have

to go through interview processes, information sessions, and extensive trainings on topics such as leadership and diversity. They have to be present for orientations and other special events during the academic year, which means sacrificing a part of their summer to be on campus. However, when compared to their peer counterparts who may be organization presidents, members of club executive boards, or members of Rowan's student government association, the leadership position of the PROS may be belittled.

Peer mentor and orientation leader positions such as the PROS program are seen as having the most benefit to students who are transitioning into new institutions. However, there are little data that describes the developmental benefits or risks that members of these programs receive from participation. The PROS program gives students a chance to help other students and the chance to grow and develop themselves.

### **Purpose of the Study**

This study was conducted to analyze the experience of the PROS members and to detail the impact through their leadership development and involvement after becoming members of the PROS program. The PROS members were asked questions on their personal beliefs of how the position impacted them, to help increase the information on the effectiveness of an orientation leader position as well as seek to describe if the position promotes leadership. Orientation leaders are present on many higher education campuses, research on the experiences of the Rowan orientation leaders sought to detail the most accurate information of orientation leaders across the country.

## **Significance of the Study**

This study examined how the PROS program impacted the leadership development of the members throughout their time at Rowan. The personal growth and development of the PROS members was a focal point of the study. As well as looking at the PROS experience as peer mentors, the study looked at other positions that the members have held, and looked specifically at the leadership positions held by the PROS members. The study examined the role of the PROS as a peer mentor position and assessed what leadership development skills resulted from being in such a position on college campuses. This provides significant data pertaining to leadership development on college campuses, as well as helped pinpoint what aspect of the PROS program was successful in developing students. If the factor that helped to create an environment can be pinpointed than it can be replicated to other departments in an effort to help develop more students in college institutions.

## **Assumptions and Limitations**

The PROS members who participated in the study were able to give their opinion on their growth and development as a result of the PROS program; as such it is assumed that all of the PROS members answered the questions as truthfully as possibly. This study also allowed students to discuss their current involvement on Rowan's campus, and how being a peer mentor helped them to increase their involvement on campus.

The application process to become a PROS member begins late in the Fall semester of the academic year, with the full PROS staff chosen at the beginning weeks of the spring semester. Many students decide to continue being a PROS member for

multiple years but many of the PROS students are new to the experience. The full PROS team is a staff of about 40 to 45 undergraduate students.

There is a potential for researcher bias in this study. I have previously worked with the supervisor of the PROS members in my position as a graduate coordinator. I also served as an intern of the Orientation and Student Leadership department at Rowan University, the same office that supervises the PROS program. I have had the chance to form relationships with past PROS members and was in attendance at the training of the new PROS members for the 2016-2017 academic year. Some of the PROS members were also members of other organizations on campus, and I have had frequent contact with them due to my position as a graduate coordinator at the student center on Rowan's campus.

### **Operational Definitions**

1. Leadership Development: Experiences that aid in increasing student's leadership capabilities in both their professional and personal lives
2. Leadership Identity: How students see themselves in terms of leadership and developing their personal definition of leadership.
3. Orientation Leader: Students who work with the orientation department of college institutions to help orient and transition incoming students to the institution.
4. Peer Mentor: Students who spend time advising, helping, and being a resource to their fellow students.
5. PROS: Peer Mentor Orientation Staff: Orientation leaders of Rowan University.

6. Student Involvement: The amount of time and energy that student expend on both academic and extracurricular activities.

### **Research Questions**

This study addressed the following research questions:

1. Did the PROS program help students identify themselves as leaders?
2. Are PROS considered to be leaders on campus by other students?
3. What other leadership positions and roles do PROS members participate in while attending Rowan University?
4. Did the PROS program help students with leadership development and personal development?
5. How has being a part of the PROS helped shape the leadership identity and development of students?

### **Overview of the Study**

This study is broken down into separate chapters that tackle different aspect of the study and the related research. Chapter II provides a detailed review of the scholarly literature that are of the most relevance to this study. Chapter II includes an overview of orientation leaders program, leadership programs in college, and the definition of leadership, leadership identity development theory, student involvement theory, and other relevant research pertaining to the topic.

Chapter III describes the methodologies and procedures used for study. This section includes a description of the population to be studied along with the demographic information of the institution used in the study. This includes the sample selection of the

population, the specific tools and instruments used for collecting data during the study, and how the data were analyzed.

Chapter IV presents all findings that are relevant to the study. This section summarizes all of the data in the study. All information from the survey instrument and the participants of the study are analyzed in this section. This section also presents the findings and data of individuals who were interviewed for the study. The research questions are revisited in this section to cross reference them with the data collected. This section also provides a statistical analysis summary of the data collected. Both quantitative data from the survey instrument and qualitative data from interviews are reviewed in this chapter.

Chapter V discusses the major findings of the study. This section provides a summary of the study, offers conclusions, and gives recommendations for practice and further study.



## **Chapter II**

### **Review of the Literature**

#### **Leadership in Orientation Programs**

Tom has just arrived at his college orientation a few weeks after graduating high school. On arrival Tom and his parents are greeted by two very cheery students who introduce themselves as orientation leaders. The students welcome the family to the institution and answer any questions they may have. Throughout the day Tom sees many more of the orientation leaders and notices how they all seem to be genuinely happy to be helping the new students enjoy their orientation. Scared of how different college will be from his high school experience, Tom interacts with one of the orientation leaders to get honest feedback on what to expect. To his surprise, the orientation leader not only answers his question but also offers advice, personal experience, and ways for Tom to contact them if he had any other questions. This helped Tom feel more relieved about his future college experience during his time at orientation.

The aforementioned vignette is representative of encounters that incoming college students may have with orientation leaders when they attend their orientation to postsecondary institution. In the current world of college orientation programming, many college institutions hire upper-class students to help transition incoming students to collegiate life. However, in the history of higher education, the use of peer leaders is a trend that is as recent as 1959 (Gasner & Kennedy, 2012). The effects of peer influence and education have been an area of study in higher education, with orientation being one of the main focuses (Gasner & Kennedy, 2012). Having students serve in these leadership

roles can be seen as beneficial for the development of the student and the people that they are assisting.

Orientation leaders, as these students are called, help ease the transition into the college for incoming students. Orientation leaders go through interview processes and training that prepares them for the leadership role that they are going to undertake. In this position they become the faces of their institutions, being the first group of upperclassmen that incoming students are able to truly interact with. The orientation leaders must be able to convey personal experiences, give realistic and uplifting views on campus climate, and be able to accurately inform incoming students of what they should expect and what is expected of them as students of their institution (Gasner & Kennedy, 2012). Also, maybe the most important aspect that makes these students leaders, is the fact that they are tasked with being the resource for new students (Gasner & Kennedy, 2012). In the short period of time that encompasses orientation, these students are seen as pseudo-mentors to incoming students. Orientation programs help students develop leadership attributes by allowing them the chance to be the faces of their respective campuses, and to be seen as leaders by incoming students.

Many universities currently use student orientation leaders to aid in the orientation of incoming freshman and transfer students. Transfer students, who have already had college experience in some type of way offer different challenges than incoming freshmen and orientation leaders must be trained in how to aid them in the best way possible. Parent and family involvement in college has also increased, and as a result, many institutions have begun to specifically train student leaders to help the

parents along the orientation process (Gasner & Kennedy, 2012). Even this subtle change in interacting with parents and family members as opposed to students instead offers orientation leaders a chance to gain different leadership skills within the orientation framework.

### **Current Orientation Leadership Programs**

An example of an orientation leader program at Rowan University is the Peer Referral and Orientation Staff program that has been in implementation for many years (Rowan PROS, 2015). Rowan relies so heavily on its orientation leaders that the program is directly under the Department of Orientation and Student Leadership Programs. The orientation leaders, better known as the PROS, each act as individual leaders to specific groups of incoming students who will be going into a similar major as the PROS themselves (Rowan PROS, 2015). The PROS program also has the opportunity for certain members to advance and increase leadership involvement by becoming PROS team leaders. The team leaders work closely with the professional orientation staff and help to supervise groups of PROS members. This is a common occurrence with orientation leader programs because of the increasing reliance on student workers in orientation (Gasner & Kennedy, 2012). Many institutions offer team leader positions to aid professionals with their workload as well as to offer students with a chance to further develop leadership skills by assisting the professionals at a level that is higher than the other orientation leader.

