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Dynamic Student Development Metatheodel: Application to Fraternity and Sorority Life.

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CHAPTER 7

DSDM

Application to Fraternity and Sorority Life

DANIEL A. BUREAU & JAMES P. BARBER

Fraternal organizations have been a part of the fabric of U.S. higher education for over 200 years, beginning with the founding of Phi Beta Kappa at the College of William & Mary on December 5, 1776 (Anson & Marchesani, 1991). Now a diverse community of over 200 national and international fraternities and sororities, these organizations bring forth amazing opportunities and challenges for any college or university campus. For those who work with them, including campus personnel, national staff members, and volunteers, there are a range of models that can facilitate desired educational outcomes.

The Dynamic Student Development Metatheodel (DSDM) brings forth numerous opportunities to aid in the outcomes of desired educational goals within Fraternity and Sorority Life (FSL): the experience of members has been largely structured to influence the affective domain that is the focus of the model. As a result, the extent to which members feel about their collegiate environment and overall experience is deeply influenced by their experiences in these organizations (Gallup, 2014). People who work with these organizations can provide significant influence to aid in achieving goals such as learning skills, developing characteristics and progressing through the stages of student development.

Much has been written about the powerful connections that students feel in these organizations and as a result to the campus environment. These connections include relationships with significant others such as mentors within chapters and across the fraternity and sorority community and campus. Such connections have been studied regarding their influence on retention and persistence (Nelson, Halperin,

Wasserman, Smith, & Graham, 2006; Routon & Walker, 2014). Additionally, the environments found in fraternities and sororities have been examined for how they enhance student learning, career competencies, and overall desirable educational outcomes (Barber, Espino, & Bureau, 2015). Ultimately, involvement in FSL has the potential to be transformative to the lives of the individual student and those around them. Membership can greatly influence the growth, learning, and development of a person in order to ensure they are successful as a student and college graduate (e.g., Biddix, Matney, Norman, & Martin, 2014; Bureau, Ryan, Ahren, Shoup, & Torres, 2011; Martin, Hevel, Asel, & Pascarella, 2011). This chapter provides an overview of how FSL facilitates the goals of the DSDM model. Specifically we focus on the influence of significant others in achieving educational outcomes such as achievement of key skills and attributes as well as progression through desired developmental stages. Implications for those who work with these organizations are explained.

CONTEXT AND COMPLEXITIES

To say that the value of the fraternity and sorority community is a topic of ongoing discussion would be an understatement. While we believe most would be partially supportive or partially indifferent, there is certainly a perception that some are “pro-” or “anti-” fraternity/sorority life. It’s easy to see why as the literature is flush with examples of what is potentially positive and developmentally desirable about these organizations and some of the destructive and/or negative attributes these organizations or the people within them might bring to a campus community.

Many of those who support, advocate for, or can at least articulate potential benefits of fraternity and sorority life indicate that the organizations may aid in the development of leadership skills (Hevel, Martin, & Pascarella, 2014). Additionally, some believe that these organizations can foster a sense of civic engagement, service inclination and/or philanthropic interest (Martin, Hevel, & Pascarella, 2012). Some identify the value the organizations have in creating meaningful connections for students; such connections might facilitate higher education priorities of retention and persistence (Biddix, Singer, & Aslinger, 2016). The extent to which these students are actively engaged and involved in their campus communities has also been held up as a benefit of fraternity and sorority life. The literature brings forth mixed messages about academic achievement and intercultural competence, but some researchers have found these outcomes to be possibly enhanced by or sometimes at the least not influenced by fraternity and sorority membership (Martin, Parker, Pascarella, & Blechschmidt, 2015).

The UniLOA has been administered by some national fraternities and sororities who have used the results to articulate the potential for the vital learning

outcomes of critical thinking, self-awareness, communication, diversity, citizenship, membership and leadership and building relationships to occur. Developing and nurturing relationships is one of the outcomes assessed through the UniLOA. Examining this outcome within fraternities it was determined that fraternity men tend to report outcomes higher than non-members relative to the development and management of relationships (Center for Student Learning Outcomes Assessment, 2009).

How fraternities and sororities enhance these developmental outcomes has also been examined through other instruments such as the AFA-EBI Benchmarking instrument and the Center for Fraternity and Sorority Research’s Fraternity and Sorority Experience Survey. Across these instruments, each of which examine learning outcomes students perceive they have developed while in college and possibly in the context of fraternity and sorority life, there is a common finding: members largely perceive the educational outcomes desired by institutions of higher education occur within these organizations.

