HALLMARKS OF SUCCESSFUL EMERGING LEADER PROGRAMS: AN
EXPLORATION OF EFFECTIVE FIRST-YEAR, NON-POSITIONAL, CO-
CURRICULAR EMERGING LEADER PROGRAMS AT COLLEGES AND
UNIVERSITIES.

A Dissertation
by
ALAN C.R. MUELLER

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Abstract

HALLMARKS OF SUCCESSFUL EMERGING LEADER PROGRAMS: AN EXPLORATION OF EFFECTIVE FIRST-YEAR, NON-POSITIONAL, CO-CURRICULAR EMERGING LEADER PROGRAMS AT COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES.

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Throughout the United States, colleges and universities invest heavily in first year programming. Additionally, many of these institutions provide leadership development programs for their students. The programs that exist at the intersection at these two greater efforts are often called emerging leader programs. This study examines emerging leader programs for first-year students that do not bear academic credit and also do not require participating students to hold any formal position on their campus.

This qualitative study examines emerging leader programs at three universities. Specifically, this study examines three aspects of emerging leader programs. First is an exploration of the way assessment impacts emerging leader programs. Second is an examination of the role that departmental and programmatic structures play in these programs. Finally this study explores the hallmarks of successful programs.

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There is significant research surrounding first-year college students and an even larger body of literature exploring leadership theory and practice. However there is little literature on first-year leadership programs. This study uses a multi case study approach to establish an understanding of the role of assessment and structures in emerging leader programs and then employs the use of grounded theory to explore the hallmarks of successful emerging leader programs.

The findings in this study suggest that assessment does not impact emerging leader programs significantly. The role of departmental and programmatic structures is significant in that the delivery formats vary greatly. These structures, when examined through the lens of college student development theory, play a role in how each program defines and achieves success. Finally this study identified three hallmarks of emerging leader programs. These are connection, peer mentorship and future framing. Future framing is the ability of a program to teach leadership concepts to students in ways that support future application.

Acknowledgments

Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to my wife, Amy, my daughter, Lily and my son, Charlie. I love you all more than you will ever know. I very much look forward to spending a lot of quality time with you all in the near future, especially on weekends!

This dissertation is further dedicated to my students, past, present, and future. Thank you all for allowing me the honor of being company for your journey.

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CHAPTER ONE

Colleges and universities throughout the United States cite leadership as an important outcome of a college education (Dean, 2009). While there are many definitions and theories of leadership, it is generally agreed that leadership is a skill that can be taught (Astin & Astin, 1996; Dugan & Komives, 2011; Kouzes & Posner, 2002; Zimmerman-Oster & Burkhardt, 1999a). During the 1970s "many colleges refocused efforts on leadership development when events such as the Watergate scandal caused institutions to ponder how they taught ethics, leadership, and social responsibility" (Dean, 2009, p. 366). Colleges and universities throughout the United States host formal leadership programs, which take many forms and exhibit different qualities. Some of these programs are academic and credit-bearing, while others are co-curricular or non-credit bearing. Other programs contain both academic and co-curricular components. A subset of these co-curricular leadership programs specifically target first-year students. Despite the widespread offerings of these programs, little empirical research has been reported on any of the emerging leadership programs. These programs are often called emerging leader programs, and are the focus of this study. In subsequent sections of this chapter I will discuss leadership programs generally, delivery formats and program attributes in an effort to set the stage for a study of emerging leader programs specifically.

Trends in the Development of Student Leadership Programs

In the 1970s, the diversification of college campuses, coupled with shared governance structures and a focus on intentional student development, led to increased co-

curricular programming efforts "including emerging leaders' retreats" (Dean, 2009, p. 366).

In recent years, many trends have emerged surrounding student leadership development. In

Developing Leadership Capacity in College Students: Findings from a National Study, John

Dugan and Susan Komives (2007) identify four key trends in student leadership

development. The first trend is the expansion of both curricular and co-curricular leadership

programs. By the mid-1980s more than 600 campuses were teaching leadership courses

(Dean, 2009). A decade later, it was estimated that there were more than 800 curricular or

co-curricular leadership programs on campuses throughout the United States, and in recent

years that number is thought to have risen to more than 1,000 campuses (Dugan & Komives,

2007). Furthermore, there was exponential growth in campus leadership practices in the

1990s, including the emergence of leadership majors and minors, certificate programs, and a

wide array of co-curricular programs.

The second trend identified by Dugan and Komives (2007) is professionalization in

leadership education. Several advancements support the notion that leadership development

programs are professionalizing as evidenced by the increased presence of organizations such

as the National Clearinghouse for Leadership Programs, the Association of Leadership

Educators and the James MacGregor Burns Academy of Leadership (Dugan & Komives,

2007). The Council for the Advancement of Standards' *CAS Professional Standards for*

Higher Education (7th Ed.) further validates the professionalization of leadership education

by including leadership program standards (Dean, 2009). Additional evidence of

professionalization is found in the development of standing commissions, conference

proceedings, and expanded leadership-focused projects sponsored by the American College

Personnel Association, the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators, the

National Association of Campus Activities, the Association of Leadership Educators, and the National Association for Women in Education.

The third trend emphasized by Komives and associates (2011) is that of focused theoretical and conceptual leadership model development. The study of leadership is not part of the traditional canon that has long pervaded the arts and sciences. As "practices began to reflect evolving theoretical conceptualizations of leadership, researchers and theorists posited leadership models and theories that specifically targeted the developmental needs of college students" (Dugan & Komives, 2007, p. 6). Theories of leadership exist in many disciplines, and several emergent theories, though grounded in developmental psychology, are interdisciplinary in nature. Models include the Relational Leadership Model, the Social Change Model of Leadership Development, Servant Leadership Models, and the Leadership Challenge (Komives, Dugan, Owen, Slack, Wagner, & Associates, 2011). I will provide an overview with further discussion of these other relevant theories in Chapter Two.

The fourth trend supporting the formalization of leadership programs on college campuses involves leadership research and "the assessment of leadership outcomes followed the proliferation of programs and integration of theoretical influences" (Dugan & Komives, 2007, p. 7). Efforts by a W.K. Kellogg Foundation study to evaluate leadership programs and establish hallmarks of successful programs have been largely successful. This multi-institutional study established several key findings about the impact of formal leadership programs on both student participants and non-participants at institutions that support such programs (Zimmerman-Oster & Burkhardt, 1999a).

In the early 1980s, colleges and universities began offering First-Year Seminar courses (Marina & McGuire, 2008) to focus on transition challenges and experiences of

first-year students. As institutions began to offer these courses, often as elective courses, and track the persistence rates of those students who had taken them, interest grew in these programs as a retention tool (Roberts, 1981). The National Resource Center for First Year Experience and Students in Transition has published several studies documenting the specific needs of first-year college students (Marina & McGuire, 2008; Schreiner & Pattengale, 2000). I will discuss transition issues and the specific and acute development of first-year students in Chapter Two.

Leadership Program Classifications

Collegiate leadership programs target various types of students. Haber (2011) describes several classification definitions for leadership programs:

- Positional versus Non-positional: Whether or not the program is intended for students in a positional leadership role (e.g., president, captain, resident assistant).
- Targeted versus Non-targeted: Whether or not the program is intended for students with certain characteristics (e.g., first-year students, female students, students involved in fraternity and sorority life).
- Open: A program that is open for all students and, as such, are both non-positional and non-targeted.

The emerging leaders programs at the heart of this dissertation will be those that are non-positional, co-curricular, and targeted at first-year students. Specifically, these programs are of high interest in this study because they contribute to leadership development through involvement opportunities while addressing the needs of students during an important developmental transition (Peraza, 2004). I'll discuss this confluence in Chapter Three and introduce a corresponding model for use in the data collection section. Additionally, programs targeting emerging leaders and potential leaders have significant developmental impact on participants (Larkin, 1981). Additionally, colleges and universities with established leadership programs realize gains in leadership development even among

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students who do not participate in formalized leadership training (Zimmerman-Oster &
Burkhardt, 1999a). The tangential impact that leadership programs have on non-participants
suggests that participants in such programs exhibit behavior outside of the context of these
formal leadership programs, and that this affects other students and student organizations.
Emerging leader programs meet the needs of students transitioning into college and promote
campus engagement among participants (Peraza, 2004). There has been virtually no research
on the impact of emerging leader programs since 1981, thus it is important to explore the
ever-increasing number of these types of programs (Komives et al., 2011). As resources in
higher education become increasingly scarce, programs that lack specific measures of
success may be in danger.

Delivery Format

Regardless of the participant for which the leadership program is designed, there are
many different delivery formats. One such format is a leadership course that follows
traditional classroom direct instruction models such as lecture and faculty-led discussion.
Another type of instructional format relies on the use of experiential education such as
service-learning, which employs the use of service work, reflection, and curricular
integration. Experiential learning builds student reflection and abstraction on experiences to
make them meaningful and to affect changes in behavior (Kolb, 1984).

Many colleges and universities sponsor non-credit-bearing co-curricular leadership
programs. As suggested by Smist (2011), "students' out-of class experiences should be
thought of as part of the educational experience" (p. 287), thus the term co-curricular means
alongside the curriculum and is used by many in leadership development work although no
actual course credit is offered to participants. These programs may take the form of one-time

programs, conferences, retreats, workshops or lectures, or be sequential in nature like

workshop and program series, emerging leaders programs, co-curricular leadership

certificate programs, global leadership programs or multi-year programs (Smist, 2011).

Program Attributes

Eich (2008) cites sixteen programmatic attributes of high-quality leadership

programs for which he identified the following three clusters: (a) participants engage in

building and sustaining a learning community; (b) there are student-centered experiential

learning experiences; and (c) research-grounded program development continuously occurs.

The W.K. Kellogg Foundation report authored by Zimmerman-Oster and Burkhardt (1999b)

suggests the following four hallmarks of successful leadership programs:

- There is a strong connection between the mission of the institution and the mission of the leadership development program or center.
- The program's approach is supported across the institution. It includes an academic component, as well as theoretical underpinnings that link curricular and co-curricular activities.
- The program has an academic home above and beyond the departmental level – ideally, under the auspices of both Academic Affairs and Student Affairs.
- There is strong leadership for the program, often a tenured faculty-level director with research expertise in leadership or youth development; or a highly experienced member of the Student Affairs community. (pp. 15-16)

These program attributes and hallmarks have been identified in the study of leadership

programs generally, but comparable characteristics have yet to be substantially identified

specifically for first-year, non-positional, co-curricular emerging leader programs.

My Personal Interest

I first became interested in first-year co-curricular leadership programs as a graduate

student. I held a graduate assistantship in Appalachian State University's Center for Student

Involvement and Leadership. One of my duties was to advise a cohort of first-year students

engaged in a ten-week emerging-leaders program. Both the philosophy of the program and the delivery format resonated deeply with me. One reason I was particularly moved by this experience was that the students involved showed up each week for two hours to explore leadership for no formal reward. There was no course credit, scholarship assistance or other incentive to participate, and yet the cohort continued to attend the program each week to learn. I perceived that many of the students involved wanted to learn for the sake of learning but upon further reflection I believe that as important as the learning may be, the program fostered learning in and through community. Eich (2008) emphasizes sustained learning communities as an important aspect of leadership programs, which resonates deeply with my experience working with emerging leader programs. In each of my first three jobs in college and university settings I replicated a modified version of this program. In some settings, I conducted formal pre-test and post-test assessments of learning outcomes and saw gains in student self-perception of personal leadership development.

Perhaps even more significant were the student outcomes that resulted from the program I facilitated at Lees-McRae College. During my final semester of graduate school I served as an intern at Lees-McRae College and was allowed to start an emerging leader program. I asked my internship supervisor for an opportunity to pilot an emerging leaders program at the college and was given permission. I established a nine-week program called Kibo. Although I had carried the program philosophy and format from my previous institution with me to use for this effort, I learned quickly that I needed to change my thinking. My previous institution had more than 14,000 students and hosted two emerging leader cohorts a semester with roughly eighteen participants each. In retrospect, I recognize that the program capitalized strongly on the fact that participants self-selected into the

program, and that the program name made it clear that it was a program for aspiring leaders. Thus, this self-selection was skewed towards those interested in formal leadership development as first-year college students. The Kibo program was established on a campus of only 750 students and purposefully did not use the word leader in the title. The staff members who collaborated on the formation of Kibo believed that the word "leadership" was often misunderstood and hoped that the substance of the program would be centered on multi-faceted understandings of leadership rather than on the personal development of leaders. The word "Kibo" came from the name of the final hut hikers reach before the summit of Mt. Kilimanjaro. We used this allusion as a metaphor for growth and exploration as part of a larger journey. Additionally, the institutional mission specifically referenced the mountains, which we were interested in intentionally reflecting this emphasis in the program name.