Institutions such as Syracuse University, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Calvin College, and the University of Washington use orientation leaders to help

facilitate orientation. The University of Southern Carolina is another university that utilizes this model. To give their orientation team leaders added leadership experience, USC involves the students in the hiring process of new orientation leaders every year (University of South Carolina, Orientation Team Leaders, 2015). Some schools such as Southern University and Emory University openly place their expectations of orientation leaders online, some of the common similarities in expectations are knowledge of the campus, pride in the institution, and active involvement in campus activities; these are some of the expectations that differentiate orientation staff from orientation leaders (Southern University & Emory University, 2015).

### **Leadership Programs on College Campuses**

Colleges and universities have said that they put a premium on leadership development. In the mission statement of many institutions, it is claimed that developing leadership skills is an important aspect when it comes to educating students. (Cress, Astin, Zimmerman-Oster, & Burkhardt, 2001). In a study of leadership programs from urban, suburban, and rural institutions, it was found that the majority of institutions describe leadership, service learning, community service, and volunteerism as a part of the institutional mission (Zimmerman-Oster & Burkhardt, 1999). However, this is not the easiest goal for some colleges. Leadership can be defined in many ways, so many institutions handle leadership program approaches differently with some colleges placing limited value on the programs. Some colleges do not find leadership programs to be of much importance; this reason explains why the advancement in leadership programs has been gainful yet slow.

With postsecondary education being highly competitive, colleges and universities have to put focus on their primary function, which is providing a quality education in the classroom, not leadership programs (Cress et al., 2001). This mindset however has the possibility of impeding students from reaching their leadership potential. Astin and Astin (2000), stated that higher education plays a part in shaping the quality of leadership in modern American society. Leadership experiences while in postsecondary institutions are essential for students to combat the effects of problems that plague American society. Institutions of higher education and faculty of these institutions are tasked to educate and train the new generation of leaders as well as further the research on leadership to find the most effective practices and approaches to leadership and leadership education (Astin & Astin, 2000).

There are many types and styles for administering leadership programs that offer students various ways to develop leadership throughout their college experience. Many institutions focus on well-known leadership positions that can be looked upon to foster leadership skills such as student government and volunteer services (Thomas, 2006). Faculty members play a significant role in helping students to develop leadership skills, introducing students to leadership opportunities in and outside of the classroom being another way faculty members are beneficial (Ewing, Bruce, & Ricketts, 2009).

### **Defining Leadership**

To get a proper grasp on the scope of leadership, the definition and leadership must be explored. Jim Kouzes and Barry Posner, who are seen as leading researchers in the field of leadership, have spent years studying what leadership is as well as the

qualities that make individuals leaders. Both authors have risen to prominence with their research and have published more than a dozen books on the subject, along with conducting seminars on leadership development (Founders & Authors, 2015).

Kouzes and Posner co-authored *The Leadership Challenge*. Originally published in 1987, the book focused on the analysis of leadership experiences of thousands of people. The authors found that no matter the individual situation there are common behaviors and actions that leaders do, which they named the five practices of exemplary leadership (Kouzes & Posner, 2012). The five practices are: Model the Way, which involves individuals speaking and acting consistently with values that they set for themselves; Inspire a Shared Vision, which involves individuals believing so passionately in their dreams that they are able to draw others in and get them involved as well; Challenge the Process, which involves individuals being pioneers and innovators who are not afraid to go against the norm to get the best results in whatever they do; Enable Others to Act, which involves fostering collaborative and trusting relationships that empower others to perform to the best of their abilities; and Encourage the Heart, which involves recognizing good work and genuinely caring for others in a way that shows them how much their contributions are appreciated (Kouzes & Posner, 2012). Now in its fifth edition almost three decades later, the five practices are still seen as characteristics that all exemplary leaders share.

Kouzes and Posner also created the *Leadership Practices Inventory* (LPI), an instrument that measures a variety of leadership skills and styles (Posner, 2004).

Believing that leadership is important for college students, the researchers created a

student version of the LPI that identifies specific behaviors and actions that students report using when they are at their personal best as leaders (Posner, 2004).

Merriam-Webster's online dictionary (2015) defines leadership as "a position as a leader of a group, organization, etc., the time when a person holds the position of leader, and the power or ability to lead other people." This definition is grounded in the idea that leadership is something that requires a position, which is not the case. In a study of leadership identity development, researchers found that students only see leadership as positional in the earliest forms of leadership identity development (Komives, Owen, Longerbeam, Mainella, & Osteen, 2005). As students grow and develop their leadership skills through experience, they learn that leadership is a process that among a group of people to achieve a goal; this realization is the basis of leadership identity development theory.

### **Leadership Identity Development**

Important to collegiate life is how students go about developing their own identity in the area of leadership. Developed by Susan Komives, Susan Longerbeam, Julie Owen, Felicia Maniella, and Laura Osteen, the theory of leadership identity development was created to better understand how students develop and integrate leadership into their lives (Komives, Owen, Longerbeam, Maniella, & Osteen, 2006). Influenced by psychosocial and cognitive developmental theories, the researchers conducted a study of college students to understand the processes a person experiences in creating a leadership identity, which led to the key concepts that explain the theory (Komives et al., 2006).

The theory of leadership identity development consists of many categories that interact with each other. The interaction of these five categories: broadening views of leadership, developing self, group influences, developmental influences, and changing view of self with others, interact to create a central category of leadership identity that develops in identity stages (Komives et al., 2005). The stages of leadership identity are awareness, exploration/engagement, leader identified, leadership differentiated, generativity, and integration/synthesis. First, in the awareness stage students begin to recognize and become aware of leaders. The second stage of exploration/engagement involves students exploring different organizations, students learn more from participation in groups. The third stage, leader identified, is where students begin to identify the differences between leaders and followers from their experience in groups. In the fourth stage, leadership differentiated, students learn to differentiate leadership from people in leader positions and begin to realize their own leadership influence. Stage five, generativity, involves students committing themselves to their passions as well as leading other students to build their leadership capacity. Finally, stage six of the theory, integration/synthesis, describes how students actively engage on a frequent basis and integrate leadership into who they are as individuals (Komives et al., 2005). The leadership identity development theory was verified in a study of leadership skill development by Ewing et al. (2009), research, which showed that an equal amount of students with and without leadership positions reported positive leadership development skills from participation in collegiate organizations. However, it is believed that holding leadership positions is very beneficial because those students who hold leadership



positions are often given additional leadership development opportunities, when compared to their non-positional counterparts.

Komives, Lucas, and McMahon (2013), published a book specifically for students to help develop leadership skills. In the book, *Exploring Leadership: For College Students Who Want to Make a Difference*, leadership development is defined as the process of building a students' ability to do leadership as well as addressing student self-efficacy to help to influence change (Komives et al., 2013). The book also goes on to explain the changes in leadership beliefs along with the myths that surround leadership. Reflection was a key concept in the book. In early chapters of the book, the authors focused on having the individuals capacity to understand themselves; this included their strengths, weaknesses, and how they saw themselves as leaders. Also discussed was the idea of understanding other people, which includes knowing other people's uniqueness, motivations and differences in leadership strengths. One can link the book to Komives' et al., earlier research on leadership identity development and how leadership is formed.

Wagner and Ostick (2013b) also developed workbooks for college students and teachers to accompany the *Exploring Leadership* book by Komives. These workbooks tackle key concepts that are focused on in the book, and when used in conjunction with the book are a great teaching tool for college institutions. The workbooks are also prime examples of how leadership programs can be presented in many different ways. Both the student and the instructor workbook go hand-in-hand leading to teachers being the driving force behind helping students to develop their leadership capabilities.