While some of the research presents findings that appear favorable for fraternity and sorority life, there are also many studies that bring forth great concerns about the environment of these organizations. Issues of hazing, alcohol misuse and abuse, sexual assault, and a lack of tolerance for others has been highlighted as common problems in these groups (e.g., Nuwer, 1990, 1999). Even beyond these issues, the history of fraternity and sorority life within higher education is very complex (Rudolph, 1990) as their development was in part to counter the boredom and routine of academic pursuits. Throughout the over 200 years of hosting these organizations on college and university campuses, there have always been challenges that administrators have with fraternity and sorority life. Such barriers to desired educational outcomes can have a very negative impact on the experiences of members and the campus community. As one addresses the opportunities for enhancing educational outcomes within these organizations, particularly through the roles of significant others, there must also be attention to strategies to reduce the risks and negative aspects that might exist within fraternity and sorority life.

SIGNIFICANT OTHERS AND THE FRATERNITY/SORORITY EXPERIENCE

Given these opportunities and challenges, fraternity and sorority life is certainly a place in which the affective and psychosocial development of members will be impacted. Students do not experience fraternity and sorority in isolation and there is much to learn through interactions grounded in this shared experience. Bandura (1977) explained that learning outcomes in the social context and is both a cognitive outcome and an affective outcome. Relationships create opportunities for

us to observe actions from which we learn. As such, these organizations are fertile ground for the relationship-centered approach to student development at the heart of the DSDM.

Astin (1984) identified five postulates relative to involvement of students, the first being that involvement is an investment of psychosocial and physical energy. As students expend energy on a range of foci and the environment in which involvement occurs supports the goals of each focus, the involvement experience can be seen as more valuable. Because, aspects of these organizations focus on the professional, social, and academic interests of members, all in one place, then students may find these experiences most developmentally rewarding. If you are realizing benefits from involvement, you are more likely to be a contributing and ongoing member (retention), and contribute back to the group and campus as an alum (implications for advancement).

Undergraduate fraternity/sorority members are highly engaged in many aspects of the campus community. Barber et al. (2015) used Bronfenbrenner's (1977, 1986) ecological model of human development to explain the various systems in which these students experience their membership and ultimately college. Relationships exist based both on the experience in the organization (i.e. chapter members, other fraternity/sorority members, alumni advisor, potentially campus professional that works with FSL) as well as outside of their experience (i.e. faculty, family, other students, other organizations). In this next section we examine who are the significant others who are influencing the educational outcomes of fraternity and sorority life. Additionally, we examine how these significant others aid in student development and explore how some of the theories that underlie the DSDM may play out through these relationships. Five groups of significant others are discussed: (a) fellow members, (b) alumni, (c) national organization staff and volunteers, (d) campus faculty and staff, and (e) persons who work on campus directly with fraternity and sorority life (FSL Advisors).

Fellow Members (Peers) as Significant Other

Undergraduate chapters of fraternities and sororities provide numerous opportunities for interactions with other college students, both within the organization that a student joins, as well as across the larger fraternity/sorority community. Fraternal organizations are by design relationship-centered groups; peers within these groups can be valuable significant others for students. We see three types of peers who may thrive in the role of significant other for fraternity/sorority members: (a) within-chapter mentors, (b) cross-chapter mentors, and (c) cross-campus mentors. As defined in the DSDM (Frederick, Sasso, & Barratt, 2015), the role of the significant other evolves over time, from one that is directive to one that is advising in nature. As an individual develops over the course of their college experience, involvement

in fraternity/sorority life offers a variety of opportunities for peer mentoring at the local, campus, and inter/national levels.

Within-chapter mentors are peers within the fraternity or sorority chapter that a student joins. Traditionally, incoming new members to organizations have been matched with an active member often called a big brother or big sister. The role of the within-chapter mentor is to help the new member learn about the organization, acclimate to a perhaps unfamiliar environment within the group or campus, and serve as an advocate. In recent years, some organizations have moved to a model where a peer mentor is assigned to a new member immediately upon joining the chapter, and later a chapter mentor is selected based on common interests and values.