Upon the completion of my internship at Lees-McRae College, I was hired full-time there as the Retention Specialist and Director of Orientation Programs. I sought to establish a cohort of first-year students to follow the seven students who had participated in the pilot during the previous spring semester. I was aware of literature on the impact of leadership programs on student engagement and persistence, and I also knew that there was increasing evidence pointing to the first six to eight weeks (Astin & Astin, 1996) of a student's time on campus as a crucial developmental time, during which many students decided whether they wanted to fully commit to persisting at an institution. The literature on emerging leader programs as retention tools fit perfectly into my position at the institution, and I was given the financial and structural support to continue the program.

Additionally, I had been charged with directing orientation programs on campus. Most orientation programs rely heavily on student leadership and engage upper-class students as peer educators for incoming first-year students (Dean, 2009). I recognized that continuing the Kibo program may help both in connecting students to the campus in a way that could impact persistence while building relationships with aspiring student leaders, which could impact my ability to recruit orientation leaders. In fact, I observed three significant outcomes from the Kibo program. First, students who participated in the program persisted at significantly higher rates than their peers, although participation was voluntary, which may bias any kind of formal causal claim. Kibo was presented to faculty as a retention tool, as they were asked to nominate students whom they believed were at risk of dropping out of college. The resulting profile of the students engaged in the Kibo program was much broader than I had experienced at my previous institution. Although, like my previous institution, the program engaged highly-mature aspiring leaders, it also engaged many students identified by faculty as retention risks using a variety of measures including socio-economic status, distance from home, first-generation college student status, incoming admissions profile and other relevant factors. The inclusion of these at-risk students was distinct from other emerging leader programs, which tend to be more self-selecting. Many of these at-risk students indicated in both formal and informal assessments that they were not looking for a leadership development program but rather were seeking a way to connect to other students at the college.

The second impact I observed was that applications for orientation leader positions increased significantly. Prior to the existence of the Kibo program, the orientation program received roughly twelve applications annually. After the first two Kibo cohorts completed

the program, the orientation program received twenty-eight applications. The following

year, the orientation program received forty-eight applications, most of which came from

students who had previously participated in the Kibo program. Although some of this

engagement may have been driven by the relationships I had formed with students through

the Kibo program, I perceived another outcome that I believe was related to the success of

Kibo.

In my four years at Lees-McRae College, other forms of student engagement saw

significant gains in participation. Kibo graduates eventually led efforts to create and

implement multiple pre-orientation leadership programs, assisted in the formation of a Kibo

Two program for upper-class students and even formed the college's first ever fraternity and

sorority. As I reflect back on those four years, it is clear to me now that the Kibo program

was a catalyst for a culture shift at that institution. Through both formal and informal

assessments, I believe that the Kibo program made a significant difference in the lives of

many of the participants and affected change within the college. Formal assessment through

surveys given before and after the experience indicated gains in student perception of

leadership skills and abilities. Informally, over the last ten years, many graduates of the

program have contacted me as they complete college and work in society; regularly they

express that they are applying lessons they learned in Kibo to their everyday life and work.

Statement of Problem

Although many colleges and universities invest heavily (through budget allocations

and staff resources) in leadership programs generally and emerging leader programs

specifically, there is very little standardization between institutions as to the philosophy and

format of these programs. Additionally, although some leadership programs engage in

formal learning assessment and program evaluation, many do not. Between 1990 and 1998 the W.K. Kellogg Foundation examined thirty-one leadership programs throughout the United States. The report concluded that there is strong evidence that leadership programs can be effective, that leadership can be taught and learned, and that participation in such programs has lasting impact beyond graduation (Zimmerman-Oster & Burkhardt, 1999b). Moreover, using data from the Higher Education Research Institute the results of the study indicated that students who participated in leadership training had an increased likelihood of demonstrating growth in civic responsibility, leadership skills, multicultural awareness, and community orientation. Although there have been several studies on leadership programs generally, and institutions use a variety of assessment techniques, there is little research specifically on emerging leader programs that are designed for first-year college students.

Research Questions

Given that there is a growing body of research on leadership programs generally (but little on emerging leader programs specifically) and given that colleges and universities are increasingly investing in programmatic interventions for first-year students it is important to study the impact of first-year leadership programs. Additionally, given the disparate ways emerging leader programs conduct assessment and are situated structurally within institutions, assessment efforts and organizational structures warrant study. This dissertation will investigate the following research questions:

- What are the hallmarks of successful emerging leader programs?
- How do assessment data inform these programs?
- How do organizational structures impact emerging leader programs?

Methodology

To identify the hallmarks of effective emerging leader programs by defining what is meant by "success," I will use elements of multi-case study methodology in this research. A multi-case study approach will allow me to examine several programs in depth as part of a system while seeking to understand each program that contains within itself a system (Merriam, 1998). In other words, each emerging leader program can be explored as an individual case through the lenses of my research questions. Furthermore, case study will allow an exploration of my research questions in greater depth while examining other aspects of the program that may overlap. Case study is ideal for these situations, in which aspects of the program may be indistinguishable from one another or may be so entwined as to render studying those aspects in isolation impractical (Merriam, 1998). For example, an assessment plan that calls for a pre-test and post-test situated around leadership-based learning outcomes may shape the way students approach the program as they glean language from the pre-test. In Chapter Three, I will provide further explanation on the elements of systems commonly found in emerging leader programs that suggest that this methodology is ideally suited as a particularly good strategy to address my research questions.

Additionally, as I will further discuss in Chapter Three, I will use grounded theory throughout this study. The application of grounded theory will allow me to discover theory from a varied and diverse set of data (Glaser & Strauss, 1999). This approach is important, in part, because there are no specific published theories on emerging leader programs, and my research questions will require a study of several different forms of data all contained within a system. Although a multiple case study approach would adequately serve to explore my second and third research questions, the notion of hallmarks referenced in my first

question calls for a different form of exploration. Grounded theory will assist in the understanding of these hallmarks, particularly because success is likely defined and measured differently in different settings. Thus a constant comparison of data sets to the theories that most directly inform this kind of program ought to create space for an emergent theory.

In the absence of specific studies on emerging leader programs, I'll offer a framework that relies on understandings of first-year student development theories and hallmarks of successful leadership programs to make space for an emergent theory of successful emerging leader programs. There is a great deal of literature on the importance of the first year of college as being highly developmentally significant for students (Upcraft & Gardner, 1989). Additionally, there is significant literature on the value of student engagement (Astin & Astin, 1996) and a small but growing body of literature on college and university leadership programs (Dugan & Komives, 2007). Grounded theory will allow me to use existing models that describe first-year college student development, models of student engagement and research in leadership programs as a backdrop, through which I can interpret data.

One form of analysis that can drive grounded theory research is comparative analysis (Glaser & Strauss, 1999) or the constant-comparative method (Eich, 2008). The constant-comparative method compares incidents applicable to established categories and allows for the integration of categories and their properties in a way that makes space for new theories to evolve (Eich, 2008). Without mentioning this methodology specifically, the 1998 study funded by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, which is also discussed in *Leadership in the making: A comprehensive examination of the impact of leadership development programs*

on students (Zimmerman-Oster & Burkhardt, 1999b), used a methodology that is similar to grounded theory. Although the scope of that project was much larger than the one I am proposing, in Chapter Three I will describe this study's methodology as it relates to my research questions.

Significance

There is little research on emerging leader programs despite growth in general leadership programming on college and university campuses. The converging trends of the last twenty years suggests a great need to understand better the "unique nature of college student leadership development" (Dugan & Komives, 2007, p. 7) and the contexts contributing to that development. Twenty-two of the programs evaluated in the W.K. Kellogg Foundation report were based on college and university campuses, and many of those participating institutions did not provide empirical evidence but rather provided anecdotal results based on testimonials, surveys, case studies and personal observations (Zimmerman-Oster & Burkhardt, 1999b). The W.K. Kellogg Foundation report looked at a variety of leadership programs but did not specifically examine co-curricular first-year leadership programs. Although programs that target current student leaders can be effective, programs that target emerging leaders have greater developmental impact on participants (Larkin, 1981). Thus, if emerging leader programs in particular can have such a high impact, those engaged in leadership programming must understand best practices in emerging leader programs targeted at first-year students. There is very little literature that specifically addresses non-positional, co-curricular programs targeted at first year students.

Most first-year college students are navigating a significant set of transitions associated with starting college. Although the average age of college students has increased

over the years, the number of students entering college immediately after high school is still

increasing. Practitioners and educators involved in the design of leadership programs for

first-year students should be aware of first-year students' needs (Peraza, 2004). Specifically,

these needs include support through the transition from high school to college and the

accompanying socialization. Intentionally designed leadership opportunities can assist first

year students through these processes (Upcraft & Gardner, 1989).

The Importance of Emerging Leader Programs

There is significant evidence to suggest that leadership programs enhance student

growth and development among both participants and non-participants on college campuses

(Zimmerman-Oster & Burkhardt, 1999b); and even further evidence that the first year of

college is of particular importance in a variety of developmental processes (Upcraft &

Gardner, 1989). In *First-Year Students and Leadership* (2004), Peraza suggests that all first-

year students deal with common needs including exploring freedom and establishing

relationships. Additionally, Peraza writes that all first-year students "respond to some

distinct opportunity points for targeted interventions to develop leadership capacity"

(Peraza, 2004, p. 5). Thus an understanding of the common practices of emerging leader

programs, in an attempt to comprehend the hallmarks of a successful program, is important

to those engaged in leadership development work on college and university campuses.

My focus on co-curricular emerging leadership programs is rooted in the

understanding that student learning "is a complex, holistic, multi-centric activity that occurs

throughout and across the college experience" (Keeling, 2007, p. 5). This idea is not only

central to student development theory, but also consistent with many modern leadership

theories. Further, this idea supports the need to understand learning that happens outside of

traditional classroom settings. This supports the idea that the study of co-curricular programs has significant value.

Current Debates Surrounding Leadership Programs

According to a report by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, there are several hallmarks of successful leadership development programs. These include the following: (a) a strong connection to institutional or departmental mission; (b) cross-institution support with an academic component and theoretical underpinnings linking curricular and co-curricular aspects; (c) an academic home beyond the departmental level; and (d) evidence of strong leadership for the program in the form of a tenured faculty member or highly experienced member of the Student Affairs community (Zimmerman-Oster & Burkhardt, 1999b). Although Zimmerman-Oster and Burkhardt suggest that an academic component is an important hallmark of successful leadership programs, in the book *The Handbook for Student Leadership Development*, Komives and associates (2011) suggest that programs can be exemplary without academic credit awarded. For reasons described above, this study will examine programs that do not have a specific academic component.

Definitions

There are many forms of leadership programs. For the purpose of this study it is important to define certain key terms. First, in the context of this project, *leadership* is defined as a relational and ethical process of people together attempting to accomplish positive change (Komives, Lucas, & McMahon, 2006). Participation in leadership programs will also reference involvement which is the amount of physical and psychological energy that a student devotes to an activity (Astin, 1999).

The term *co-curricular* will be used to encompass any leadership program offered on a college or university campus that does not award course credit to students for its completion. When I use the term *emerging leader program*, or *emerging leaders program*, I will be referring to co-curricular leadership programs for first-year students. Thus, if I need to describe a leadership program that awards class credit, I will use words like "course" or "class" to describe these offerings. Leadership programs can be divided into ones that are positional and others that are non-positional. Positional leadership programs are ones that presuppose student participants hold a position that is external to the leadership program (Komives et al., 2011), such as being a member of a fraternity or sorority, being a student athlete or being part of a certain major. I will use the term *emerging leaders program* to denote a program that is non-positional, meaning that student participation in the program is not contingent on the holding of a formal leadership position.

Student development will refer to a process through which students traverse cognitive growth and psycho-social growth in manners of increasing complexity. Development is not distinct from learning, as one does not occur without the other (Keeling, 2007), thus when I speak of student development or college student development, learning processes are included.

Organization of Study

This study is organized in a six-chapter format. In this first chapter, I broadly establish an introduction to the issue, describe the problem, and introduce my research questions. I also discuss the significance of this issue in higher education, define some important terms, and briefly reference the methodology I used to explore my research questions.

Chapter Two of this study presents current literature relevant to this study. I start by describing foundational literature in student development theory, which relies heavily on developmental psychology (Evans, Forney, & Guido-DiBrito, 1998). College student development literature examines college students and their experiences through a variety of lenses in a variety of settings, much of which are beyond the scope of this study. However, I establish the foundations of the field. Additionally, I introduce literature on leadership theory and development in Chapter Two. Once I have established a basic foundation in leadership theory, I describe the emergent literature on student leadership programs on college and university campuses. Finally, I establish the gap in our current understandings of the programs I studied, and describe the conceptual framework of the study.