Leadership programs and activities play a major role in the endeavor of developing students to realize the best of their ability. The issue with most programs is the fact that majority of them focus on skill building and short term interventions and not how leadership identity is formed or changed (Komives et al., 2005). As stated earlier by Komives et al. (2005), in the early stages of developing a leadership identity students do not personalize leadership identity; instead they view adults as the leaders. This changes when students begin to see leadership as a process and begin to personalize their own meanings of leadership (Komives et al., 2005). Integral to this personalization of leadership is the amount of involvement that students have as they experience their college years

### **Student Involvement**

Student involvement plays an integral role in the areas of leadership and leadership development for college students. The theory of student involvement was popularized by Alexander Astin. Astin (1999) defined involvement as the amount of physical and psychological energy students devote to the academic experience. This theory is relevant because it takes into account both the academic and social experiences that students have while in college. According to Astin (1999), students have a variety of involvement opportunities presented to them during their college years. Clubs and organizations are the obvious choices for involvement opportunity, but along with that there are chances for students to get involved at their places of residence on campus, being involved in athletics, student-staff interaction, honors program involvement, academic involvement, and involvement in student government (Astin, 1999). In a study

of involvement, Astin (1996), found that the three most powerful forms of involvement are academic involvement, involvement with faculty, and involvement with peer groups. In this study it is interesting to note that peer groups seem to have the biggest effect on educational and personal development. This is due to the effect that the more time students spend interacting with peers increases the capacity of students to become more involved in the educational experience (Astin, 1996). Astin made it clear that not every type of involvement would be beneficial for students. Student involvement theory puts a premium on active participation, in order for students to get the benefits of being involved they cannot be involved in groups in a passive manner, they must actively seek to get the best out of their involvement (Astin, 1999).

It is the active aspect of involvement that connects student involvement and leadership on a deeper level. In their study on leadership development, Komives et al. (2005), discovered that one of the factors that influenced leadership identity was meaningful involvement. Involvement is seen as the starting ground to students identifying their passions and clarifying what their personal values are. After becoming involved and socially integrated into college life, students must use knowledge of their personal values and passions to become involved in more meaningful activities (Komives et al., 2012). This meaningful involvement in activities directly related to the students' passions helps the students in developing their own leadership identity formatted around their interest.

Although there are many positive effects of involvement, the too much of a good thing precedent is still in effect. In involvement positions that effect leadership, there are

some negative consequences if a student decides to become overinvolved in extracurricular activities. Spratt and Turrentine (2001), studied involvement patterns of leaders of minority and religious groups and found that students who took on multiple leadership roles had the highest rates of alcohol use. Although this is a small sample of the negative effects of involvement, it confirms Astin's thought that there are limits to amount of involvement and that too much involvement can start to become counterproductive. Also relevant is the idea that students do not get benefits from leadership because they do not believe involvement in organizations helps to build leadership skills. Ewing et al. (2009) noted that a percentage of students reported negative perceptions of involvement affecting leadership development and skill building. Some perceptions of students were that involvement did not prepare them for future careers, involvement did not help build relationships with people who have similar interests, and that involvement did not allow individuals to learn about their strengths (Ewing et al., 2009). This study included students who held leadership positions as well as those who did not. This poses the question of whether students who are not involved in leadership positions or collegiate organizations get the full benefits of leadership development that was promised in the institutions' mission statement.

### **Relevant Research**

Relevant research on leadership development was done at Rowan University's campus. With Rowan's growing interest in leadership development and programming, Farber (2010), studied the involvement patterns of freshmen who were involved in the Freshmen Leadership Interest Program. The Freshmen Leadership Interest Program,

better known as FLIP, was developed as a three-day retreat that introduced new freshmen on Rowan's campus to leadership opportunities at the institution (Farber, 2010). Farber studied the development of senior students who were involved in the program as freshmen as well as graduates of Rowan who were once involved in the program as freshmen. A specific topic area in his research was how involvement in the program impacted leadership development throughout the student's time at Rowan.

To collect data, Farber (2010) administered surveys in conjunction with conducting interviews on students who were once involved in the program. Farber used Astin's framework of student involvement to examine data and found that students who were involved in the FLIP program developed a connection to campus which was integral in increasing their levels of involvement on campus. The study also showed that involvement in the program positively affected leadership development, and ability of the students to see themselves as successful leaders.

A study conducted at Louisiana State University, also studied leadership in college students. Lambert (2011), researched organizational participation in students to find a correlation between participation and leadership. Student development theories and leadership theories built the foundation for the study. Different leadership theories and material such as the leadership identity development theory and the leadership challenge discussed earlier were also used in this study.

To collect data, Lambert (2011) used the *Multi-Institution Study of Leadership* (MSL). The MSL assesses different leadership outcomes such as consciousness of self, congruence, commitment, collaboration, common purpose, controversy, citizenship and

change. Lambert administered the MSU online to 4,316 LSU students, of those emailed to participate, 1,032 responded for the study. Those who responded represented different organizational groups throughout the LSU campus, which was essential for Lambert's research to determine how different participation effected leadership outcomes. Lambert found that different participation effected leadership outcomes, and students in a religious student group scored the highest on leadership outcomes. She also found out that while Greek organizations preached leadership, they had much lower scores on leadership outcomes as compared to their non-Greek counterparts.

### **Summary of the Literature Review**

Orientation Leader programs are one of the most common forms of leadership programs on college institutions. With many schools utilizing this type of program, students are able to develop leadership skills and capabilities as well as develop their leadership identity. This review looked at the importance of the orientation leader position on college campuses, and the importance of leadership programs, leadership identity development, and student involvement.

As collegiate institutions begin to realize the importance of leadership development programs, some institutions are taking action to develop students to their best ability. Some institutions have added leadership as a main focus in their campus mission statement. Leadership development can occur in many different forms due to the various styles of leadership programs and activities that promote leadership. Many researchers have developed different views that seek to explain leadership and how leadership effects students in college. Theories such as leadership identity development,

and literature such as the leadership challenge attempt to explain the most common leadership practices. These practices can be applied to students in college to help them develop their own leadership style.

The positive impact of student involvement can be essential to those who act as orientation leaders. Knowing the campus and what it has to offer can give students in peer leadership positions the confidence and a better reference point from which to help other students become better accustomed to the institution. What is important when it comes to involvement is making sure that students choose activities that will be meaningful to them and will benefit their growth and development the most. Too much involvement can be just as negative for students as no involvement at all, and leaders must find a good balance to get the most benefit from leadership programs. There is more research needed in college institutions that focus on leadership development and programs, such as orientation leader programs, that aid students in developing their leadership identity.

## **Chapter III**

### **Methodology**

#### **Context of the Study**

This study was conducted at Rowan University. Rowan University, originally Glassboro Normal School, is a state public research institution. Rowan's main campus is located in Glassboro, NJ, with satellite campuses in Camden, NJ and Stratford, NJ. Rowan University has also grown with partnerships involving local community colleges. Rowan College at Gloucester County formerly Gloucester County College in Sewell, NJ and Rowan College at Burlington County formerly Burlington County College are two examples of Rowan's expansion and commitment to education for students in the area.

Ranked 19<sup>th</sup> among Best Regional colleges in the Northeast and 3<sup>rd</sup> among public institutions in this category, Rowan University is steadily growing (Fast Facts, 2015). Rowan students attend an institution that is on the rise for multiple reasons. CollegeNET, a company that develops technologies, ranked Rowan as one of the top three schools for social mobility for the second year in a row (Fast Facts, 2015).

Majority of students at Rowan University are full-time students. A total of 89% of students who attend Rowan are full time students, with 11% of students attending Rowan on a part time basis (College Board, 2015). According to Rowan's common data set for the 2014-2015 academic year, the average age of all Rowan University students is 22 years old, while the average age for full time students at Rowan is 21 (Common Data Set, 2015) Rowan University also has a focus on diversity in the school setting. A total of 53% of Rowan students are male and 47% of Rowan students are female (College



Board). The location of Rowans campus is very popular with students who live in New Jersey. Ninety five percent of students at Rowan are from New Jersey, so only 5% of students of out-of-state students.

Rowan also offers its students many opportunities for extracurricular activities. Rowan sponsors 146 total student organizations, including Greek organizations, and student clubs (Fast Facts). Rowan also offers a number of intramural and club sports and competes at the NCAA Division III level with other colleges and universities in the region.