Cross-chapter mentors are peers who are students at the same institution as a student, but belong to another fraternity/sorority than the one a student has joined. Individual chapters form a larger fraternity/sorority community on a university campus. This may range from a handful of organizations to a community of nearly 100 chapters (e.g., University of Illinois). Each fraternity/sorority community provides opportunities for leadership programs, social events, and governance across the entire community or subsections of the community (i.e., governing councils such as the Interfraternity Council or National Pan-Hellenic Council [NPHC]). As such, students may find peers who fill the role of significant other who are members of different organizations within the fraternity/sorority community. This dynamic presents important opportunities for interactions with diverse others. Although most fraternal organizations are single-sex organizations and many remain racially homogenous, cross-chapter mentors may hold a different cultural or gender identity from the student. Interactions with diverse others inside and outside the classroom has consistently been proven to be beneficial learning experiences (Gurin, Dey, Hurtado, & Gurin, 2002; Gurin, Lehman, & Lewis, 2004; Gurin, Nagda, & Lopez, 2004), and are vital to the long-term relevance of the fraternity/sorority experience that is often criticized for promoting racism, sexism, and homogeneity (e.g., Flanagan, 2014; Rhoads, 1995; Sanday, 2007). These cross-chapters relationships, though frequent, are not as universal as within-chapter mentors which are nearly universal in membership practices.

Finally, significant others may take the form of cross-campus mentors, who are students at other institutions. Due to the structure of fraternities and sororities as national or international organizations, chapters and communities exist on multiple campuses. Student members may meet peers who belong to the same organization on other campuses at regional or national leadership programs, conventions, or other educational or social meetings sponsored by national organizations. Students may also meet peers who are members of different organizations on other campuses at a growing number of broad-based fraternal programs such as the Undergraduate Interfraternity Institute (UIFI) sponsored by the North-American Interfraternity

Conference, or the AFLV Conferences, planned by the Association of Fraternal Leadership and Values. Relationships between students and mentors on other campuses are increasingly relevant with tools such as social media, video conferencing, etc.

The size of the organization and its influence on how members interact with other members can be very influential. It is presumed that while one may have more connections with potential significant others in an organization with more members, some organizations on some campuses could have 100–300 members. While it has been determined that experiences over about 150 members may end up reducing educational outcomes (McCreary, 2015), a member's perception of their experience will influence their ultimate outcomes. For example, Darlene examined all of her options when participating in Panhellenic Formal Recruitment. Entering the process, she was not sure as to what she wanted out of a sorority but perceived that it could provide her with an opportunity to have a well-rounded college experience, which would help her achieve her goals of enhancing her resume to secure internships and work after college. Once she joined, she discussed with her chapter president what it was she wanted to get out of college and sorority life. The President provided feedback explaining the overall goals of the organization to have fun, serve the community, develop leadership skills, and help members do well academically. Darlene developed a plan with the President as to how she would advance her personal goals through getting involved in chapter operations so that she could dabble in the many things that the sorority provides.

Alumni as Significant Other

At its core, building long-term, intergenerational, and meaningful relationships are functions that fraternity and sorority life tends to achieve. As intergenerational organizations, fraternities and sororities also have members who have graduated. Because these organizations connect members beyond just their collegiate careers, alumni and graduate members can be pivotal in developing relationships that achieve the goals of the DSDM.

Referred to as alumni or graduate members, depending on the type of fraternity or sorority, these individuals range in age from right out of college to several decades out of college. Because fraternities and sororities often invoke that you are “members for life” some individuals will choose to stay involved in various ways across the lifespan. While there are alumni and graduate chapters for these members to participate in, there are also opportunities for them to interact with current undergraduate members in a range of ways. Graduate members may have varying degrees of engagement with the chapter: some may be involved in volunteer advisory roles and others may just interact with undergraduate members by chance.

One way is through alumni and graduate advising. For some chapters there may be an alumni board that provides advice to the undergraduates, particularly the leaders. This advice may range from positional (i.e. an alumna member who helps with recruitment or finances) to more broad as some alumni boards guidance may not be structured by function. Such interactions can facilitate key outcomes of the fraternity/sorority experience. Critical thinking, a vital outcome identified by the UniLOA, may occur because the undergraduate will have the opportunity to think through diverse opinions with the older alumni/graduate member. Such thinking skills also help students to move through the stages of many student development theories that frame the DSDM, such as Chickering's Seven Vectors. Moving from independence to interdependence can occur as the student realizes they can rely on the alumni advisor to examine issues critically.