Chapter Three describes the methodology of this study in detail. In this chapter I discuss the methodological approach, research design, and rationale that best served the exploration of my research questions. I also discuss my role as researcher, and the methods I used to collect, code, and analyze the data. I include a discussion of Internal Review Board procedures related to this study and finally discuss the concept of trustworthiness.

Chapter Four contains a complete accounting of data collected. This chapter contains various artifacts consistent with my research methodology including interview transcripts and copies of documents from the various programs studied. In Chapter Four I present the data from each institution in case study format which will include specific sections on program structures and assessment and the ways that these impact and inform the programs. Finally, in Chapter Five I provide an analysis of relevant data as it relates to my research questions. The beginning of the chapter follows the case study format through analysis on program structures and assessment. Following those sections I present both data and analysis

through a grounded theory framework to explore the hallmarks of successful emerging leader programs. It is important to note that in the grounded theory portion of Chapter Five new data is presented; this is due specifically to the use of the constant comparative method which calls the researcher to interpret data as she or he collects it (Glaser & Strauss, 1999). I conclude with Chapter Six with a discussion of implications for leadership in education, a reexamination of my theoretical framework and suggestions for further study.

CHAPTER TWO

In this chapter I introduce foundational theories in student development. I then unpack in more detail leadership theory and reference research on first-year college students. By exploring literature surrounding leadership theories generally and first-year student development specifically, I intend to provide a space in which a theory of successful first-year co-curricular leader programs can emerge.

College Student Development Theory

Beginning in the mid-twentieth century, researchers began work to understand college students and their experiences better. The emergent research on college students borrowed heavily from the fields of sociology, industrial psychology, and developmental psychology. This work carries with it an underlying assumption that we should seek to understand students as whole people containing within them a wide variety of dimensions (Keeling, 2007), and that dichotomies between the heart and mind or self and intellect are constructs that seek to isolate parts of one's being that are inexorably connected. These theories are important to understand before we explore the theory base in the leadership field underpinning first-year leadership programs on college and university campuses. To effectively explore an advanced cognitive, ethical, and emotional concept like leadership, it is crucial to have a strong understanding of college student development theory.

Much work has been done to identify the ways in which students develop while in college, and the result of that work often has manifested as "stage theory." Generally, stage theories seek to explain various phases of development. Early efforts identified that students

generally traverse a cognitive trajectory that moves from dualistic thinking relying exclusively on childhood authorities into a stage of multiplicity in which conflicting authorities present different truths (Perry, 1970). As students move through multiplicity, they identify the tensions of competing narratives on the nature of our world and eventually move into a stage that Perry (1970) calls *relativism*. In this stage students begin to understand that some authorities may be better than others depending on the context. Perry also describes a stage called *commitment in relativism*, but suggests that few adults truly reach this stage of development, which is typified by people such as Mahatma Gandhi. In the wake of the Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1944, the women's liberation movement, and the civil rights movement, college campuses became increasingly diverse (Rentz, 1996). Perry's scheme of college student development drew criticism in the 1960s and 1970s, as the subjects in his study were almost exclusively white, male, upper-class students.

Throughout the 1970s and 1980s several researchers sought to understand the developmental trajectories of other under-represented college student groups. Work by Gilligan (1993) and others explored the development of female college students. Women in college experience transitions that are similar in theme yet differ significantly from their male counterparts; they traverse a trajectory that includes a move towards individual survival, during which individuals are self-centered and preoccupied with survival (Gilligan, 1993). The transition to individual survival gives way to a transition to responsibility and then to a stage that identifies goodness as self-sacrifice. During this stage women dwell within the paradox of self-determination and care for others and may give up their own judgment in order to achieve consensus and remain in connection with others, causing disequilibrium to arise over the issue of hurting others (Evans, Forney, & Guido-DiBrito,

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1998). Eventually, women experience a transition Gilligan calls *from goodness to truth*, during which women question why they have put the needs of others first, and decide to put individual needs on par with the needs of others. Finally, women will embrace the *morality of nonviolence*, through which they are elevated to the principle of care defined by a respect for self and understanding of personal power to navigate competing choices and competing moralities (Gilligan, 1993).

Specifically, an understanding of stage theories seeking to describe the experience of women in college will provide greater context through which we can better understand developmental needs that first-year leadership programs seek to address. Although the transitions differ slightly in tone, the themes of re-contextualizing authority in a way that progresses from external authorities to internal ones transcend gender lines. Generally, all students are facing the questions of young adulthood about personal identity, authority, and self.

Although not focused on college students, the *Center for Creative Leadership Handbook of Leadership Development* (Ruderman, 2004) suggests that there are several forces that shape women as leaders. There are five themes present in women's leadership development including authenticity, connection, agency, wholeness, and self-clarity (Ruderman, 2004). These themes are echoed thematically in the work of Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger, and Tarule (1997) who use the metaphor of voice to discuss developmental transitions from silence to voice to describe the experience of women. Their research was conducted in the 1980s and focused primarily on college women. This stage theory suggests that college women live in silence created by a male-dominated culture, but can then move into what is called *received knowledge*. In the received knowledge stage women who

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recognize paradoxes related to competing goods between self and others embrace concrete and dualistic thinking and have little confidence in their own voice, choosing instead to repeat the words of others. Women then generally proceed through what Belenky and associates (1997) call *subjective knowledge*, which is typified by a shift in authority from the external to the internal, into a stage called *procedural knowledge*. In procedural knowledge, women experience a rich connected way of knowing that is guided by empathy while incorporating listening and observing to allow what was once simple to become more complex. Finally, in this stage women embody constructed knowledge, which includes an integration of many aspects of self, comfort with ambiguity and a narrative sense of self. Although I will not be studying single-gender groups, I believe that an understanding of gender identity as a part of the student development experience is important for this study, as I suspect the programs I will be studying will have participants of multiple genders.

Additional research has emerged to describe many aspects of personality operating in the lives of college students such as racial identity, gender identity, sexual orientation, spiritual identity, socio-economic identity, and ability/disability identity among others (Evans, Forney, & Guido-DiBrito, 1998). Although for a time it was generally accepted that students sought autonomy from family and other support systems as they entered college, students with strong ethnic family ties, commuter students, and students with little or no family connection may have different experiences (Chickering & Reisser, 1993). Generally speaking, however, theorists in these areas identify the struggles of members of these various groups in understanding and integrating various aspects of their identity in a search for wholeness. The difference in environment, loss of past social networks and the lack of understanding of new social structures make the first year of college a particularly acute

time of transition for college students (Peraza, 2004), that brings into focus, often for the first time, identity issues among college students relating to race, socio-economic status, ability status and other aspects of self.

There is debate as to whether students necessarily experience all stages described in the literature and whether there can be non-sequential movement between and among stages (Evans, Forney, & Guido-DiBrito, 1998). Earlier stage theories were understood by most to be linear and sequential. Many theories describing various under-represented college student populations are less linear than the more conventional theories. For example, various stages of development experienced by members of the gay and lesbian community may over-lap one another, and in some cases people may re-traverse less-complex stages that they had grown beyond even years before (D'Augelli & Patterson, 1995).

Although different developmental theories hold that students experience stages in a linear fashion and others indicate a more multi-phase experience, it is generally accepted that as college students persist, their ability to engage and develop grows in complexity (Evans, Forney, & Guido-DiBrito, 1998). In other words the most significant work in college student development theory suggests that, in most cases, the ways students think, make meaning and understand themselves and the world will become more complex over time. This idea makes developing first-year leadership programs challenging, as it is critical to teach critical leadership theories in ways that are developmentally appropriate for student participants.

Leadership Theory

Leadership theory has evolved over the last several decades and is "complex, socially constructed, and continually evolving" (Komives et al., 2011, p. 36). Theories have grown out of various disciplines including industrial psychology. These are sometimes referred to as industrial or conventional theories and include ideas like trait-based, behavioral, situational, and expectancy-based theories (Northouse, 2010). Trait-based theories of leadership emerged in the wake of the industrial revolution and maintained remnants of classism that celebrated aristocracy and royalty. Trait-based leadership theories posited that leadership is a series of traits with which people are born possessing or not possessing. Unfortunately these theories developed out of an attempt to catalog the traits of leaders, most of whom were white, male, upper class, heterosexual and able-bodied. As the shortcomings of trait theory became apparent the theoretical base shifted to one of behavior-based leadership (Komives, Lucas, & McMahon, 2006).

The idea undergirding behavior-based leadership is that leadership can be described as a set of behaviors, thus defining leadership as a set of actions and not inborn traits. This was an important theoretical step forward and made space for understandings of the differences between autocratic, democratic, laissez-faire, and consensus based approaches (Komives et al., 2011). Although these ideas represent more adaptable and accessible forms of leadership than trait-leadership theories, they are still leader-centric, and tend to reduce leadership to a metaphorical recipe that anyone can follow. These theories support the belief that if someone can exhibit certain behaviors, he or she will be a leader. This set of theories still pervades much of the popular discourse on leadership as typified by books like *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People: Powerful Lessons in Personal Change* (Covey, 2004) and

The 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership: Follow Them and People Will Follow You

(Maxwell, 2007). These behavior-based leadership guides fail to take into account the

diversity among aspiring leaders in learning style, perceptual preferences and decision-

making preferences. Additionally, this kind of thinking relies heavily on a power dynamic

that carries with it an implicit over-emphasis on the goals of the leader without thought to

greater contexts such as that of mutual benefit.

Post-industrial leadership theories took a paradigmatic turn towards themes of

transformational influence, authenticity, complexity, relationship, and reciprocity

(Northouse, 2010). Transformational leadership differentiates between mutually beneficial

relationship-driven leadership and transactional leadership, the latter of which is typified by

negotiation and exchange. Although this theory does introduce followers as a significant

factor in leadership, the focus is still leader-centric (Komives et al., 2011).

Another post-industrial set of theories are those that include adaptive and complexity

theories. These theories suggest that leadership is best understood as part of a system, on

multiple levels and in multiple ways (Heifetz & Linsky, 2002) and that sometimes these

systems can be understood as living ecologies (Senge, 2006). In other words, the actions of

leaders and followers within a setting impact each other and the environment in such a way

that they must be understood in the context of the setting, rather than simply through a lens

focused on the traits or behaviors of those involved.

The Leadership Challenge

The *Leadership Challenge* contains an accompanying theory of leadership

established by Kouzes and Posner (2002). This theory grows from the behavior-based school

of leadership thought while also incorporating post-industrial aspects such as relationship-

based, authentic and ecology-oriented leadership. The leadership challenge is popular among college leadership educators (Komives et al., 2011), and thus deserves some special attention. As I have been exposed to various leadership programs throughout the professional career, I have seen this model referenced by fellow practitioners as much as any other leadership model. The theory involves five processes in which individuals and groups can engage in an effort to foster leadership development (Kouzes & Posner, 2002). The first of these processes is called *model the way*, which is the process through which leaders engage in personal value clarification. The authors suggest that this process should include both listening to the voices of leaders we respect, and then in turn speaking our voice through the lens of our values. This internal work can be manifested in formal personal mission statements or credos, and may also be typified by continued reflective practice.

The second process is to *inspire a shared vision*. This process challenges leaders to imagine exciting and ennobling possibilities while engaging others in the process. Kouzes and Posner (2002) suggest that to engage in imagining possibilities, one must engage both present-oriented leaders, or tactical leaders, and also future-oriented leaders, which they call strategic leaders. Engaging multiple leaders through the process is an important practice through which a group can establish a shared sense of destiny. They suggest that a vision is "inclusive of constituents' aspirations; it's an ideal and unique image of the future for the common good" (Kouzes & Posner, 2002, p. 143). This understanding of vision in a leadership setting makes a stand in that it supports the notion that a leadership vision must be reciprocal, positive, and relational.

The third component of the leadership challenge is *challenging the process*. This aspect of leadership includes themes around internal motivation, asking questions

concerning why things work as they do, looking outward for ideas and seeking and creating meaning in the work of everyone involved in a team (Kouzes & Posner, 2002). Examples of this kind of leadership work in practice include things like cross-function and cross-industry idea migration and crowd-sourcing. Guiding questions for a team engaged in this form of leadership would include lifting ideas used in one setting or industry and adapting it for a present but unrelated setting.

The fourth part of the leadership challenge is about *enabling others to act*. This is more than a simple lesson on effective management and delegation but rather a way of establishing a climate and setting conducive to collaboration. Kouzes and Posner (2002) suggest that to foster collaboration leaders should "create a climate of trust, facilitate positive interdependence *and* [*sic*] support face-to-face interactions" (p. 243). This draws heavily from the adaptive leadership theories in that the organization of a system drives and supports a process. In other words, this part of the process may occur as leaders and followers work together to establish systems, norms, and practices that are conducive to collaboration.