### **Population and Sampling**

The available population chosen to complete this survey were members of the Peer Referral Orientation Staff (PROS), the orientation leaders at Rowan University. The PROS have an average of about 40 student employees who work yearly on campus. These employees are comprised of continuing PROS members, who have had their position for more than a year, new PROS, who have just been interviewed and accepted into the program, and PROS team leaders, who assist the professional orientation staff by helping to supervise the other PROS staff. PROS members also work outside of Orientation for special events on campus such as, Welcome Weekend, Family Weekend, and open houses that take place on campus. A purposive means of choosing subjects for the study was used for this total population study. To get adequate data, all members who were involved in peer mentoring by being an orientation leader were invited to take the survey. This feature is very important because the study sought to understand how being an orientation leader helped to develop leadership skills in students. Upon completion of

the survey, participants were asked to sign a sheet regarding interest in being interviewed. Four participants were chosen from this list, two of which were new PROS members and two were returning PROS members. This was done to get perspectives on the PROS program from the different members.

### **Survey Instrumentation**

The instrument in the study used (Appendix A) is a modified version of Ohio University's survey on student involvement. The Ohio University survey on student involvement was developed by Ohio University's Office of Institutional Research. Due to having such a unique topic and body of research that goes beyond student involvement, aspects of the Ohio University survey was tailored for the most effective feedback. Upon further research on the Ohio University survey instrument, a modified version of the instrument was found in the thesis of Thomas Iacovone (2007). Iacovone (2007) stated, that the survey was distributed to the freshman students on Ohio University's campus; the survey instrument was distributed by the Office of Institutional Research, the Residence Life department, and the Vice President of Student Affairs office.

The 37-item survey was split into different sections, not including the background and demographic information. The first section inquired about personal beliefs about the leadership aspect of the PROS position. The students were required to answer in a Likert format ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. The second section focused on the effectiveness of PROS on fostering leadership qualities. These eight items were placed in Likert format ranging from highly ineffective to highly effective. The purpose of these items was to get PROS members to rate how effective the PROS experience had

been in promoting personal development. The next section focused on the amount of involvement of PROS members on campus. This section sought details on the extracurricular activities that the PROS have taken while at Rowan, other than their PROS experience. The final section focuses on the importance of involvement opportunities at Rowan. The instrument was pilot tested by other student leaders on campus. These students were three members of the Student Government Association, three Graduate Assistants in the office of Student Life and two Admissions Ambassadors. These students tested the instrument to determine face validity and general readability of the instrument. The pilot test of the survey took about 10 minutes. The pilot group proposed more questions for future study.

To determine reliability of the survey, the Likert scale items were analyzed using Chronbach Alpha coefficient tool in SPSS. Coefficients of .70 and above are considered reliable. The Likert scale items inquiring about personal beliefs about the leadership yielded a score of .747. The Likert scale items inquiring about effectiveness of PROS on fostering leadership qualities yielded a score of .784. The Likert scale items inquiring about the importance of involvement opportunities yielded a score of .764. Overall all Likert scale items yielded results above .70, thus the instrument appears to be consistent and reliable.

### **Interview Instrumentation**

The interview instrument consisted of five questions (Appendix B). These questions focused on the experience of the students as PROS members. Students were asked why they decided to join the PROS. The students were also asked if being a PROS

member helped them to develop during their time at Rowan and what they gained from being a PROS member. The next question was posed so that students could tell how they believed they developed as a leader from their PROS experience. The final question asked students whether being a PROS member helped them in any other leadership positions on campus.

All interviews were conducted on a one-on-one basis and were all conducted at the Chamberlain Student Center at Rowan University. The basis of the study was explained to all interview participants. This was done, to give the participants knowledge of the study and to help them make an informed decision about being involved in the interview process. After an explanation, all participants signed a consent form before the interview process began. All interviews were recorded via phone recording applications. Interviews ranged from 8 to 17 minutes.

### **Data Gathering Procedures**

Prior to any data collection, the application for data collection was completed and approved by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of Rowan University. The survey was in a paper format and was distributed to the PROS for completion during a PROS training in early March. It was recommended that all PROS members complete the surveys and return them in person. All PROS members received a copy of the survey through email as a safety measure; due to full attendance of the PROS members at the training email surveys were not utilized.

## **Data Analysis**

Analysis of the data was done using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) computer software. Data were inputted into a variable view while utilizing the software, and was subsequently analyzed after inputting the variables into SPSS. Descriptive statistics were used to examine the research questions posed in Chapter I. These statistics, such as mean, median, mode, frequency, and standard deviation were examined by utilizing frequency tables in SPSS. Based on the *Logical Analysis of Written Data* (Sisco, 1981; Appendix D), content analysis was used to analyze the qualitative data. Data were analyzed by looking for common and divergent themes. Once the themes were determined, the data were organized into appropriate categories.

## **Chapter IV**

### **Findings**

#### **Profile of the Quantitative Sample**

The subjects in this study consist of the total population of the Peer Referral and Orientation Staff members. This encompasses 36 students, all of whom were currently enrolled at Rowan University in Glassboro, New Jersey during the 2015-2016 academic year. All subjects were recruited through convenience sampling; their involvement as a PROS member was vital as a basis of this study. A total of 36 surveys were distributed, and 36 of the surveys were returned, yielding a response rate of 100%.

Table 4.1 displays the demographic information for participants of this study. The data show that there were 16 females (44.4%), 17 males (47.2%) two students who identified as other (5.6%), and one student who did not answer the question (2.8%). Of the students, 13 (36.1%) were freshmen at Rowan University, eight students (22.2%) were sophomore students, nine students (25.0%) were juniors, four students (11.1%) were senior students, one student (2.8%) identified as other, and one student (2.8%), did not answer the question. Also shown is the amount of time that subjects in the study have been active as PROS members. According to the data, 19 students (52.8%) had been PROS members for less than a year, six students (16.7%) were PROS members for one year, four students (11.1%) were PROS members for two years, five students (13.9%) were PROS members for three years, one student (2.8%) were PROS member for four years, and one student (2.8%) did not answer the question. The collected data accounts

for one graduate student who was also a PROS member and one undergraduate PROS student who was adamant about not reporting any demographic information.

Table 4.1

*Sample Demographics (N=36)*

<i>Variable</i>		<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>
<b>Gender</b>			
	Male	17	47.2
	Female	16	44.4
	Other	2	5.6
	No Answer	1	2.8
	Total	36	100
<b>Academic College</b>			
	Communication and Creative Arts	9	27.3
	Education	3	8.3
	Engineering	5	13.9
	Health Sciences	1	2.8
	Performing Arts	2	5.6
	Business	4	11.1
	Science & Mathematics	5	13.9
	Dual Colleges	4	11.1
	No Answer	3	8.3
	Total	36	100
<b>Grade Level</b>			
	Freshman	13	36.1
	Sophomore	8	22.2
	Junior	9	25.0
	Senior	4	11.1
	Other	1	2.8
	No answer	1	2.8
	Total	36	100

Table 4.1 (continued)

*Sample Demographics (N=36)*

<i>Variable</i>		<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>
<b>GPA</b>			
	2.0 to 2.5	1	2.8
	2.6 to 3.0	5	13.9
	3.1 to 3.5	12	33.3
	3.6 to 4.0	14	38.9
	No Answer	4	11.1
	Total	24	100
<b>Length of PROS Membership</b>			
	> 1 Year	19	52.8
	1 Year	6	16.7
	2 Years	4	11.1
	3 Years	5	13.9
	4 Years	1	2.8
	No Answer	1	2.8
	Total	36	100

**Analysis of the Quantitative Data**

**Research question 1:** Did the PROS program help students identify themselves as leaders?

Tables 4.2 and 4.3 depict information regarding Research Question 1. Subjects were asked a series of questions regarding their beliefs on the PROS as a leadership position as well as their beliefs on how the position has helped to develop them. Table 4.2 provides data on the responses of the subjects. The data are organized based on mean scores, and are presented from most to least positive. A total of 26 subjects (72.2%) strongly agreed with beliefs that the position has helped to develop them as leaders. A total of 27 subjects (75%) strongly agreed with beliefs that the position has helped build



their confidence in their leadership. A total of 22 subjects (61.1%) also strongly agreed with the belief that their PROS experience has increased their capabilities as a peer mentor.