Some undergraduate chapters may even have oversight for the intake and education of new members. This is often true in the intake processes for culturally based organizations. While these practices came about as a result of efforts to eliminate hazing and underground pledging practices, today they provide an important opportunity for members to come into the organization under the shared guidance of graduate and undergraduate members. Working collaboratively they can develop skills that facilitate the UniLOA outcome of membership and leadership. Explained by UniLOA as “Within formal groups, individuals should recognize how they can contribute and be active in their participation, whether that participation is the holding of a recognized office with prescribed duties, or a member that contributes to the common good through active participation that supports growth and development of the collective body” (<http://uniloa.com/DomainDescriptions/MembershipLeadership.pdf>). Students in fraternities and sororities that do not have strong alumni and graduate member support would not experience the opportunity to engage with people, older than they, to work through what roles one might play in such an important process. Such interactions may be influential in their ability to manage change in the college environment. For example, as many national fraternities and sororities have a prescribed education process, when changes occur it is important for undergraduates to identify why and how these changes must be implemented. Such learning is a desired outcome of Pascarella's model for assessing change.

Alumni and graduate members serve as both formal and informal mentors and friends. While they may have positions within the alumni or graduate chapter or advisory board and/or serve in a capacity to directly influence the operations of the undergraduate chapter, they also interact with younger members to provide guidance on how to just “be a member”. They also showcase interests and identities that may be different to these undergraduate students. For example, an alumna or graduate member may be actively engaged in issues that affect the lives of women. These issues may not be as salient for the undergraduate member but

they will be able to watch how the alumna member lives her life and manages her responsibilities. This can facilitate powerful learning about concepts of citizenship and possibly diversity.

Finally, because these organizations are often found on many campuses, undergraduates might even develop relationships with alumni from a chapter different than their own and even from a fraternity/sorority different than their own. For example, a member of a chapter on the University of Memphis may know a graduate member from the same organization who was an undergraduate member at The College of William and Mary.

While these relationships can be value added, there may also be issues in the role that alumni play as significant others. Sometimes there are not alumni or graduate members actively engaged with a local undergraduate chapter. Also, it is important to consider how the environment is set up to connect these individuals in meaningful ways. For example, does an alumni mentoring program in the chapter require the mentor to model certain behaviors that would help the mentee become more aligned with these outcomes or is there little structure that may not support these outcomes?

National Organization Staff and Volunteers as Significant Other

One of the essential elements of the DSDM, which facilitates affective outcomes of what fraternities and sororities often refer to as a "well-rounded college experience" is that these organizations often have a wide variety of highly complementary activities. These are social in nature, but also may focus on aspects of professional identity (i.e. a fraternity for engineers or professional trainings as part of the requirement to be a member), academic (i.e. hosting study hours or having academic management plans), and philanthropic (i.e. such as service activities or events that raise money). These organizations are often structured as part of a national organization that seeks to develop environments in which all the aspects of membership can be achieved. Because these organizations are often franchises found on multiple campuses but with one national charter, the role of the national organization as significant other must be examined.

The national organization operates in many different ways. Some have a headquarters. Some are strictly volunteer driven. Most have their own national policies as organizations as well as support the policies and procedures of the host institution. The national network provided by fraternities and sororities allows for a sense of interconnectedness with the organization's undergraduate and graduate/alumni members, as well as the leadership of the national organization, which may include a board of trustees/directors, staff to support operations, and volunteers at the regional, state and local levels. For example, within historically African American fraternities, there may be a reference to "my frat" or my brother. The ability for a

fraternity or sorority to enhance this desired factor of the DSDM is powerful given that regardless of other priorities, members seem to value this aspect as much as any.

The national organization's function as significant other is also reflective in that it prescribes an approach for membership education. Organizations within other culturally based organizations may have approaches that are hybrids of intake and the recruitment or rush process used by many of the socially based organizations in the North American Interfraternity Conference. Those organizations that are part of the National Panhellenic Conference typically run a recruitment process that is highly structured and grounded in a process of ongoing mutual selection between the potential member and active members. All of these processes are in place to help the national organization have a consistent process to bring in and educate members.