The final process of Kouzes and Posner's theory is to *encourage the heart*. This aspect of the model intersects postindustrial and feminist leadership in that it emphasizes the relational but also goes further to feature suggestions about personalizing authentic ways of thanking members of a team. Kouzes and Posner (2002) suggest that this final process of the leadership challenge also closes the loop and reconnects with shared values and vision.

The leadership challenge theory is a strong theoretical framework for student leadership in a college setting, but the application of this theory in a leadership setting lends itself more to positional leadership roles. Specifically, the assessments accompanying the

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book, *The Leadership Challenge,* are designed to be completed by individuals reflecting on their practices in a particular leadership role. As I'll discuss in the conceptual framework section, the emerging leader programs I studied in this project are open to students who may or may not already serve in formal campus leadership roles.

Although this framework targets leaders already serving in formal leadership positions, and the programs explored in this study target first-year students irrespective of formal leadership roles, it is still an important theory to understand as it frames a great deal of practice in student leadership development. In the absence of models specifically designed for emerging leader programs, understanding the Kouzes and Posner framework can provide some background on the operant theories in student leadership development.

The Social Change Model

The *Social Change Model* of leadership (SCM) was established specifically for college student populations by a group of leadership scholars and educators facilitated by Alexander and Helen Astin (1996). This model approaches leadership as a purposeful, values-based collaborative process that results in positive social change. The SCM suggests that leadership is inherently tied to social responsibility and manifested in creating change for the common good (Higher Education Research Institute, University of California, 1996). Additionally the model is built on the idea that individuals will increase self-knowledge and the capacity to work collaboratively with others. This aspect of the SCM is consistent with the foundational research in student development theory in that it is predicated on the idea that students will traverse a trajectory of increasing complexity while in college.

The social change model incorporates eight values grouped into three categories. The first three values, considered individual values, are as follows: (a) the consciousness of self,

(b) congruence, and (c) commitment (Higher Education Research Institute, University of California, 1996). These values are typified by the ability to be self-aware "of beliefs, values, attitudes, and emotions that motivate one to take action. Acting in ways that are consistent with one's values and beliefs… and [*sic*] … Having significant investment in a person or idea, both in terms of intensity and duration" (Dugan & Komives, 2011, p. 46). This trajectory echoes the themes presented in several of the stage theories discussed earlier in this chapter. The second set of values is described as group values and includes the ideas of collaboration, common purpose, and controversy with civility. The ideas central to this set of values are that leaders will work with others and that through sharing responsibility, authority, and accountability leaders will move toward an understanding of shared vision. Additionally, the framework of controversy with civility harkens to complex competencies discussed by stage theorists typified by a respect for varying opinions and respect for other people. The final two values belong to a category called community values and include citizenship and change.

Although these final values categorically fit into community values, Susan Komives and associates (2011) suggest that the first seven values across all three categories contribute to the eighth value. Thus, in some sense, change is considered to be the hub of the model, as illustrated in Figure 2.1.
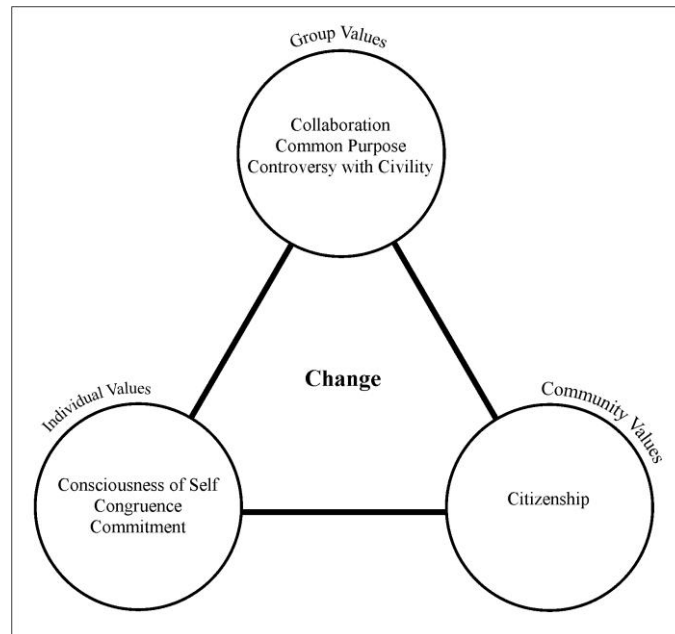
Figure 2.1. Social Change Leadership Model. (Adapted from Astin & Astin, 1996).

The social change model of leadership development is the most applied leadership theory in the context of college and university leadership programs (Owen, 2008). The social change model of leadership is ideal as a frame for understanding emerging leader programs in that many of the values implicit in the model meet the specific needs of first-year students (Astin & Astin, 1996)**.** In a way the developmental underpinnings of the social change model of leadership capitalize on and understanding of college student development theory, while also illuminating that the best way to promote development is to create an environment that engages students through values.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for this study will be grounded in both student development theory and leadership development theory. Through an exploration of the practices, assessment data, participant experiences, and organizational structures using the constant comparative method, my plan is that a theory illuminating hallmarks of successful first-year co-curricular leadership programs will emerge. Figure 2.2 illustrates in part the framework through which the study will be conducted.
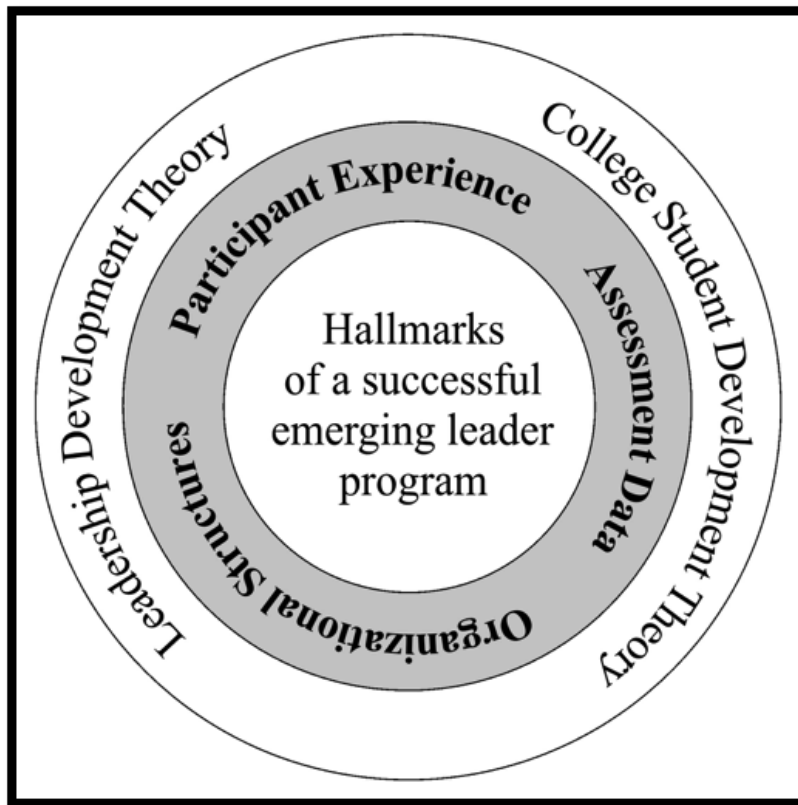
Figure 2.2. Theoretical Framework

This dissertation seeks to find hallmarks of effective emerging leader programs through the lenses of college student development theory and leadership development theory. The grounded theory part of this study will draw heavily from the conceptual framework illustrated above as I examine all of the data through the lenses of the two bodies

of theory. In other words, the various artifacts, interview transcripts and other data are moved from the outer circle to the inner circle of the diagram interpreted through the constant comparative method which I discuss at length in Chapter Three.

CHAPTER THREE

In this chapter I will begin by briefly introducing qualitative inquiry, case study, and grounded theory. Throughout the chapter I will discuss the ways in which these methodologies and associated approaches will serve to best explore my research questions. Specifically, I rely heavily on the case study portion of my methodology to explore the ways assessment data and organizational structures inform and impact emerging leader programs. Both the case study methodology and grounded theory methodology speak to the broader research question concerning the hallmarks of successful emerging leader programs.

Methodology

This study will use qualitative inquiry in a mixed methods approach including both multiple case study and grounded theory. Qualitative inquiry has a distinct role in the research landscape (Merriam, 1998). To understand something qualitatively means to explore the depth and complexity of a problem. Qualitative research explores context, richness of experience, and perspectives of phenomena. When dealing with studies about people and the systems of which they are part, qualitative inquiry seeks to understand the experience of participants in their own words (Glesne, 2006). This form of inquiry may illuminate ideas that were not part of the researcher's original thesis and may lead to other understandings of a phenomenon, the context or even suggest the study of different phenomena. This kind of research can explore nuance and complexity in ways that are almost impossible for quantitative studies. To explore and understand hallmarks of successful first-year co-curricular leadership programs I needed various forms of data, much

of which can be most appropriately examined through qualitative study. For example, certain interviews with participants in emerging leader programs contain a great deal of nuance and context that would be particularly difficult to quantify. To understand the foundations of each program I conducted a thorough analysis of artifacts and documentation. I collected formal statements issued by the offices and departments that sponsor these programs. Additionally, to understand these programs I reviewed training manuals, statements of philosophy, and other artifacts including lesson plans, meeting schedules, recruitment materials.

To understand the relationships that connect program structures, assessment and hallmarks of success with the program, I needed to conduct interviews with several constituent groups. Primarily these constituents include those charged with the facilitation of the program, and those who have participated in the program. It was critical to interview people with different kinds of connections to each program to understand their perspectives on the role of assessment, structures and then more broadly to understand the hallmarks of successful programs, but even more crucial was the fact that the relationships between these program aspects was illuminated throughout and in between the interviews. In other words, the broader picture of how organizational structures may impact hallmarks was illuminated by fragments of different interviews from different perspectives. My interview protocols are included in Appendix A. The complexity of the relationships between the various aspects suggests not only that this study be qualitative but more specifically that it should employ the use of multiple case study. Specifically multi-case study aids in understanding the role of assessment and program structures in this study as those aspects are unique to each case. In

other words, the programs I studied do not use the same assessment tool, but rather each has a distinct method for determining program success.

Similarly, program structures varied between institutions. This variance included similar offices with slightly different names and missions, for example University of South Florida's program is housed in the Center for Leadership and Civic Engagement, whereas Emory University's program was housed in the Office of Student Leadership and Service. These two offices shared much in common, but were also different in many ways, including the structure and focus of the emerging leader programs they host. Howard University's program, in contrast, is housed in an executive-level office. The fact that the programs I am studying fit the three criteria of my study (co-curricular, non-credit bearing, non-positional) but that there are significant variances in assessment and structure makes a multi-case study approach ideal.

Case Study and Multi Case Study

Case study as a specific form of qualitative research is different from other forms such as life history and grounded theory in that it seeks an understanding of an integrated system (Glesne, 2006). Case study is particularly well suited to understand a particular program that may exhibit unique characteristics due to context. According to Merriam (1998), "…in education case studies are ethnographic evaluations, program descriptions, historical interpretations, sociological studies, and so on" (1998, p. 40). The various aspects of a program exist in a system that may be indistinguishable from the program itself. For example, some colleges may refer to their program as the *emerging leaders program*, and those who facilitate the program may refer to the participants as *emerging leaders*. Student participants may regularly use words like "going to emerging leaders" to describe their

participation. The program goals, the organizational context of the program, the way in which it is delivered, the people facilitating it, and the student participants are all part of a system. Each aspect of the system maintains a perspective on the system that is unique, and can even change over time.

Case study research is appropriate when the subjects and elements at the heart of the study are bound within a single system (Miles & Huberman, 1994), as well as in the context of that system, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident (Yin, 2009). That system likely includes everything from the reasons that led to the creation of the program through every practical aspect of the program including the following: selection and recruitment of participants; participant experience; program and learning outcomes; assessment plans; and results. Most people claiming to have an understanding of a program have a basic understanding of the main aspects of the program and the way those aspects relate to each other through the lens of their experience.

In this study, the emerging leader programs are each situated in unique contexts that include the program design, delivery, assessment, participant experience, organizational context, and foundations. Choosing to study how these aspects interact within emerging leader programs blurs the lines between each of the aspects and the whole of the program. There may be variations between and among the programs examined in this study, thus initially I conducted a case study of each program. To effectively study several related cases, I employed the use of multi-case study.

Multi case study involves multiple cases or subcases embedded within a single area of study (Merriam, 1998). In this study, the connective tissue between the various cases will be an ongoing systematic analysis of the data collected within each case. In order to develop

deeper understandings of the data between cases I used a grounded theory approach. Grounded theory is an effective means of understanding the ongoing systematic analysis of data as it emerges throughout the course of a study (Glaser & Strauss, 1999).