Table 4.2

*Leadership Development (N=36)*  
*(Strongly Disagree = 1, Disagree = 2, Neutral = 3, Agree = 4, Strongly Agree = 5)*

	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Strongly Agree	
	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%
Orientation leader positions are essential on college campuses. <i>n= 35, M= 4.89, SD= .323</i> <i>Missing = 1</i>	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	11.1	31	86.1
Being a PROS member has help build my confidence in my leadership. <i>n= 35, M= 4.74, SD= .505</i> <i>Missing = 1</i>	-	-	-	-	1	2.8	7	19.4	27	75
My PROS position helped to develop me as a leader <i>n= 35, M= 4.71, SD= .591</i> <i>Missing = 1</i>	-	-	-	-	1	2.8	8	22.2	26	72.2
New students of Rowan view PROS as leaders. <i>N= 36, M= 4.67, SD= .586</i>	-	-	-	-	2	5.6	8	22.2	26	72.2

Table 4.2 (continued)

*Leadership Development (N=36)*

*(Strongly Disagree = 1, Disagree = 2, Neutral = 3, Agree = 4, Strongly Agree = 5)*

	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Strongly Agree	
	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%
I learned valuable skills from my PROS experience that I could not have learned in another position. <i>N= 36, M= 4.50, SD=.655</i>	-	-	-	-	3	8.3	12	33.3	21	58.3
I am a better peer mentor after my experience with the PROS. <i>N= 36, M= 4.47, SD=.736</i>	-	-	-	-	5	13.9	9	25	22	61.1
I seek out leadership positions as a result of my PROS experience. <i>n= 35, M= 4.43, SD=.655</i> <i>Missing = 1</i>	-	-	-	-	3	8.3	14	38.9	18	50
Returning students and upperclassmen view PROS as leaders. <i>N= 36, M= 4.11, SD=.747</i>	-	-	-	-	8	22.2	16	44.4	12	33.3
New students keep contact with their PROS. <i>n= 35, M= 3.74, SD=.817</i> <i>Missing = 1</i>	-	-	2	5.6	11	30.6	16	44.4	6	16.7

Table 4.2 (continued)

*Leadership Development (N=36)*

*(Strongly Disagree = 1, Disagree = 2, Neutral = 3, Agree = 4, Strongly Agree = 5)*

	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Strongly Agree	
	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>		<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%
Returning students keep in contact with their PROS after their first year at Rowan. <i>n= 35, M= 3.51, SD=.818</i> <i>Missing = 1</i>	-	-	2	5.6	18	50	10	27.8	5	13.9

**Research question 2:** Are PROS considered leaders on campus by other students?

Table 4.2 displays PROS member’s beliefs of how the campus views them as leaders. The data are organized based on mean scores, and are presented from most to least positive. A total of 31 subjects (86.1%) strongly agreed that orientation leader programs such as the PROS are essential on college campuses. When asked if new students of Rowan view PROS as leaders, 26 subjects (72.2%) strongly agreed with the statement. However, participants did not share the same beliefs when questioned about returning Rowan students. The data displayed that only 12 subjects (33.3%) strongly agreed that returning students and upperclassmen view PROS members as leaders.

Table 4.3

*Leadership Qualities (N=36)*

*(Highly Ineffective = 1, Somewhat Ineffective = 2, Neutral = 3, Somewhat Effective = 4, Highly Effective = 5)*

	Highly Ineffective		Somewhat Ineffective		Neutral		Somewhat Effective		Highly Effective	
	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%
Ability to see myself as a leader. <i>N= 36, M= 4.78, SD= .422</i>	-	-	-	-	-	-	8	22.2	28	77.8
Comfortability seeking out leadership opportunities <i>N= 36, M= 4.75, SD= .439</i>	-	-	-	-	-	-	9	25	27	75
Awareness of my leadership strengths <i>n= 35, M= 4.69, SD= .530</i> <i>Missing = 1</i>	-	-	-	-	1	2.8	9	25	25	69.4
Increase in independence <i>N= 35, M= 4.61, SD= .494</i> <i>Missing = 1</i>	-	-	-	-	-	-	14	38.9	22	61.1
Awareness of my weaknesses <i>N= 36, M= 4.33, SD= .756</i>	-	-	-	-	6	16.7	12	33.3	18	50

Table 4.3 provides data on the perceived effectiveness of the PROS program as it pertains to developing leadership qualities. No subject involved in the study reported

negative effectiveness of the PROS program as it pertains to developing leadership qualities. A total of 28 subjects (77.8%) reported that the PROS program is highly effective in increasing the ability to see themselves as leaders. A total of 27 subjects (75%) reported that the PROS program is highly effective in increasing their comfortability seeking out leadership opportunities. A total of 25 subjects (69.4%) reported that the PROS program was highly effective in increasing their awareness of their leadership strengths. However, only 18 subjects (50%) reported that the PROS program is highly effective in increasing their awareness of their weaknesses. A majority of subjects either agreed (33.3%) or were neutral (16.7%) when answering the question pertaining to the weakness.

**Research question 3:** What other leadership positions and roles do PROS members participate in while attending Rowan University?

Table 4.4 displays data on the involvement patterns of the participants. The data displayed that all of the PROS members are involved in different campus activities other than their PROS membership on Rowan's campus. More than half of the subjects were involved in Volunteer Services, Leadership Programs, or Campus Recreation, with percentages being 52, 50, and 50 respectively. More than a fourth of the participants were involved in Student Government or Greek Life, at 27.8% and 25% respectively. Although other forms of involvement on campus fell below the one-fifth mark, the data show that the PROS members are a diverse group of students who were actively involved in campus activities.

Table 4.4

*Involvement in Campus Activities (N=36)*

	<i>f</i>	%
Volunteer Services	19	52.8
Leadership Programs	18	50
Campus Recreation	18	50
Student Government	10	27.8
Fraternities, Sororities	9	25
College Productions or Performances	5	13.9
Religious Organizations	5	13.9
Intercollegiate Athletics	4	11.1
College Publications	2	5.6

### **Profile of the Qualitative Sample**

Below is a brief description of the two new PROS members and the two returning PROS members who took part in the study. Due to the small amount of PROS members, certain identifies were omitted to protect the identities of the participants.

Participant 1 is a freshmen student at Rowan University. He is a full-time, residential student and is a member of the Performing Arts college, studying Music Education. Participant 1 is a new PROS member, and is currently in his first semester as a PROS member.

Participant 2 is a sophomore student at Rowan University. She is a full-time, residential student and is a member of the College of Education, studying English as a subject matter, with a psychology minor. Participant 2 is a new PROS member, and is currently in her first semester as a PROS member.

Participant 3 is a sophomore student at Rowan University. He is a full-time, residential student and is a member of the Henry M. Rowan College of Engineering,

studying Mechanical Engineering, he is also a member of the Honors Concentration.

Participant 3 is a returning PROS member, and is currently starting his second year as a PROS member.

Participant 4 is a sophomore student at Rowan University. She is a full-time, residential student and is a member of the College of Communications and Creative Arts, studying Public Relations, with a Communication Studies minor. Participant 4 is a returning PROS member, and is currently starting her second year as a PROS member.

### **Analysis of the Qualitative Data**

To facilitate a conducive rapport, the interviews were held in a conversational and free form manner. The first interview question was strategically asked as a means to make the participants feel more comfortable and to further drive the interview. When asked the first question “What made you apply to become a PROS member,” all participants mentioned a previous encounter with PROS members that inspired them to apply. Participants 1 and 4 spoke highly of their orientation experience and their desire to give incoming students similar experiences. Participants 2 and 3 admitted to not being involved in their orientation due to previous engagements and spoke of specific PROS members who inspired them to apply for the position.