The function of the national organization reflects an opportunities to examine how the essential elements of the DSDM plays out: the significant other(s) here are often virtual. Most organizations do not have a national representative or regional volunteer who is involved in the day to day operations of the chapter. This dynamic brings forth an area of affective development that might be further examined: when the significant other is engaged from a distance, how are educational outcomes, often seen as best developed through in-person interactions, achieved?

Campus Faculty and Staff as Significant Other

Faculty and staff can be important significant others for fraternity/sorority members. On many campuses, each chapter is expected to have a faculty or staff advisor in addition to an alumni chapter advisor. Sometimes these faculty/staff advisors are members of the fraternal organization, but not necessarily. It is not uncommon to have a non-member serve as an advisor, perhaps a woman advising men's groups and vice versa. The chief diversity officer, and director(s) of campus cultural centers frequently serve as Significant Others to members of historically African American and culturally-based organizations. Whether formal or informal, the impact of racial, ethnic, gender and cultural identities might be a factor for organizations to find an advisor from a different part of campus, outside of the Fraternity and Sorority Life office that may better understand the function of identity in enacting the fraternity/sorority experience.

Faculty and staff are well-positioned to serve as long-term significant others for organizations. Faculty members, particularly those on the tenure track, are likely to stay at an institution for a long period of time. Likewise, staff members often remain at an institution over time, even if moving into new professional positions. Peers who serve as significant others will only be in a mentoring position for a year or two as students graduate and new peers matriculate to the institution; the peer culture of a fraternity/sorority community turns over completely every four years.

The FSL campus advisor has a bit more longevity than peers, but with an average time in position of 3.33 years (Koepsell & Stillman, 2016), it's likely that a member will see at least two professional campus advisors during their undergraduate years.

Often, the area of chapter operations where the faculty/staff advisor is most involved is academic success and scholarship. Fraternities and sororities strive to be above the all-campus average in terms of grade point average, and have minimum expectations for individual members in terms of academic performance. Faculty/staff advisors can make a great impact as significant others in this area in developing alternative approaches to traditional problems. For example, many fraternities and sororities try to promote academic success with one-size-fits-all "study tables" programs. These "mandatory hours" programs miss the mark of working with individual students to meet high expectations. Accountability to be in the library for three hours may be motivational and productive for one student, but a complete waste of time for another. It would be better for significant others to work with students who need additional support individually to create an academic plan and decide how best to hold accountable.

Using the Learning Partnerships Model (Baxter Magolda & King, 2004) would be a strong approach for faculty and staff serving as Significant Others to fraternity/sorority members. Forming deliberate partnerships to promote learning and advance student success is in line with the relationship-centered approach advocated by the DSDM. An added benefit of building learning partnerships between faculty/staff and undergraduate members may be increased retention within the organization and at the institution.

Faculty and staff who are significant others also serve as a type of communications officer for the fraternity/sorority. In doing so, they can address the DSDM expectation that individual and group performance is clearly observable to those outside the organization on an ongoing basis. One of the barriers that fraternal organizations face in communicating with external audiences is the inherent secrecy of the group. For example, ritual is a very positive aspect of fraternity and sorority life that communicates the values, goals for relationships, and so on to members, but is secret (in most cases) and therefore not clearly observable to those outside the organization on an ongoing basis. Relationships between fraternity/sorority members and faculty/staff at an institution can go a long way in breaking out of the insular environment of a fraternal organization and getting better at telling the story of the benefits of fraternity/sorority membership.

Fraternity/Sorority Life Advisor as Significant Other

Perhaps the most publicly visible significant other for fraternal organizations is the Fraternity/Sorority Life Advisor (FSL Advisor), who directly oversees the chapters at a particular institution. Those with responsibility for administering a fraternity/

sorority advising program can actively engage both individual and groups in the development of goals, meeting one of the essential elements of the DSDM, "clearly articulated individual and group goals." Individuals who hold this professional position on a university campus most often work within the Division of Student Affairs, and hold at least a master's degree in higher education, with specific training in student development, assessment, and learning environments. In this case the significant other likely received training to enact work in student affairs and were professionally socialized through experiences in fraternity/sorority life and as a graduate assistant in their master's degree program.