Grounded Theory

Grounded theory is the emergence of a theory through systematically obtained data to provide researchers with relevant predictions, explanations, interpretations and applications (Glaser & Strauss, 1999). Although many research models seek to test a theory, grounded theory uses a variety of methods to discover theory through engaged research. One such model of grounded theory discovery is the constant comparative method, which compares incidents applicable to several categories, integrates categories and their properties, delimits the theory, and finally writes the theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1999). Embedded within this approach is a natural triangulation and re-triangulation of data. Grounded theory method consists of "systematic, yet flexible guidelines for collecting and analyzing qualitative data to construct theories 'grounded' in the data themselves" (Charmaz, 2006, p. 2). In other words, as I collect data, I compare those data to the theoretical frameworks related to leadership development and first-year programming to create a new framework in which a new theory can develop.

Part of the reason that this methodology is particularly well situated to address my research questions is that there is a gap in both research and theory on first-year co-curricular leadership programs. Research exists on the developmental needs of first-year students (Schreiner & Pattengale, 2000), leadership theory and even leadership programs generally (Komives, et al., 2011). Stepping into this gap, however, requires a flexible and emergent approach that is shaped throughout the process by data as they are collected. The

literature on leadership programs and my professional experience will naturally shape an initial strategy for systematically studying the programs I identify, as reflected in my research questions, but my design must leave significant space for unanticipated aspects, categories or features that appear along the way.

Although I will discuss my role as the researcher in more depth in subsequent sections, grounded theory work required a great deal of reflection on my part. According to Charmaz (2006):

> Grounded theory methods foster seeing your data in fresh ways and exploring your ideas about the data through early analytic writing. By adopting grounded theory methods you can direct, manage, and streamline your data collection and, moreover, construct an original analysis of your data (p.2).

I remained both systematic and vigilant throughout the process, reflecting regularly on the data and remaining open to new questions borne through the process. This analysis regularly caused me to check back in with the various theoretical models of student development, leadership theory, and first-year student needs to identify touchstones against and through which new theories could emerge. In addition to checking new data against this set of related theories, it was also important to check data gathered within a certain setting with data from other settings in the study.

Research Design

Sampling

For this study I used purposeful sampling to identify three emerging leaders programs at four-year colleges or universities. As little formal research has been conducted on first-year, co-curricular emerging leader programs, selecting participants presented a

challenge. There is not a well-established basis in the literature about what constitutes a successful emerging leaders program or even what constitutes best practices. The multi-institutional survey conducted by the National Clearinghouse for Leadership Programs (NCLP) provides a significant data set. Unfortunately, limited participant response prevents the NCLP from sharing participants as institutions would be immediately identifiable, which violates the protections granted to the participating institutions by the primary researcher (J. Owen, personal communication, April 30, 2013).

The 2008 report from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation identifies several hallmarks of effective leadership programs (Zimmerman-Oster & Burkhardt, 1999b). Although this study did not specifically identify first-year, co-curricular, non-positional emerging leader programs, some of the leadership programs it highlighted as successful have emerging leader programs embedded in a larger suite of programmatic offerings. Additionally, the characteristics of a successful leadership program described in the *CAS Professional Standards for Higher Education* (Dean, 2009) provide insight on characteristics typical of leadership programs in general. Finally, *The Handbook for Student Leadership Development* (Komives et al., 2011) provides not only characteristics of successful leadership programs, but also a framework for discussing leadership programs generally and broad categorization language to aid in discussing co-curricular emerging leader programs specifically. Later in this chapter I will explain how I used these frameworks to select participants in the absence of established criteria for successful emerging leader programs.

Role of the Researcher

As primary researcher, my role was to collect all data, conduct interviews, and code data in order to perform necessary analyses (Charmaz, 2006). In this role, I constantly

compared data and reflected on the ways in which the data intersected with the theoretical

lenses I identified in this study.

In qualitative research, the researcher is the research instrument (Merriam, 1998).

Through engagement in grounded theory I worked hard to remain aware of assumptions

borne of my personal experiences with first-year co-curricular leadership programs and to be

explicit about how these assumptions may be affecting the way I collected and interpreted

data. I also endeavored to continually process data through the lenses of the theoretical

foundations described in this study. I engaged in this work systematically by recording field

notes, pre-coding data and writing reflective journals. My field notes and journal entries are

part of the data of the study.

Data Sources

The data sources in this project began with published external and unpublished

internal documents about each program. This included the following sources: websites,

promotional materials, mission statements of hosting departments, program mission

statements, stated program goals, curricula, program schedules, assessment plans,

assessment results and any other materials relevant to this study. These artifacts shaped the

way that I explored other aspects of each program. Figure 3.1 shows all of the data sources I

received from each institution. The programs in this study maintain many different kinds of

program materials, and some of the program materials did not speak directly to my research

questions. I did examine these other sources such as retreat planning lists, which contained

lists of items students should bring to the retreat, and also sources like the liability waivers.

Although these data sources did not directly shed light on my research questions, they did

provide additional context that helped me understand the culture of the programs.

Additionally, it is important to note that in a few instances I interviewed people who were former program participants but may have also served as a program facilitator. In those instances in which participants fit both categories they are included below as program affiliates.

Data Source	University of South Florida	Howard University	Emory University
Participant/former participant interviews	8	7	6
Program affiliate interviews (center directors, student facilitators, professional facilitators etc.)	3	4	3
Assessment reports	2		
Program pamphlets	1	1	1
Application materials		1	
Lesson plans/activity descriptions	4		1
Posters and other promotional material			1
Facilitator learning agreement/outcomes	1		1
Retreat planning list	2		1
Facilitator guides and materials			
Participant liability waiver	1		
Participant selection interview materials	2		

Figure 3.1 Table of data sources

I discovered several unique program aspects that I had not anticipated that required explorations in the interviews that were not originally included in my original protocol (see Appendix A). One of these unique aspects was my observation of several intercultural presentations at Howard University during a luncheon. The substance of these presentations most certainly influenced my understanding of that program, but I did not have a methodological plan to capture this data. Another important data source is the interviews and interview transcripts. The interview data is the most robust form of data in this study, as it describes the emerging leader programs from the perspective of those who participate in it.

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Finally, my reflections on the interviews serve as an additional data source as I engaged in reflective comparison of the various aspects of the different programs. My original intent was that by employing the constant comparison of the data I collected to the theoretical lenses I have discussed and to other sets and forms of data, a theory of emerging leader programs would emerge.

Data Collection

I collected data in three primary forms. The first form of data involved published documents and artifacts of the programs I studied. Additionally, I collected available assessment data on the programs in the study. These data were identified by purpose of the material and coded accordingly.

The second form of data emerged from transcripts of the interviews I conducted. These transcripts were coded to identify themes necessary for examination through the constant comparative method as described earlier in this chapter. Through the constant comparative method, I coded some data as they emerged in ways that related back to the bodies of theory described in this study. This happened primarily through field notes and reflective journals. The final source of data involved the emergent themes that have grown out of the other two data sets while they were compared regularly to the theoretical backgrounds I discussed in Chapter Two. This data set contains themes gleaned from the coding of the first two data sets and reflections based on reflections specifically inspired by the intersection of the coded themes with existent theories.

I followed the interview questions described in my methodology, and occasionally asked additional clarifying questions. I asked the current and former student directors all of the questions designed for participants as well as those designed for other program affiliates

(see Appendix A). Part of why I used the language "other program affiliates" is because I could not have anticipated the various models and what kinds of students, paraprofessional, graduate students or professionals might be involved in facilitating the program.

Participants and Participant Selection

The participants in this study included three first-year co-curricular leadership programs, and ten people affiliated with each program, five of whom were participants or former participants. I received an informed consent form from program directors at two of the three programs in the study allowing me to use the program name; for the other institution I will use a pseudonym. Additionally, because each of these programs includes individuals, such as program facilitators and participants, I provided a separate informed consent form (see Appendix B) to each interviewee. As structures for these programs varied, my interviewees were in one of two broad categories. The first category was composed of participants, which included anyone currently or formerly participating in the program as a student. The second category I called *affiliates*, which included other people with a direct connection to the program; this category was mostly comprised of staff members but also included some student directors who also fit the participant category.

Participant selection was one of the most problematic parts of this study. I established a small panel of experts in the field of student leadership development and first-year student programs. I selected six experts in consultation with my dissertation committee, paying close attention to authors of significant publications in student leadership development and first-year student development. Five of the six experts responded to my request. Those who responded were Susan Komives, Darin Eich, Mario Peraza, Kathleen Zimmerman-Oster and Corey Seemiller. I sent each of these panelists a proposal abstract of

my study and then asked for recommendations of institutions with the desired programs. Additionally, I did an internet search of all campus-based leadership programs researched in the W.K. Kellogg Foundation 1998 study to determine which, if any, of these programs contained first-year co-curricular leadership programs. I used this list as though it was from an additional expert and compared it to the lists received from the panelists. By asking these experts to independently identify strong first-year, co-curricular leadership programs I was hoping to identify overlapping recommendations. Although three institutions were mentioned by more than one expert, none of them host a program that fit the specific criteria of my study. This supports the idea that first-year, co-curricular, non-positional emerging leader programs are not well established in the literature or in the minds of scholars in the field of student leadership development.

My list contained thirty-nine colleges and universities. Nine of the institutions on my list hosted programs that fit one or two of my criteria. Several of these programs were also open to sophomores. Three of these programs took place during the summer prior to students' arrival as enrolled students in a *premester* format. Although these premester offerings seemed very similar to the programs I intended to study, the students were not yet enrolled in their respective colleges and universities. One of the theoretical lenses I have used through the grounded theory portion of this study is reliant on research conducted on college freshmen, thus connections to the experiences of students who are not yet enrolled in their first year of college would be difficult to draw.

After an exhaustive internet search and several phone calls made to the various institutions on the list, I determined that ten of the recommended institutions host co-curricular, non-positional, first-year emerging leader programs. Nine of these ten institutions

were research institutions, and the tenth was a liberal arts college. Although this study is not quantitative, and thus did not require that participating institutions fit similar categories, in consultation with my dissertation chair I eliminated the liberal arts college from the list of institutions I invited to participate in the study. If the final ten institutions had been split more evenly between liberal arts colleges and research universities, or if there had been several masters-comprehensive universities on this list, I would not have eliminated this college from my invitation list, but instead sought institutional diversity.

I invited the programs housed at the nine research institutions to participate in the dissertation. Five of those nine institutions responded that they would be willing to participate in the study. Those institutions were Florida State University, Rutgers University, University of South Florida, Howard University, and Emory University. My methodology required me to study three different institutions, so I had to choose three of these five. I considered two potential paths. First I considered trying to select institutions that were as similar as possible. As Florida State University, Rutgers University, and The University of South Florida are all large, public, and predominantly white institutions I considered this as a possible way of selecting my final three institutions. My second option was to seek the most institutional diversity possible. I realized that including Howard University in the study would add depth as it was the only historically African-American serving institution among my finalists. In consultation with my chair, I chose to seek as much diversity in the study as possible and therefore selected The University of South Florida (the most diverse of the predominantly white institutions on my final list), Howard University, and Emory University. In addition to racial diversity, two of these institutions are private universities, and they all vary in size of student body.

Of the three programs I studied, one has only existed for five years, and another has existed for more than twenty years but has changed dramatically in delivery format. It seems that a lack of formal assessment within these programs, and the shifting landscape of their structures may present challenges for identifying their existence. My personal experience corroborates this, as at each of my last three institutions there were emerging leader programs that are now defunct. Two of those three emerging leader programs would have fit the criteria of my study.

Trustworthiness

There is no single way to insure validity in a qualitative study, and even the view that a method could ensure validity is a remnant of early forms of positivism (Maxwell, 2005). In quantitative research the idea of validity relies heavily on the degree to which a study can test a hypothesis and stand up to validity threats. Examples of these threats include rival hypotheses or ways of explaining phenomena that differ from the researcher's hypothesis. Researchers seek to reduce validity threats by including processes like using randomizing samples or control groups. Conversely qualitative researchers:

> …rarely have the benefit of previously planned comparisons, sampling strategies, or statistical manipulations that "control for" plausible threats, and must try to rule out most validity threats after the research has begun, using evidence collected during the research itself to make these "alternative hypotheses" implausible. (Maxwell, 2005, p. 107)

Joseph Maxwell (2005) identifies two specific threats to validity in qualitative studies: researcher bias and reactivity. Researcher bias concerns the theories and beliefs embedded in the perceptual lens of the person conducting the research. It is impossible to

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eliminate all researcher bias. To the contrary, systematic use of the constant-comparative

method within a grounded theory framework relies heavily on the exploration of theories

and beliefs of the researcher. Thus the exploration of these perspectives reframes what

could be considered a threat to validity as a natural part of the process worthy of exploration

and documentation throughout the research process. In an effort to reduce reactivity I

constructed most of my interview questions as open-ended questions. Reactivity is a

phenomenon during which research participants try to answer questions in a way that meets

the interviewer's expectations. Open ended questions can reduce the likelihood of reactivity

as they do not contain cues about what kind of answer the researcher is seeking.