**Research question 4:** Did the PROS program help students with leadership development and personal development?

Content analysis was used in order to determine participant’s perceptions on whether the PROS program helped them develop themselves as leaders, and/or helped them foster personal development. During the interview process, participants were asked

questions about their beliefs about the PROS program, if they gained anything from the program, or if the program helped them to develop them during their time at Rowan.

“Do you feel as if the PROS program has helped you to develop in your time at Rowan?” Participants expressed areas in which they believed that they developed.

Certain themes became apparent through the analysis. Table 4.5 shows the frequency and rank order of the growth areas described by participants with the theme of communication being expressed most frequently.

Table 4.5

*Selected PROS member’s Belief of Developed Areas (N=4)*

Category	Subcategory	Frequency	Rank
Communication	Public speaking	3	1
	Listening		
Confidence	Renewed	2	2
	Less nervous		
	More comfortable		
Knowledge base	Presentations were eye-opening	2	2
	Presentations opens your mind		
Growth	Personal development	2	2
	Personal growth		

Participants mentioned growth in their communication skills, the most popular skills mentioned were public speaking skill and listening skills. When speaking on her development and belief that the PROS program has helped her to develop, participant 2 said, “Um I think so, a lot with being comfortable with public speaking.” Also mentioned was the belief that the PROS program helped to develop listening skills, expressed by



two participants, with participant 3 stating, “Yea, like it helped me with listening I guess it helped me with I guess understanding other people better.”

Confidence was another theme expressed by some of the participants. Participants mentioned examples of how they grew more confident through the PROS experience, with some explicitly stating that they became “more comfortable,” or “less nervous.” When asked the question, participant 1 stated:

Uh definitely, I feel that I had like this renewed confidence in myself if you will, not like a cocky sense, but it’s something that I haven’t felt in a long time, just being so confident in myself that I can do not anything but I can do what I want to set my mind to..

“What have you gained from being a PROS member?,” was the next question asked and introduced the theme of an increase in knowledge. Participants cited particular training sessions and presentations that they felt really helped them learn more about higher education. Participant 4, noted that the presentations “open your mind’ and that it helped her realize more about higher education and how “higher ed is really a career.”

The last theme that resulted from this question was the idea of growth in general. When speaking of their experiences with the PROS, participants explicitly stated how the PROS program helped with their “personal growth” and “personal development.” Participant 1 felt strongly about the experiences helping him grow, he stated, “I gained a lot of leadership and just personal development.”

**Research Question 5:** How has being a part of the PROS helped shape the leadership identity and development of students?

Content analysis was used in order to determine participant’s perception of their leadership identity. During the interview process, participants were asked about their growth and development as leaders, and if the PROS program helped to enhance or develop their leadership skills.

“How have you developed as a leader since becoming a PROS member?” When asked to expound on their leadership development during the PROS, two themes were apparent with participants when it pertained to leadership identity. The first theme was the realization that other students at Rowan view them as leaders because of their position as a PROS member.

Table 4.6

*Selected PROS member’s Perception of their Identity as Leaders (N=4)*

Category	Frequency	Rank
Others beliefs that participants are leaders	2	1
Participants believe that they are leaders	2	1

Participant 3 provided a very poignant response. Participant 3 stated:

Just kind of like an identity, like I knew what I was like all about before but now it pretty much concreted like morals I have, ways that I feel about certain things, how I handle certain situations, it just kind of made me realize the kind of person that I am, and who I want to be, you know who I strive to be.

Participant 1 noticed a negative experience, which he attributed to others beginning to view him as a leader. Being a freshman himself, he detailed an experience of a freshmen organization that he is a member in and how the group member's perceptions of him have changed as a result of him receiving the PROS position. He stated "now that four or five people have titles in that group it's like they're being treated differently and that is something that I'm not really pleased with."

Participants were also asked "Has your PROS experience helped you with any other position on campus?" All participants mentioned having other involvement that they believe has been effected by their PROS membership. Participant 1 and 2 specifically mentioned connections to the resident assistant position on Rowan's campus. Participant 1 stated "In my RA interview, they were kind of surprised when I said that I was a PROS member." Participant 2 stated "I would just say it strengthened me as an RA.

Overall, all four participants were very open and willing to share their experiences about the PROS program. The new PROS member participants were more apt to talk about how they believed the experience is helping to develop them, but did not have specific experiences with new and incoming students to bolster their beliefs. However, returning PROS member participants were able to tell stories about particular moments, that involved new and incoming students, that helped them to grow and develop.

## **Chapter V**

### **Summary, Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations**

#### **Summary of the Study**

This thesis investigated the orientation leader program at Rowan University. The study aimed to determine if the PROS programs of Rowan University helped to develop the students involved both personally and as leaders. The study sought to see if the PROS members saw any personal or leadership growth and development from being a part of the PROS program. In addition, the study aimed to see whether the PROS believed that they were leaders on the campus. A total of 36 subjects took part in the survey aspect of the study, all of whom met the requirements for the sample selection. Each subject was a student during the 2015-2016 academic year, and was an active PROS member on Rowan's campus.

Interviews were also used to gather more data from PROS members. Four of the 36 PROS members took part in an individual interview during the Spring 16 semester. The interviews were held in a private location inside of the Chamberlain Student Center on Rowan's campus. The questions focused on perceived development and gains from being a PROS member, perceptions on growth as a leader while involved with the program, and beliefs on how the experience has helped them with other involvement on Rowan's campus. Each of the interviews were recorded via phone, the audio file was then downloaded onto my personal computer and all interviews were transcribed.

In order to analyze the data, content analysis was used. Content analysis was used to find the emergent themes in the interviews. The themes that were found were

illustrated in a table format. Direct quotes from the participants were used to illustrate the themes and to give a perspective of the PROS experience that added to survey data findings.

### **Discussion of the Findings**

The study found that the PROS program was successful in helping the PROS members see themselves as leaders. When asked if the PROS position helped to develop them as leaders, 26 subjects (72.2%) strongly agree with the statement. When asked about their leadership qualities, a total of 28 subjects (77.8%), believed that the PROS program was highly effective in increasing their ability to see themselves as leaders.

This reflection on the experience and knowledge of the development is consistent with the knowledge base. Komives et al., (2013), believed that reflection and understanding personal strengths and weaknesses were key concepts. When asked if the program increased awareness of leadership strengths and weakness, 25 subjects (69.4%) thought that the program was highly effective in increasing the awareness of their leadership strengths and 18 (50%) believed that the program was highly effective in increasing awareness of their weaknesses.

Also, the study found that the PROS members did believe that students see them as leaders. The data state that the PROS students believed that new students viewed themselves as leaders at a greater percentage than returning students. A total of 26 subjects (72.2%) strongly agree that new students of Rowan view PROS as leaders. This percentage reflected a downward trend as only 12 subjects (33.3%) strongly agreed that returning students and upperclassmen view PROS as leaders. The drop in this number can

be seen as consistent with the knowledge of leadership identity development. Komives et al., (2005), reported that in the earliest form of leadership identity development, students only see leadership as positional. New students who can be seen as being in the early forms of leadership identity development would be more likely to see the PROS as leaders due to their position. Returning students and upperclassmen, who may be further in their leadership identity development, may already be aware that having a position does not make an individual a leader.

During the interview process, one of the participants had a story that was very consistent with the knowledge base. When speaking on his PROS experience and his participation with an organization for freshmen students, participant 1 stated, “now that four or five people have titles in that group it's like they're being treated differently and that is something that I'm not really pleased with.” This can also be linked to the knowledge base and the belief that the earliest form of leadership identity development is based upon seeing leadership as positional. With participant 1's leadership position as a PROS member, the other freshman students began to see him as a leader, which could be seen as the reason why they began to treat him differently.

All four of the interview participants also admitted that their experiences with former PROS members helped them in deciding to apply to be PROS members. Participant 4 stated, “I met someone that was a PRO and I had such a good experience at my orientation, so I wanted to be able to give that to someone else.” This is consistent with Kouzes and Posner (2012) and their practices of exemplary leadership, specifically “Model the Way,” “Inspire a Shared Vision,” and “Enable Others to Act.” Participant 4's

story of a PROS member modeling the way, inspiring her, and enabling her to act and become a PROS member is consistent with such a worldview.