Two developmental theories underlie the role of the FSL Advisor as a significant other for fraternity/sorority members: Baxter Magolda's (2001, 2004, 2008, 2009) self-authorship, and Tinto's (1993) student departure. The journey toward self-authorship, as detailed by Baxter Magolda, consists of personal development in three domains, cognitive (how a person views knowledge), intrapersonal (how a person sees identity), and interpersonal (how a person views relationships). Over the course of a lifespan, people move from a reliance on external formulas, through a series of crossroads in which there is conflict between external frameworks and an internally-generated way of thinking, and eventually to a capacity for internal foundation. Though research has established that most traditionally-aged college students do not achieve self-authorship by the time they graduate (Baxter Magolda, 1999, 2001; Kegan, 1994), the undergraduate years can be a time of intense development toward self-authorship when students are exposed to experiences that call upon them to use an internal voice (Barber, King, & Baxter Magolda, 2013). Experiences that prompt students to navigate complex relationships, actively construct identity, and offer belonging as a source of support are particularly influential in promoting development; FSL Advisors have great influence over how much a fraternity/sorority community focuses on these types of developmentally effective experiences.

Tinto's (1993) theory of student departure relies on information about student inputs (i.e., pre-entry attributes such as high school GPA, etc.), student goals, and student experiences to predict retention and persistence to graduation. Due in part to demographic information collected during the fraternity/sorority recruitment or intake process, FSL Advisors have access to student input data that other areas of campus may not have readily available. In addition, the FSL Advisor has a strong sense of the types of experiences that fraternity/sorority members have during the course of their membership. Research has shown that joining a fraternity or sorority increases the likelihood of graduation; membership in a fraternal organization is positively correlated to retention and graduation (Nelson et al., 2006; Routon & Walker, 2014).

The FSL Advisor is well-positioned as a central significant other, in that they have relationships with all four of the other groups of significant others (peers,

headquarters, alumni, and faculty/staff), and therefore can serve as a coordinator to help make connections and assist the various significant others in working together toward the common goal of student learning and development. Unfortunately, these professionals often turn over quickly on the college campus. Demographic data collected from the Association of Fraternity/Sorority Advisors (Koepsell & Stillman, 2016) indicated that campus-based professionals are often new professionals in the field, and have an average of 3.33 years in this role. Since these administrators will have a sense of what the institution wants, as well as the extent to which the fraternity and sorority community wants, they will be able to have conversations with students to strengthen the alignment between the institutional and organizational goals and learning outcomes. When those goals are in conflict there is an opportunity to address reconciliation or how to compromise on the goals.

However, with an average stay of just over three years, it is not likely that the same FSL Advisor will be in the position for a student's entire undergraduate experience. Therefore, the FSL Advisor may be effective as a significant other for individual leaders in office for one year, but less effective in terms of longer-term organizational memory. Faculty/staff and alumni advisors may be better suited for this on-going mentoring over the course of multiple generations of students.

APPLYING TO PRACTICE: SIX ESSENTIAL SSIPS FOR EDUCATIONAL OUTCOMES IN FRATERNITY AND SORORITY LIFE

A basic premise of many theories of college student development is progression toward a desired outcome: Chickering and Reisser (1993) aimed to move students through independence to interdependence, Rogers (1957) sought to help persons develop a sense of self and in relation to others, and Baxter Magolda (2001) focused on helping students move from externally prescribed sense of identity to more of an internally authored identity. Such movement toward both individual and organizational goals can be enhanced with the right experience within a fraternity/sorority. There are a number of services, supports, interventions, and programs (SSIPs) that can help significant others to better serve undergraduate students in fraternal organizations and foster an environment conducive to learning and development.

Significant Others in Concert: Working Together

FSL professionals are often in positions of mentoring for many members. However, no individual or group has a monopoly on mentoring or playing the role of significant other in the fraternity/sorority context. Ideally, a team will work together to support fraternity and sorority members. Keeping the relationship-centered ap-

proach of the DSDM in mind, we encourage significant others to actively seek out others who are engaged in similar work with the chapter or community. This relates directly to one of the essential elements of the model, "High performance expectations for both the short and long-terms with individual students agreeing to meet those expectations." When those expectations are discussed with the student and multiple significant others are invested in those outcomes, they can be easily reinforced through the daily conversations and activities in which these individuals engage.