Researcher's Relationship with the Data

For this study, I examined artifacts that included websites, program pamphlets,

training manuals, program outcome descriptions, program assessment reports, program

schedules, and activity descriptions. Many of these artifacts are unpublished program

materials. As part of my data collection and analysis, I included my reflective journals, field

notes, interview transcripts, and interview notes.

For clarity, I will present the case study for each program and discuss the associated

data pertinent to my research questions on assessment and organizational structures. The

research question concerning the hallmarks of successful programs is addressed in Chapter

Five. Chapter Five contains the grounded theory analysis that relies heavily on the

conceptual framework represented in Figure 2.2 to incorporate understandings gleaned from

the multi-case study through the broader theoretical lenses of leadership theory and college

student development theory.

The mixing of methods occurred primarily as I engaged in the grounded theory analysis discussed in Chapter Five. Grounded theory, a distinct methodology, requires use of reflective journals, field notes, and interview data. The case study construction serves as scaffolding for the process. In other words to engage in grounded theory around a phenomenon, a certain amount of study of the case is critical, thus there are elements of case study embedded in grounded theory. After I completed the case studies I carefully reconsidered my constant-comparative notes and data, which included data from the case studies. In some ways, I found value in completing case studies at this depth to engage in grounded theory, which allowed me to establish a basic understanding of the phenomena being studied.

Simply, I engaged in the constant comparative method throughout the entirety of data collection and analysis and then introduced the process through narrative following review of the case study. In a way, I have been maintaining two relationships with the data. The first relationship is the constant comparative one, which called me to examine everything I read and hear to find evidence of its connection to the two bodies of theory established for this study. This has been a long relationship and became quite natural for me as regular analysis of data through these theoretical lenses appeared consistent with my professional practice. My work in student affairs regularly requires me to listen to students' experiences while simultaneously examining their language through multiple theoretical lenses. The constant nature of this process is still present through the writing of these chapters. In some senses the data presentation and analysis in written form creates new data points to compare.

My second relationship with the data became one in which I tried my best to hold all assumptions as tentative. This relationship is obvious through evidence of my intensive coding, reflection and re-coding of data as I carefully considered my assumptions. This process has involved a series of sweeps through the data to try to discern themes that may be present with no specific thought given to any lens other than the stated purpose of the program. In other words, each case defines its own parameters in this form of understanding the data. This second relationship with the data supported the majority of my multi-case study work, as my only point of comparison for data became the existence of the program and its stated mission. Although the constant comparison method did help me understand the cases at times, particularly as it related to the intersection of structures and leadership learning goals, It is worth noting that this was not the primary driver of the case studies.

My examination sought to demonstrate in a concrete way the manner in which the constant comparison of data through the two theoretical lenses of this study guided understanding of the research questions. This was particularly useful as I discussed the data collected through interviews, as throughout the interview process I took notes as I heard words and phrases that related neatly to the two bodies of research in my conceptual framework. Additionally, as I coded the interview transcripts I also coded for each of these bodies of research.

I will present each of the three programs as a case study. I will begin each case study by describing my experience with the institution and program. Then I will share a brief summary of the program by referencing data collected through artifacts such as training manuals, statements of philosophy, lesson plans, meeting schedules, recruitment materials and others relevant material. After I present each case, I will draw attention to various

program aspects and draw some comparisons between the programs as they relate to my research questions.

As I present the data, I will differentiate between themes and evidence of theory. Through the coding process several themes emerged from the interview data. Coding is a common way of managing large amounts of data that assigns "short-hand designation to various aspects of your data so that you can easily retrieve specific pieces of data" (Merriam, p. 164, 1998). Although connections to student development theory and leadership theory also emerged from the interview data, I have treated them differently from the themes discovered through the coding of the data and discuss those in Chapter Five as part of my data analysis. The presence of these theories differs from the themes I have identified in a few ways. First, through the constant comparative method, I have been actively seeking evidence of these two bodies of research throughout my study. This differs from themes that emerge through the data as I read and re-read the transcripts, field notes and artifacts in search of themes that I had not yet named. In other words, my second relationship with the data was one in which I did not begin looking for themes until my data collection was complete.

Secondly, the presence of student development theory and leadership theory may be present in how students talk, though they may not use specific language or name them in the course of answering questions. In other words, the themes that emerge in the interviews stem directly from their own experience and the words they choose to use to describe those experiences. It was essential to listen carefully to their answers as their language may contain elements that suggest a connection to the theoretical lenses used in this study. For example, one participant explained that the program helped him find "…who I am on

campus. I wanted to be an architect and an audiologist and all that. After gaining those

personal developmental development skills I got I realized that I was just doing it for the

title" (Interviewee five, personal communication, September 23, 2014). This quote can be

examined through several lenses including the area of student development theory called

identity theory (Evans et al., 1998) as the student discusses who he is on campus. Or the

quote could be examined through the perspective of *career fit theory* (Swanson & Fouad,

1999) because the student referenced a shift in attitudes about personal career aspirations.

Additionally, the quote speaks to a potential shift in understanding of leadership theory that

differentiates titular leadership from other forms of leadership like influence-based

leadership, servant-leadership or social-change leadership. Thus quotes like this one may

provide substance for the grounded theory portion of my study as they intersect with student

development theory and leadership theory. Additionally I examined all of the interview

transcripts in the context of each case where I found other themes present around areas like

skill development or self-reflection, which play a more central role in my presentation of the

case study data.

CHAPTER FOUR: THE FINDINGS

In this chapter I will present the data from this study as it relates to the multi-case study methodology presented in Chapter Three. I present each program as a case, drawing particular attention to program structures and assessment. I will present additional data that are specifically relevant to interpretation through grounded theory in Chapter Five. Specifically, the split in data presentation between Chapter Four and Chapter Five is due to the particular form of grounded theory data collection used in the study, which is the constant comparative method. As I collected data, I examined each aspect and analyzed it through the theoretical lenses of college student development theory and leadership theory. Therefore, the presentation of data relevant to the grounded theory part of this study has been connected to my analysis since I began collecting it, and I will present the data and analysis together.

The Case of University of South Florida's Emerging Leader Institute

The University of South Florida, part of the Florida state university system, is a research university serving more than 46,000 students. The university serves a student population that is predominantly white but is among the more diverse predominantly white institutions in the United States with 40% of entering freshman in 2014 reported as non-white (University of South Florida, USF System Facts: 2014b). The university website explains that the University of South Florida is:

…a high-impact, global research university located in beautiful Tampa Bay on

Florida's spectacular west coast. It is one of the largest public universities in the

nation, and among the top 50 universities, public or private, for federal research

expenditures. The university is one of only four Florida public universities classified

by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching in the top tier of

research universities, a distinction attained by only 2.3% of all universities. (USF,

2014a)

The Emerging Leader Institute at the University of South Florida engages sixty

aspiring freshman leaders each year. The purpose of the Emerging Leader Institute is:

…to take first year students on a weekend retreat to cultivate their capacity and

aspiration for leadership. Recognizing the power of peer education, established

student leaders are selected to serve as the institute's facilitators in order to present

and guide the curriculum. (*Emerging Leaders Institute Program Description*, p. 1)

The program also explicitly references the Social Change Model of Leadership

Development (Astin & Astin, 1996) as foundational to its mission.

I arrived at the University of South Florida on the morning of Tuesday, September

23, 2014. As I entered the student union building I was struck by the size and scope. It had

been a long time since I had visited a campus that serves as many students as the University

of South Florida. Interestingly, as I entered the building from the north, I immediately saw

the Center for Leadership and Civic Engagement, which is the office that sponsors the

program I came to research. Having studied the intentional design of educational spaces, I

saw many symbols of design that I perceived as student-centered. There were signs helping

people navigate the building, several student union staff members at a prominently featured information desk, large open spaces, ample seating in large common areas as well as tucked away in various nooks and corners. I entered the Center for Leadership and Civic Engagement and found the center's director. He was welcoming and engaging. He offered to start the day by giving me a tour of the building. As we toured, I asked him questions about the structure of the student affairs division and the various functional areas. Through this informal conversation it became clear to me that within the last decade there had been a shift towards specialization at the university. Many campus student affairs divisions have become increasingly specialized, but a great deal of this specialization happened through the latter half of the twentieth century (Rentz, 1996). Apparently, many of the traditional student affairs functions had been coordinated through a shared office of generalists, but over the span of the past few years have become organized as distinct units to support functions like campus activities, leadership and service, fraternity and sorority life and others. The director also explained to me that the University of South Florida was the seventh most diverse predominantly white institution in the United States. My observations of campus throughout my visit and data presented on the university website supported this claim. During my various breaks throughout the day I visited other buildings and areas on campus including the campus bookstore, and also a courtyard with statues of the university's mascot, the bull, and decorative water fountains.

I conducted seven interviews in a conference room in the Center for Leadership and Civic Engagement, and four in the director's office. One of these interviews was with the director of the center and the other ten were with former participants. The ten former participants I interviewed included the current student director, a former student director,

and a current leadership team member; these students facilitate the entirety of the program. The Center for Leadership and Civic Engagement office suite, where I conducted interviews, was full of students and professionals working at computers. There were several posters on the wall about the Emerging Leader Institute, which is commonly referred to as the ELI. Many in the office call the program simply as Eli, almost as though it is another person in the office. This kind of personification of the program is consistent with a theme that I would eventually hear echoed by many program participants and affiliates relating to networking.

Program Structures

The Emerging Leader Institute is hosted in the Center for Leadership and Civic Engagement, which is part of the Division of Student Affairs. The Center for Leadership and Civic Engagement mission is to educate and challenge students "to be effective, ethical leaders who serve as engaged citizens for the global community" (USF Center for Leadership & Civic Engagement, 2014). According to the program director, a generalist student affairs office housed the institute before moving into its current operational home. The director suggested that the shift from the generalist office to the Center for Leadership and Civic Engagement changed the program, explaining that the program shifted from a simple team-building one to a program with strong team-building aspects as well as a set of very intentional learning outcomes surrounding social change (Interviewee one, personal communication, September 23, 2014).

The program is a student-facilitated, over-night retreat hosted annually in January. A leadership team of ten students and one student director plan and facilitate the retreat. These

student facilitators are selected by members of the Center for Leadership and Civic

Engagement staff in late spring semester for the following January's retreat. The student

director and student leadership team spend the fall semester after their appointment

recruiting program participants from the first-year class. This recruitment takes many forms

including direct emails and individual outreach to academic departments, residence halls and

fraternities and sororities. The program receives an average of three hundred applications for

its sixty spots. The director and student leadership team use a blind review process to select

applicants only after their applications have been stripped of identifying information.

According to the director of the Center for Leadership and Civic Engagement, the largest

challenge to getting a diverse participant pool is in achieving gender balance as the program

receives many more qualified female applicants than male ones (Interviewee one, personal

communication, September 23, 2014). Half-way through the selection process gender is

reattached to the applications. After this, the student facilitators expand their list of top

applicants to get more gender balance in the program. As many as eighty percent of

applicants are women, it is difficult to establish a cohort with gender balance. The program

does not cite a specific public goal to have equal gender participation, yet the recruitment

process is oriented toward achieving as much gender balance as is feasible.

The student director and student leadership team are given a significant amount of

autonomy to run the program. Several days before the retreat, the student director and

facilitation team conduct a practice run of the various retreat activities. The retreat takes

place at a campsite off campus. Although the Emerging Leaders Institute offers follow-up

workshops and networking events, these offerings are optional for program participants.

Many participants used the words program and retreat interchangeably when describing their

Emerging Leader Institute experience. This use of interchangeable language will be important later in this chapter as I discuss program structures.

The philosophy of the program as articulated by the Center for Leadership and Civic Engagement director and current and former student directors is that peer facilitation is the foundation of the program (Interviewee one, personal communication, September 23, 2014). Documents used to plan the retreat reference not only participant learning outcomes but also facilitator outcomes. The yearlong commitment of the student facilitators is in many ways a program within the larger program. Although participants can only participate in the retreat as freshmen, student facilitators get a second opportunity to participate through facilitation. In some ways the experience of these student mentors could be the subject of an additional study. I will discuss this further in Chapter Five.