The study found that the PROS students are a very active group of students. The greatest emphasis placed on involvement was volunteer services, leadership programs, and campus recreation, with participation in these being 52%, 50%, and 50% respectively. This shows that at any given time at least half of all of the PROS members are involved in other groups and organizations on campus. This is consistent with the knowledge base presented by Astin (1996), who believed that involvement on campus, especially peer groups, has the biggest effect on educational and personal development on students. Astin (1999) also put a premium on active participation in organizations to get the maximum, and as mentioned previously, 50% of PROS students reported being involved with leadership programs. Being involved with leadership programs can definitely be seen as having active involvement.

The amount of involvement shown by all PROS members can be seen as the students being in the second stage of leadership identity development. Komives et al., (2015), believe that students learn more from participation in groups, this exploration/engagement stage can be seen as a part of the development process of PROS members.

The interviews suggested that the PROS program was successful in helping the members to develop as leaders. When speaking on his development, Participant 3 spoke on how the PROS program changed what it meant to be a leader. He stated:

Well I've always had like a general tendency to be a leader, pretty much through high school and early on in freshmen year but with PROS it kind of helped me see that I didn't always have to be the leader. I could always have my leadership qualities but I also know when to follow.

This development is consistent with broadening the views of leadership, which is a category of leadership identity development where students begin to take different approaches to leadership (Komives et al., 2005).

## **Conclusions**

The study was able to affirm findings from the previous knowledge base and provide integral data in how leadership programs can help to develop the leadership identity of students on college campuses. PROS students who were interviewed seemed very aware of what the PROS program has done for them and how the program has helped them to develop as leaders.

Data were able to show the stages of leadership identity development both apparent in the PROS members themselves and with other Rowan students. New student's beliefs and views of the PROS members as leaders as opposed to the beliefs of returning and upperclassmen students confirmed the differences in the stages of leadership identity develop that is apparent in each group. Returning students and upperclassmen have learned through experience that a position or title does not make a leader.

The data also showed that participants who are involved in the program, no matter the length, believed that the program helped them to develop. Although they have not had



the experience that returning PROS members have had, themes of growth and development were consistent between the two groups of PROS members. It is important to note that no subject in the study disagreed or strongly disagreed with any statement related to the PROS helping them to develop. In fact, the only statements that PROS members disagreed with was the idea of students keeping in contact with their PROS members after orientation, something that is out of the control of the PROS.

PROS members appear to be very successful at motivating and inspiring new students to apply for leadership positions. Participants interviewed, openly expressed how they were impacted by previous PROS members, and how those interactions pushed them to become PROS members themselves. Similarly, the data expressed how 75% of PROS members felt more comfortable seeking out leadership opportunities due to the influences of the PROS program.

Overall, the data show that the PROS members are a diverse group of students who are seen as leaders on Rowan's campus. PROS members felt as though the PROS program is very successful in helping them to develop, both personally and as leaders. Based on the data regarding campus involvement, the PROS members contribute more around campus than just their PROS responsibilities. They are involved in many other clubs and organizations, which does more to help them develop as leaders on campus. When asked about the program, participants in the study had only positive feedback about the program. The only negative experience was due to the actions of other students and had no connection to the program at all.

## **Recommendations for Practice**

Based upon the findings and conclusions of the study, as well as previous research on the topic, the following recommendations for practice of leadership identity development are presented:

1. Be aware of how leadership positions effect students and what students feel are best practice. This can help to further program development that will be successful in helping students to develop holistically.
2. Create opportunities and programs that help educate students on the stages of leadership identity development.
3. Make sure there are programs developed that focus on getting students actively involved with different campus clubs and organizations.
4. Increase leadership programs for new students.
5. Present these finding to other administrative positions on campus. This can be done in the effort to teach other clubs and organizations what the PROS program does well, and what can be emulated to develop students who are not involved with the PROS.

## **Recommendations for Further Research**

1. Future studies on the perception of orientation leaders should conduct surveys with orientation leaders at multiple institutions.
2. Administrators on college campus should also be surveyed on their beliefs on orientation leaders as leaders on campus.

3. A study should be conducted that surveys the general student population on college campuses, which would be effective in discovering if campus stakeholders view orientation leaders as leaders on campus.
4. A study should be conducted that compares the development of students involved in one-year orientation leader programs and those involved in multiple year orientation leader programs, to see what provides greater development for students.
5. A study should be done of PROS and other orientation program that explores what the programs can do to improve, in order to further develop students as future leaders in higher education.

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## Appendix A

### Survey Instrument

#### Leadership development and involvement: A study of the 2015 peer referral and orientation staff at Rowan University

You are being invited to participate in a research study done by NaQuan Redd from Rowan University. The purpose of this research study is to determine leadership development and involvement in the orientation leaders at Rowan University, also known as the Peer Referral Orientation Staff (PROS). Completion of this survey indicates that you are willingly giving consent to participate. All responses will be kept confidential, and after the completion of the study all data will be properly disposed of.

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

Academic College (e.g., Business, Education, Engineering etc.,)  
\_\_\_\_\_

Year: \_\_\_\_\_ GPA: \_\_\_\_\_

How long have you been a PROS member?  
\_\_\_\_\_

The following questions inquire about your beliefs in the PROS position as a leadership position on Rowan's campus.

	Level of Agreement				
	<i>Strongly Disagree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Neutral</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Strongly Agree</i>
1. My PROS position helped to develop me as a leader.	1	2	3	4	5
2. Orientation leader positions are essential on college campuses.	1	2	3	4	5
3. I seek out leadership positions as a result of my PROS experience.	1	2	3	4	5
4. Being a PROS member has helped build my confidence in my leadership.	1	2	3	4	5

	<i>Strongly Disagree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Neutral</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Strongly Agree</i>
5. New students of Rowan view PROS as leaders.	1	2	3	4	5
6. I learned valuable skills from my PROS experience that I could not have learned in another position	1	2	3	4	5
7. I am a better peer mentor after my experience with the PROS.	1	2	3	4	5
8. New students keep contact with their PROS after orientation.	1	2	3	4	5
9. Returning students and upperclassmen view PROS as leaders.	1	2	3	4	5
10. Returning students keep in contact with their PROS after their first year at Rowan	1	2	3	4	5

Directions: The following questions ask about your experience as a PROS member as it pertains to your peer mentorship and your development as a leader. Please respond by rating how much of an effect being a PROS member had on you.

	<b>Effectiveness</b>				
	<i>Highly Ineffective</i>	<i>Somewhat Ineffective</i>	<i>Neutral</i>	<i>Somewhat Effective</i>	<i>Highly Effective</i>
<b>Leadership Qualities</b>					
11. Ability to see myself as a leader.	1	2	3	4	5
12. Comfortability seeking out leadership opportunities.	1	2	3	4	5



13. Increase in independence.	1	2	3	4	5
14. Awareness of my leadership strengths.	1	2	3	4	5
15. Awareness of my weaknesses.	1	2	3	4	5

**Peer Mentorship**

16. Awareness and acceptance of others.	1	2	3	4	5
17. Increase of listening skills.	1	2	3	4	5
18. Competency as a mentor.	1	2	3	4	5

Questions 19– 22 ask about how often you do certain activities—weekly, monthly and yearly. Please answer every question, placing your response in the blank beside each question.

**Weekly:**

19. How many of the following activities did you participate in? (For the following activities, place a check mark (✓) on the first line for those in which you participated. For those you check, please indicate the number of hours you participated each week during this academic year in the space to the right.)

Check Number Hours

- \_\_\_\_\_ Intercollegiate Athletics
- \_\_\_\_\_ Campus Recreation (Club Sports, Intramurals, Fitness, Aquatics)
- \_\_\_\_\_ College Publications (e.g., The Whit, Avant, Venue)
- \_\_\_\_\_ College Productions or Performances (e.g., RTN, choir, theatre)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Fraternities, Sororities
- \_\_\_\_\_ Religious Organizations (e.g., RCF, Chi Alpha)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Student Government (e.g., SGA, Interfraternity Council)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Leadership Programs (Leadership Rowan, Torch Series)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Volunteer Services (e.g., individually or in organizational settings)

**Monthly:**

- \_\_\_\_\_ 20. How many weekends each month do you spend on campus?
- \_\_\_\_\_ 21. How many times do you go out with friends each month?