Many fraternity and sorority chapters have an alumni board or a housing corporation that in part aims to serve in this coordinating role. However, there boards are too often insular, involving only those volunteers directly affiliated with the chapter, and unintentionally marginalizing significant others on campus or in the community. Ideally, alumni volunteers should be in communication with the campus FSL Advisor; headquarters staff should provide support and resources to faculty members engaged in mentoring chapter members, and so on. Those mentors working on the university campus are well-positioned to identify resources on campus, and forge partnerships that may advance student development and develop stronger relationships with mentors. For example, the FSL Advisor may reach out to the Career Center or Alumni Relations to create a program to match students with alumni career mentors.

It is vital that significant others at all levels understand the need to focus on both individual member outcomes as well as those of the chapters and larger fraternity/sorority community. Often, one area receives the lion's share of time and resources to the detriment of other areas. For example, if all significant others focus exclusively on chapter outcomes, individual member development may suffer, and vice versa.

Leverage the Existing Infrastructure

As most organizations have a prescribed process for educating members and running the operations of the chapter, it makes sense that working within this infrastructure can be beneficial to all who wish to strengthen the educational outcomes of memberships. From the period of intake and recruitment through ongoing educational programming, significant others can work together to ensure that training and education creates a forum for achieving the UniLOA educational outcomes as well as other key objectives. Through recruitment and educational processes, members are able to examine individual goals against those of the organization. As members accept leadership roles as committee chairs, executive officers, council officers, and others, they will participate in chapter and campus leadership retreats as well as have the opportunity to attend trainings for their national organization or one provided by some other education pro-

vider in the interfraternity movement such as the Undergraduate Interfraternity Institute (UIFI) coordinated by the North American Interfraternity Conference. To enhance the potential to achieve educational outcomes as explained within the DSDM, those responsible for managing these leadership experiences can be more intentional about adopting the outcomes of the UniLOA as well as enacting activities that support movement through the various stages of the theories on which the DSDM is based. The essential elements of the DSDM should also be focal points of these educational experiences.

These trainings can also be opportunities to reconcile dispositions entering the organization. While fraternities and sororities may aspire toward these educational outcomes, it is clear that not everyone joins for these reasons nor are the undergraduates (and their significant others) good at shepherding the movement toward these educational outcomes. Efforts to align the individual member's values with that of the organization may help to better achieve the educational outcomes of the DSDM.

Develop Mentoring Curricula for Significant Others

Significant others need to have appropriate training and resources in order to be most effective in their mentoring roles. Campuses and fraternity/sorority headquarters have high expectations for alumni involvement with undergraduate chapters, but do not always provide training for chapter advisors, faculty members, and other volunteers engaged with chapters (or believe other entities are providing such instruction and support). We recommend that campuses develop a mentoring curriculum to educate significant others to best help students. This curriculum would take on different forms for the diverse types of mentors we have described within the fraternity/sorority community. For example, holding a workshop for chapter advisors on mentoring and the basic framework of DSDM may be a needed first exposure for volunteers to the basic ideas of development, and build awareness that new or early members may need different kinds of mentoring than students nearing graduation. Likewise, a comprehensive mentoring curriculum would include training workshops for peer mentors (including those in the traditional roles of big brothers/sisters) on healthy relationships and mentoring strategies. These relationship-centered educational programs could complement existing community-wide education on hazing, sexual assault, and other negative cultures that hinder relationships.

Further evolution of a mentoring curriculum could include workshops (or better yet credit-bearing courses) focused on student development theory. This could be a great opportunity for student leaders (VP Member Development) and individual members to learn about student development theory that is taught in most higher education graduate programs. Learning about theories of self-authorship,

identity development, etc. may be beneficial to undergraduates as they consider how they are personally moving toward a state of interdependence, and how best to serve as significant others to their peers.

Shift Approaches to Advising

Many professionals entered the field of fraternity and sorority advising because we had an experience in these organizations that we want to help others achieve or avoid. As undergraduates we rarely know about the intention behind planning a learning experience: it certainly is less fun to know the educational outcomes of an event than to just experience it and have fun at the event. However, in today's student affairs work, we must do more to inform students and other stakeholders of the desired educational outcomes for the work we do. Not only must we inform students what we hope to achieve in the context of these educational (and any other) experiences, but we must also try to engage more students than simply the leaders and worst members. We need to do more to reach out to those "middle" members who are engaged differently, because if we do not then it is very unlikely that they will have the opportunity to interact with student affairs educators in a way that facilitates educational outcome development. Such a missed opportunity means that we as educators likely miss out on enacting programs, resources, and services that reach the majority of our members.