The materials associated with the program include applications, manuals for student-facilitators, questions for participant recruitment interviews, lists of items for participants to bring on the retreat, retreat schedules, retreat activity descriptions, a retreat liability waiver and several program description documents. There are also specific program learning and development outcomes for participants and a separate set for facilitators. Interestingly, some of the outcomes for participants are articulated in the form of a shift in belief. In other words, there seems to be a commitment within the program to changing what students believe.

This is consistent with an understanding of student development theory and the value-laden Social Change Leadership Model (Astin & Astin, 1996). The participant outcomes, shown in Figure 4.1, are outlined in three categories:

USF Emerging leader institute pamphlet
Because they participated in your program, University of South Florida students will now know:
- How to make an impact and how to get involved
- More about their abilities to become leaders
- How to become "catalysts for positive change"
- They have a home away from home and a supportive group to encourage them to achieve their goals

Because they participated in your program, University of South Florida students will now believe:
- That they can be the change
- That they have what it take to become leaders on the University of South Florida campus and the global community
- More in their leadership abilities and their personal ability to share with others
- That they can accomplish their goals
- In themselves

Because they participated in your program, University of South Florida students will now be prepared to:
- Take on bigger roles and more challenges, and set goals they can achieve
- Take on every challenge that comes their way, and not be afraid to take the next steps in their various organizations
- Build the rest of their future here at the University of South Florida and beyond!
- Carry out their plan of action
- Continue years at the University of South Florida with more confidence and ambition

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Figure 4.1. University of South Florida Emerging Leader Institute Pamphlet

Program Assessment

The University of South Florida Emerging Leader Institute is regularly assessed in several ways. The 2013 assessment data were combined into a central report that uses survey data including pretests and posttests, photographic evidence, and observation to present findings. The assessment sought to determine what students are learning, changes in student perspective on leadership, changes in the way students perceive themselves, and ways to improve the program. The 2013 program assessment indicated that students learn through participation in the program. Specifically there were noteworthy learning gains in understanding leadership typology and increasing self-discovery. The report also suggests that students:

> …gained a multi-dimensional definition of leadership that is inclusive of themselves and others and is applicable to anyone's life. They thought that they were better able to relate to themselves, others, the community, and the world after the Emerging Leader Institute. (*Emerging Leader Institute assessment*, 2013)

The 2014 assessment involved a more quantitative examination of the program. Some of the findings from their 2014 assessment are shown in Figure 4.2.

The statements were presented on a five-point Likert scale, with five representing the highest level of agreement, three indicating a neutral opinion, and one representing the highest level of disagreement.

PROGRAM EVALUATION & FEEDBACK

1. I was able to network and meet new people that could contribute to my success at USF.

2. I learned about teamwork and am better prepared to be an effective team member and leader after attending ELI.

3. Based on my experience at ELI, I am more interested in taking on a leadership role at USF.

4. I am now more aware of my leadership tendencies and how to maximize my strengths as a leader.

5. I feel better prepared to make choices in my life based on my values.

6. ELI has helped me understand why commitment is important for leadership.

7. ELI has increased my knowledge about leadership in a useful way.

8. I would recommend continuing the use of Student Facilitators for ELI.

9. I feel more confident about taking on leadership roles based on my experience at ELI.

10. I would recommend this experience to next year's freshmen.

Figure 4.2. Emerging Leader Institute Assessment Results.

The results of the assessment are generally positive. These data are consistent with the interviews I conducted in that the strongest areas seem to be the social connections, the peer-leadership facilitation model and perspective-shifting on leadership topics. Although the responses seem positive, there are some weaknesses in the construction of the survey instrument including the use of several compound questions. Specifically, questions one,

two and four in Figure 4.2 use compound clauses in their construction that suggest some strong assumptions. For example, question four asks students to report on increased awareness of their leadership tendencies and ways to maximize their strengths as a leader. Although these two competencies are related, the assumption that participants' level of agreement with one part of the clause is the same as their level of agreement with the other calls into question whether the answers to this question are useful. Additionally, there are several learning outcomes that are seemingly not part of the formal assessment questions, as well as questions in the assessments that revolve around outcomes that are not explicitly described in the learning outcomes. For example, the first item of the survey (see Figure 4.2) concerns the participant's ability to network, which is not a specifically articulated learning outcome. It seems that there may be an assumption that the ability to network with others is a valuable skill that supports other articulated outcomes. Still other goals are articulated in highly metaphorical language such as "students will believe that they can be the change" (*University of South Florida Emerging Leader Institute*, program pamphlet). The fact that this belief is an articulated program outcome speaks strongly to a values orientation within the program. This is consistent with the philosophy undergirding the social change theory of leadership.

Additional Themes

The interviews presented a great deal of data that helped me better understand the program format and character of the program. The substance of the interviews centered on several themes including networking, engagement and community. One former participant said:

…I think the best part of the whole program is when I get to learn about other kids. It enriches me as a person. I get so much involvement in just one program; I don't think a lot of other programs do. (Interviewee six, personal communication, September 23, 2014)

A few students also discussed participation in the program as a metaphorical door opening to opportunities throughout campus and the surrounding community. Although this may fit nicely into multiple theme groups, the metaphor struck me as an interesting way to see the program. Still other participants spoke of the life-changing nature of the program. This showed up in a variety of ways and was sometime stated as a surprise. One participant said, "I attended the Emerging Leader Institute, and it literally changed my life completely; a lot of students don't understand that part…in the long run it's going to change you" (Interviewee five, personal communication, September 23, 2014). This same student explained how participation in the Emerging Leader Institute had led her to other forms of engagement and that her perspective on the experience has changed now that she is a senior. She went on to say that the director of her Emerging Leader Institute had asked her what she wanted to achieve and explained to her that she would have to work hard to reach her goals. Looking back she says, "It was pretty interesting how one little thing changes your life completely."

Overwhelmingly, the central theme of the Emerging Leader Institute at the University of South Florida is networking. Students repeatedly brought up the various ways that participation in the program helped them meet new people, and through those people find new opportunities. I will discuss themes in greater depth in Chapter Five.

The Case of Howard University's Freshman Leadership Academy

Howard University is a historically black university (HBU) serving more than 10,000 students. Founded in 1867, the university is:

> …a private, research university comprised of 13 schools and colleges. Students pursue studies in more than 120 areas leading to undergraduate, graduate and professional degrees. To date, Howard has awarded more than 120,000 degrees in the arts, the sciences, and the humanities. (Howard University, 2014)

The Freshman Leadership Academy at Howard University engages an average of sixty aspiring freshman leaders each year. The Freshman Leadership Academy was "created to expose *first year* [*sic*] students to the specific duties, responsibilities, opportunities, and challenges associated with all aspects of student, local, national, and international leadership" (Freshman Leadership Academy Fall 2014 Application for Membership). The Office of Student Affairs sponsors the program, which is different from most of the programs originally explored as I selected participant institutions. I'll discuss the impact of this structure later in this chapter.

My visit to Howard University began on the morning of Tuesday, September 30, 2014. I arrived at campus early and located the student services building that housed the division of student affairs. The building was older and had a feel reminiscent of the 1970s. The pictures on the wall of many famous people attending university events, including Michele Obama and Bill Clinton, fascinated me. The student affairs office was simple in presentation, but it was also a lively place with students coming and going and working in various offices. The receptionist was professional and helped me find the director of Howard

University's Freshman Leadership Academy. The director showed me to a conference room in which I could conduct the interviews. She assured me that during a break later that she would show me the campus and that we would also be attending a lunch featuring cultural immersion presentations by past participants of the Freshman Leadership Academy. The fact that my visit corresponded with these presentations was happenstance and fortuitous in that it enriched my understanding of the program. I felt very welcomed during my entire visit to Howard University.

The director and I had been in close contact in the weeks leading up to my visit and had also connected through Linked-in. Through this connection she found out that I was a member of Iota Phi Theta Fraternity, which is one of the five largest historically black fraternities in the nation. Throughout the day, as I met various students and administrators, she would often tell them about my affiliation. This revelation often catches people off guard, as there are not many white people in this fraternity, and yet I have found that in some ways it also fosters more openness among African-Americans who have knowledge of these rich fraternal traditions. The office manager who was professional to me as I entered in the morning was friendly and even familial with me as I left that day, and I believe that this shift happened in part as she learned of my affiliation. Five of the nine largest historically black Greek-letter organizations, also known as the National Pan-Hellenic Council (NPHC) member organizations, were founded at Howard University, and there was much evidence of their influence on campus including elaborate shrines, commonly referred to as plots, commemorative statues, and featured coats of arms throughout the campus. As I met people throughout the day and conducted interviews with students and other program affiliates I observed that this affiliation increased the comfort level of the people I met. My belief stems

from my observations of significant shifts in body language and also subtle shifts in dialect as people at Howard University learned of my affiliation. Often, people's body language would shift from stiff and professional to affectionate and familial almost instantly after learning of my association with Iota Phi Theta.

I interviewed former participants throughout the morning and then took a break at 10:30 a.m. The program director took me on a tour of campus, which included stops on the main quad to look at various fraternity and sorority plots; a visit to the student union; and a stop by the music department. The director had been a dance major as an undergraduate at Howard University, and as she knew that I was also a supporter of the arts, specifically band, she introduced me to the band director.

After the tour she drove me to another building on campus where we attended the Freshman Leadership Academy luncheon and presentations. The lunch was fantastic, and I had an opportunity to sit with several faculty, administrators, and alumni of Howard University while enjoying the student presentations. The graduates of the Freshman Leadership Academy program attended the event in professional attire, while members of the current cohort wore matching red golf shirts featuring the Freshman Leadership Academy logo. According to my planned methodology, I took field notes immediately following the lunch as doing so during the presentations might have been distracting.

After the presentations I returned to the student services building to conduct my final interviews. I will discuss the substance of these presentations later in this chapter and again in Chapter Five. In total I interviewed ten people affiliated with the program including the

program director, the program advisor, the co-founder of the program and seven former participants.

Program Structures

The Freshman Leadership Academy is a year-long program for roughly sixty freshmen. The program includes a fall retreat for all participants and invited graduates of the program, and a spring retreat for participants and program mentors. During the academic year the Freshman Leadership Academy participants meet every other week for seminars on various leadership-related topics. Both professionals and graduates of the program, who serve as peer-facilitators, facilitate the sessions. Additionally, each participant is assigned a campus mentor who is also a program graduate. This mentor serves as a big sister or big brother figure for the participants to provide additional informal guidance outside of the regular program meetings. At the end of participants' freshman year, they travel to China for a month-long cultural immersion. I did not anticipate that any of these programs would have a specific international component, but given the global mission of this program, it makes sense.

The philosophy of the program is centered on professionalism and family. Participants and facilitators use the abbreviation FLA and often refer to each other as *flamily* [*sic*] or *flam* [*sic*]. The director of the program told me that participants sometimes call her *mama flam*. As I reflect on my experience at Howard University, I certainly felt like part of an extended family. I was even told by the chief of staff of the Office of Student Affairs that I would always have a family at Howard with the Freshman Leadership Academy. Finally,

the program has a strong emphasis on professionalism in presentation, attire and communication, as noted by the way people greeted me, students were dressed, etc.

Program Assessment

According to the chief of staff of the student affairs division, the program is regularly assessed through tracking grade point average, persistence and graduation rates of participants. Additionally, the office of student affairs tracks community service hours completed, rates of study abroad participation, and leadership position attainment among former participants. I was not able to secure this information because individual student performance records are privileged under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act but was told that program participants outperformed their peers in all three measures. The director of the program expressed interest in reading my research of the Freshman Leadership Academy program as a form of assessment. The founder of the Freshman Leadership Academy program and the program director each referenced informal focus groups that were used to assess the program and suggested that feedback from students in those groups impacted the program. Specifically, they mentioned changing content of some of the workshops.

The administrators involved with the Freshman Leadership Academy did not include the intercultural presentations given by students in their list of assessments. These presentations centered on students' experiences in China and were full of rich descriptions of transformative experiences. Although the program coordinators do not view these presentations as assessment, they most certainly could be considered a strong form of assessment. I will discuss this in more detail in Chapter Five.

Additional Themes

Throughout my interviews, I followed the questions outlined in my methodology and asked occasional clarifying questions and follow-up questions. The responses centered on multiple themes including those of family, networking, connections and perspectives on leadership. Something very interesting about this set of interviews was how people regularly shifted between first person singular and first person plural with their answers. There existed a clear distinction between the individual and group, but there also seemed to be a regular blurring between the individual and group at times. One participant explained:

> …we treasure each other's goals and visions and missions and what we want to do in life and how we're going to get there. We treasure the connections… it's just literally like a huge family and we're willing to do whatever to make sure each one of us gets to where we want to go. (Interviewee nine, personal communication, September 30, 2014)

Also interesting in the interview data was that participants did not generally discuss their affiliation with the program in the past tense. Some of the students I interviewed had participated in the Freshman Leadership Academy three years prior to the interview and yet responded to questions as though they were still participating. This is different from what I observed in the other programs in the study and reinforces what I came to understand as a central theme of this program around family.