\_\_\_\_\_ 22. How many campus parties did you attend each month during the year?

Questions 23 through 37 ask you to respond by rating how important each item is to you here on campus.

	<u>Importance</u>				
	<i>Not Important</i>	<i>Somewhat Unimportant</i>	<i>Neutral</i>	<i>Somewhat Important</i>	<i>Very Important</i>
<b>Social Involvement</b>					
23. Involvement in campus activities?	1	2	3	4	5
24. Connection to your fellow students at Rowan?	1	2	3	4	5
25. Connection to the faculty and staff at Rowan?	1	2	3	4	5
26. Having close friends at Rowan	1	2	3	4	5
<b>Academic Involvement</b>					
27. Instruction in my major courses.	1	2	3	4	5
28. Faculty available outside of class.	1	2	3	4	5
29. Academic Advising	1	2	3	4	5
<b>Campus Atmosphere</b>					
30. Adequate personal Security	1	2	3	4	5
31. Adequate social atmosphere	1	2	3	4	5
32. Adequate academic atmosphere	1	2	3	4	5

**Personal Goals**

33. Developing self-esteem & confidence	1	2	3	4	5
34. Making progress toward academic goals.	1	2	3	4	5
35. Adjusting socially to change	1	2	3	4	5
36. My personal achievement for academic success	1	2	3	4	5
37. Graduating from Rowan University	1	2	3	4	5

## **Appendix B**

### **Interview Instrument**

#### **Leadership development and involvement: A study of the 2015 peer referral and orientation staff at Rowan University**

1. What made you apply to become a PROS member?
2. Do you feel as if the PROS program has helped you to develop in your time at Rowan?
3. What have you gained from being a PROS member?
4. How have you developed as a leader since becoming a PROS member?
5. Has your PROS experience helped you with any other position on campus?

# Appendix C

## eIRB Notice of Approval



\*\* This is an auto-generated email. Please do not reply to this email message.  
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If you have questions, please contact your local IRB office \*\*

DHHS Federal Wide Assurance Identifier: FWA00007111  
IRB Chair Person: Harriet Hartman  
IRB Director: Sreekant Murthy  
Effective Date: 2/26/2016

### eIRB Notice of Approval

#### STUDY PROFILE

**Study ID:** Pro2015000688  
**Title:** Leadership Development and involvement: A study of the 2015 Peer Referral and Orientation Staff at Rowan University  
**Principal Investigator:** Burton Sisco      **Study Coordinator:** None  
**Co-Investigator(s):** NaQuan Redd      **Other Study Staff:** None  
**Sponsor:** Department Funded      **Approval Cycle:** Twelve Months  
**Risk Determination:** Minimal Risk      **Device Determination:** Not Applicable  
**Review Type:** Expedited      **Expedited Category:** 6  
7  
**Subjects:** 40

#### CURRENT SUBMISSION STATUS

<b>Submission Type:</b>	Research Protocol/Study	<b>Submission Status:</b>	Approved		
<b>Approval Date:</b>	2/26/2016	<b>Expiration Date:</b>	2/25/2017		
<b>Pregnancy Code:</b>	No Pregnant Women as Subjects Not Applicable	<b>Pediatric Code:</b>	Not Applicable No Children As Subjects	<b>Prisoner Code:</b>	Not Applicable No Prisoners As Subjects
<b>Protocol:</b>	NaQuan Redd IRB Protocol	<b>Consent:</b>	There are no items to display	<b>Recruitment Materials:</b>	There are no items to display

#### \* Study Performance Sites:

Glassboro Campus      Chamberlain Student Center, Glassboro Campus  
Glassboro Campus      College of Education, James Hall, Glassboro Campus

There are no items to display

ALL APPROVED INVESTIGATOR(S) MUST COMPLY WITH THE FOLLOWING:

1. Conduct the research in accordance with the protocol, applicable laws and regulations, and the principles of research ethics as set forth in the Belmont Report.
2. **Continuing Review:** Approval is valid until the protocol expiration date shown above. To avoid lapses in approval, submit a continuation application at least eight weeks before the study expiration date.
3. **Expiration of IRB Approval:** If IRB approval expires, effective the date of expiration and until the continuing review approval is issued: **All research activities must stop unless the IRB finds that it is in the best interest of individual subjects to continue. (This determination shall be based on a separate written request from the PI to the IRB.) No new subjects may be enrolled and no samples/charts/surveys may be collected, reviewed, and/or analyzed.**
4. **Amendments/Modifications/Revisions:** If you wish to change any aspect of this study, including but not limited to, study procedures, consent form(s), investigators, advertisements, the protocol document, investigator drug brochure, or accrual goals, you are required to obtain IRB review and approval prior to implementation of these changes unless necessary to eliminate apparent immediate hazards to subjects.
5. **Unanticipated Problems:** Unanticipated problems involving risk to subjects or others must be reported to the IRB Office (45 CFR 46, 21 CFR 312, 812) as required, in the appropriate time as specified in the attachment online at: <http://www.rowan.edu/som/hsp/>
6. **Protocol Deviations and Violations:** Deviations from/violations of the approved study protocol must be reported to the IRB Office (45 CFR 46, 21 CFR 312, 812) as required, in the appropriate time as specified in the attachment online at: <http://www.rowan.edu/som/hsp/>
7. **Consent/Assent:** The IRB has reviewed and approved the consent and/or assent process, waiver and/or alteration described in this protocol as required by 45 CFR 46 and 21 CFR 50, 56, (if FDA regulated research). Only the versions of the documents included in the approved process may be used to document informed consent and/or assent of study subjects; each subject must receive a copy of the approved form(s); and a copy of each signed form must be filed in a secure place in the subject's medical/patient/research record.
8. **Completion of Study:** Notify the IRB when your study has been stopped for any reason. Neither study closure by the sponsor or the investigator removes the obligation for submission of timely continuing review application or final report.
9. The Investigator(s) did not participate in the review, discussion, or vote of this protocol.
10. **Letter Comments:** *There are no additional comments.*

**CONFIDENTIALITY NOTICE:** This email communication may contain private, confidential, or legally privileged information intended for the sole use of the designated and/or duly authorized recipients(s). If you are not the intended recipient or have received this email in error, please notify the sender immediately by email and permanently delete all copies of this email including all attachments without reading them. If you are the intended recipient, secure the contents in a manner that conforms to all applicable state and/or federal requirements related to privacy and confidentiality of such information.

## Appendix D

### Rules and Procedures for Logical Analysis of Written Data

#### RULES AND PROCEDURES FOR LOGICAL ANALYSIS OF WRITTEN DATA

The following decisions were made regarding what was to be the unit of data analysis (Sisco, 1981):

1. A phrase or clause will be the basic unit of analysis.
2. Verbiage not considered essential to the phrase or clause will be edited out --e.g., articles of speech, possessives, some adjectives, elaborate examples.
3. Where there is a violation of conventional syntax in the data, it will be corrected.
4. Where there are compound thoughts in a phrase or clause, each unit of thought will be represented separately (unless one was an elaboration of the other).
5. Where information seems important to add to the statement in order to clarify it in a context, this information will be added to the unit by parentheses.

The following decisions were made regarding the procedures for categorization of content units:

1. After several units are listed on a sheet of paper, they will be scanned in order to determine differences and similarities.
2. From this tentative analysis, logical categories will be derived for the units.
3. When additional units of data suggest further categories, they will be added to the classification scheme.
4. After all the units from a particular question's responses are thus classified, the categories are further reduced to broader clusters (collapsing of categories).
5. Frequencies of units in each cluster category are determined and further analysis steps are taken, depending on the nature of the data-- i.e. ranking of categories with verbatim quotes which represent the range of ideas or opinions. (p.177).

Sisco, B. R. (1981). *A study of the attitudes of selected academics and selected decision-makers toward adult learners*. (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). Syracuse University, Syracuse, NY.