Significant others must move beyond the interactions with only the most outstanding and most challenging members and try to get into chapters to meet with "average members" who are seeking such experiences, but do not have the guidance and mentoring needed. Different types of significant others will have different access to the membership. For example, a faculty/staff advisor who has a regular presence at chapter meetings may have a stronger rapport with chapter members (including those in the middle) than an alumni board member who can only be present for quarterly meetings. The challenge is to determine the best way to reach the members, and then use the most effective resources and significant others to engage.

Use the Assessment Cycle to Create Shared Expectations

As students move from a state of dependence to one of independence, and ultimately a state of interdependence, assessment becomes increasingly important. More standardized learning outcomes may suffice for students in less advanced stages of development (those dependent on external formulas), but students who are more advanced developmentally will benefit from more individualized, co-created learning outcomes that are rooted in assessment data. Working with students to establish expectations (i.e., outcomes) of FSL membership, including programmatic

and learning outcomes, is essential to move beyond dependence on authority to independence and interdependence. The assessment cycle (Suskie, 2009) provided a simple four-step model for using principles of assessment in practice: (1) establish learning goals, (2) provide learning opportunities (3) assess student learning, and (4) use the results. The final step feeds back into the first, creating a system in which the assessment results inform the next iteration of learning goals.

Using examples from the Wabash National Study of Liberal Arts Education, a national longitudinal study of student learning outcomes, Hevel and Bureau (2014) described how to use assessment data to improve the fraternity/sorority experience. Notably, they found that two factors has an impact on the way that fraternity/sorority membership influenced students: students' entering characteristics (i.e., the inputs of Tinto's model), and students' racial/ethnic identities. With this in mind, it may be necessary to create different learning outcomes for different individuals or groups of students.

Developing a training session for student leaders and significant others working with fraternities and sororities about the assessment cycle would lay the foundation for the community to establish expectations for members, set learning outcomes for individuals and groups, and decide how to hold one another accountable. Once developed, these expectations could be revisited every two to three years to use assessment data to inform and revise the learning goals of fraternity/sorority membership (as per the assessment cycle).

Document and Communicate the Affective Impact

Finally, we urge those working with fraternity or sorority communities to document and communicate the affective impact of membership in these organizations. Too often, the metrics of success (or lack thereof) in fraternities and sororities are limited to quantitative data on GPA, judicial incidents, and recruitment statistics. Although important data points, these figures miss the impact of the relationships that are at the center of the DSDM. It is crucial to be able to document the extent of mentoring that significant others provide, and how those mentoring relationships help undergraduates to move toward a state of interdependence.

Incorporating the assessment cycle into practice is a strong initial step in collecting evidence of the influence of relationships in the developmental process. Using that evidence to improve student learning and development is also important, as is communicating impact to external and internal stakeholders. One of the essential elements of the DSDM is that individual and group performance is clearly observable to those outside the organization on an ongoing basis. We argue that part of that transparency is a communications effort. This communication may take many forms. Formal communication will include semester or annual reports to the Vice President for Student Affairs, fraternity/sorority headquarters,

parents, etc. Informal communication such as social media posts, word of mouth, campus reputation, and everyday interactions of members also serve to document and communicate the impact of relationships in fraternity/sorority membership.

CONCLUSION

Fraternity and sorority life presents a plethora of opportunities to use a relationship-centered approach to student development. In effect, these organizations can be a playground/laboratory for development and learning because of the multiple contexts that exist internally within fraternity/sorority communities. Many aspects of student and academic affairs are represented in a microcosm in fraternal organizations. On many campuses, FSL involves residence life, judicial affairs, leadership programs, new student orientation, diversity and inclusion, academic success, and community engagement, among other areas. This in mind, members can benefit from many significant others who identify their role and accept the responsibility to focus on educational outcomes as a result of the relationship between the student and significant other.

Significant others are necessary for fraternity/sorority members and organizations to thrive. Without the relationship-centered approach to development illuminated in the DSDM and made possible through the mentoring of significant others, fraternities and sororities may devolve to a loosely organized social club. As such, we must not to lose sight of the individual students (and their need for mentorship and development) who comprise fraternities and sororities.

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