Overwhelmingly the theme that emerged most strongly from these interviews is that the Freshman Leadership Academy is a family. This was more than a theme I simply heard throughout the interviews, but was also something I personally experienced while on

campus. It is hard to explain exactly what the factors were that led to this feeling, but my visit to Howard University was one of the most rewarding experiences of my research journey, and the intangible sense of belonging I felt while there transcended the research project. The theme of family did more than just emerge through the data I collected, it intersected with my life. In the weeks following my visit, I have stayed connected to the director of the program. She is currently a doctoral student and we speak and email each other regularly; through the process we have become friends.

The Case of Emory University's Emerging Leader Experience

Emory University is a private, predominantly white institution that serves over 14,000 students on the undergraduate and graduate level. Graduate students comprise roughly 45% of the student body annually. The Princeton Review describes Emory University as an:

> …internationally recognized for its outstanding liberal arts college, highly ranked professional schools, and comprehensive healthcare system. Emory College, the four-year undergraduate division of Emory University, offers a broad and rigorous liberal arts curriculum with over 70 majors and 55 minors to choose from. Emory provides the opportunities, resources and facilities of a major research university and with 5,500 undergraduate students, the small classes and faculty attention of a smaller liberal arts college

> The Emory University Emerging Leader Experience "is designed to support students in developing their leadership skills, widening their social networks and meeting a diverse

group of friends, building a shared community, and helping each other realize his or her fullest potential" (Emory University, 2014).

I arrived at Emory University on the morning of Monday, October 6, 2014. The campus was more difficult to navigate than I expected, and the organization and varying architectural styles suggested to me that the institutions may have had periods of high growth complicated by limited property. Additionally, as I looked for the student center I asked several people walking on campus about its location. The first three groups of people didn't know where the building was located.

When I arrived at the student center, I was struck again by the architecture. From the outside the building had two distinct styles and once inside I understood why. The student center was a building that contained another complete building inside it. As I entered the main lobby and looked to the right I noticed a full multi-story exterior of a building that had been engulfed in the larger structure I had just entered. I soon learned that there were offices on both the east and west side of this building with the same room numbers. Although I did not realize it at the time, the interesting transitional feel of the physical campus environment would parallel a theme I would later discover in the interview data concerning transition.

When I finally found the Office of Student Leadership and Service, I met the director. She then took me two floors above and down a small corridor to a small room that indicated there would be interviews taking place. She left me there and told me that we would talk later during her scheduled interview. I was on the top floor of the building and it felt almost like an abandoned hall. I was not treated poorly during my visit, but at each of the other two institutions I visited I had sensed a higher degree of hospitality. In each of the

other settings the interviews took place in the sponsoring office, and I was greeted with a kind of warmth denoted by questions about my lunch plans, firm handshakes and even hugs.

Program Structures

The program format at Emory University for the Emerging Leader Experience has changed several times. For many years the program was an overnight retreat followed by several weeks of meetings during which participants would explore leadership topics. During the last decade the program shifted to a retreat-only format, then back to a retreat with follow-up meetings. Interestingly, through the interview process I learned that there were plans to again shift the model back to a retreat-only format. The most recent move does not seem to be precipitated by any formal assessment, but is in response to a perception held by the facilitators that students do not have enough time for the extended commitment of a multi-week program.

The Emerging Leaders Experience is housed administratively in the Office of Student Leadership and Service, which is a unit that supports civic engagement and service-learning at Emory University. The program philosophy is situated around social justice and connects strongly to issues of diversity, power, and privilege.

Program Assessment

The program is not regularly assessed in a systematic way; however, one of the program affiliates indicated that several years ago the program had been assessed. I was not provided results of this assessment but was told that each year students were given a satisfaction survey focused on what they did and did not like about the program.

I interviewed nine people affiliated with the Emerging Leader Experience including the host center's director, a former program facilitator, the current program facilitator and six former participants. The interviews felt more formal than others I had conducted in the study. Many of the interviewees spoke regularly of the nature of Emory University as a whole and its students. Students told me that they were often overwhelmed, and that the typical Emory student was over involved and also navigating a very challenging curriculum. The interviews centered on several themes including those of connection, community, networking, making friends, diversity and learning about leadership. One student said of her experience, "One of the best benefits, I think for me, is just being able to find other people that think of leadership as a great value too. These people have become my best friends in that and I know I can trust them" (Interviewee two, personal communication, October, 6, 2014).

Additional Themes

Two themes emerged from my coding efforts that struck me as central to the Emerging Leader Experience program. The first theme is that of connection and community. This showed up in several ways, but interestingly community was used to discuss both on-campus community and engagement in the off-campus community. Several participants discussed engaging in community service projects as part of their Emerging Leader Experience program experience, while others suggested that participation in the program fostered the connections and passions to seek community engagement opportunities outside the program. Not all Emerging Leader Experience cohorts participated in service projects. This is due in part, to the shifts in program delivery format. In other words, for some former

Emerging Leader Experience participants their experience was simply a retreat, while for others it was a multi-week program that included a retreat at the beginning.

The shifting of formats speaks to the second theme present in the data, which is one of transition. Specifically, I mean that it was difficult in some ways to understand this program as the format seems to be continually changing. This also exposes an assumption in my methodology. As I constructed the interview questions and used the word program, I built them on an assumption that most people I would be interviewing experienced a single or similar program. In some ways, the two different formats of the Emerging Leader Experience at Emory could be considered substantially different enough from one another as to consider them different programs. The program facilitators also cited other imminent structural changes in the host office that they anticipated would change the program, but were uncertain what those changes would entail for the Emerging Leader Experience. This theme was mirrored in much of my experience at Emory including the layout of the campus, the building that was entirely engulfed in the newer student union and many interviews that referenced transition as a regular part of life at Emory University and within the Emerging Leader Experience.

A Note on Grounded Theory Data

Although much of the data in this study is presented in Chapter Four, I will present additional data in Chapter Five. Specifically this is because in grounded theory methodology the line between data and interpretation is blurry. The grounded theory practice I used for this study is called the constant comparative method (Glaser & Strauss, 1999). This process required me to start interpreting data as I collected it through two specific lenses. Those two

lenses as described in Chapter Two were college student development theory and leadership theory. I received some of the data in the form of printed materials before arriving on each campus to conduct my interviews. Consequently, my frame of understanding of the programs began to develop as I analyzed these documents before conducting my field research. These documents included program brochures, websites, retreat schedules, program descriptions, activity descriptions and assessment data. Each of the programs sent different materials. For example, only the University of South Florida included assessment reports in the materials they sent. Although these artifacts served as the first data source, three other data sources were used for this process.

The first of these three data sources were the interviews which I had transcribed. As I listened in each interview I was intentional about keeping the two operant lenses present in my mind. During the interview process I took extensive notes, marking time frames within the interviews during which I heard responses that seemed to reflect college student development theories or leadership theories. These field notes are the second source of data. After completing the interviews, I also conducted a separate review of my notes, cross-referencing them with the indicated parts of the interview transcripts. The final data source included other field notes and reflective journals. I did extensive reflective journaling during participant selection in a digital format. The other field notes and journals were writings often crafted while on a train or plane as I returned from my research sites. It was important to write these reflections within a reasonable amount of time following my interviews and observations. Too much time lapse might lead to distortion, while too little time might lead to shallow reflections.

To present data through the constant comparative method entirely in Chapter Four would be challenging, as the collection and interpretation of data in the constant comparative form of grounded theory are inexorably connected. In Chapter Five I will include the data as part of the analysis section.

CHAPTER FIVE: GROUNDED THEORY ANALYSIS

In this chapter, I will provide an analysis of the major findings of the study relevant to current literature in the field. I will analyze the role assessment plays in emerging leader programs and then examine how structures impact these programs. Following this analysis I will provide a section on grounded theory that presents data and analysis through the lenses of college student development theory and leadership theory. This section will conclude with an exploration of the ways the data intersected these two bodies of theory.

Analysis of Data

Program Assessment Analysis

Literature from the Kellogg Foundation suggests that leadership programs on college and university campuses are assessed poorly and inconsistently (Zimmerman-Oster & Burkhardt, 1999b). The data from my study are consistent with this assertion. There was no single standard assessment used by any of the programs in my study. Additionally, there was a great deal of inconsistency among the types of assessments used at each institution.

The University of South Florida assesses their Emerging Leader Institute regularly. The program use different assessment methods each year and, consistent with most aspects of the program, the assessment efforts are coordinated by students. This lack of consistency makes it very difficult to make comparisons across years. In addition, students may or may not have the knowledge and experience necessary to conduct sound assessments. There was

no indication that students are actually trained in how to conduct program assessment. The student-constructed assessments contain some questions with compound clauses that ask participants to use a Likert-type scale indicating agreement with statements. This threat to validity is problematic as sometimes participants may agree with one part of the clause but not a subsequent part. More importantly, there are questions in portions of the assessments that do not seem to have a direct connection with the mission statement of the office or articulated goals of the program (Schuh & Upcraft, 2001). This may offer confusing or disconnected data unrelated to the objectives of the assessment. Increased congruence between mission statements and assessment questions may help increase the usefulness of assessment.

In 2012, doctoral students at the University of South Florida conducted an assessment of the Emerging Leader Institute. The results of that assessment prompted a renewed effort to integrate elements of the social change leadership model into the program. Although I was not able to get access to this report, apparently it was viewed by the director of the Center for Leadership and Civic Engagement at the University of South Florida as particularly meaningful. The program director suggested that the report was eye-opening and brought a fresh perspective to the program.

The Howard University Freshman Leadership Academy is assessed in a few ways. Although there is no formal assessment of learning outcomes, the Chief of Staff in the Office of the Vice President for Student Affairs at Howard University tracks every participant through a variety of programmatic outcomes. Rather than assessing specific learning outcomes, the program evaluates students through a rubric of participation and attainment outcomes. Former participants are tracked by grade-point average, persistence

and graduation rates, community service hours, participation in study abroad experiences and attainment of leadership positions. This is very consistent with a practical-mindedness that I perceived while attending a reception with the current members of the academy. In addition to presenting themselves in a highly polished and professional manner, those with whom I spoke at the reception were surprisingly focused on their careers. According to Mr. Miles, graduates of the Freshman Leadership Academy outperform their peers in every measure of success that the university currently tracks. Of course, self-selection bias could account for this high level of achievement among program graduates.

Additionally, the director has conducted several focus groups with former participants of the Freshman Leadership Academy as she assumed the role of director. Finally, the office collects significant anecdotal and ethnographic evidence of success through annual cultural immersion presentations given by Freshman Leadership Academy cohorts after they return from their immersion experience in China. The program coordinators did not seemingly recognize these presentations as a form of assessment, but they were powerful first-person narratives of transformation. I had the good fortune to see several of these presentations and was impressed at the insights provided by students on their immersion experience. Some of the presentations echoed the themes of family and also of transformation that I heard throughout my time at Howard University. I will briefly touch on these presentations later in this chapter when I discuss areas for further study. The richness of the presentations was equal to any other assessment results in this study, and yet the fact that the program facilitators didn't mention these presentations as a form of assessment is a missed opportunity.

At Emory University, one assessment had been conducted within the last three years, but none of the professionals I interviewed knew anything about the way the assessment was conducted or much about the results of the assessment. Despite this lack of assessment, the sponsoring office switched the delivery format of the program twice in the previous three years. When I asked why these changes were implemented, the professionals who facilitate the program indicated that it was in an attempt to deliver the program in a format that students want, based on satisfaction surveys. The director of the Office of Student Leadership and Service indicated that program participants had been given satisfaction surveys that gave her more information about the student opinion. Satisfaction surveys are one way of understanding students' perception of the quality of an experience which is believed to be linked to persistence (Schuh & Upcraft, 2001).

Although adapting program delivery method to reflect students' desires makes sense, I also found that, through my interviews and interactions at all three institutions, these programs provide education for participants that the participants did not even know they needed until later in their college careers. This is consistent with many student development theories that suggest that student thought increases in complexity as they persist (Evans, Forney, & Guido-DiBrito, 1998), thus what students want and what they need in cocurricular educational settings may differ.

Several students suggested that, as they look back at their emerging leader experience, after several years, they recognize that they were learning things for which they did not yet have mental frames. In other words, they were learning leadership theories and concepts for which they had no previous experience for application. The experiences articulated by students throughout this study and specifically at Emory University might be

better understood with a critical analysis through student development theoretical lenses. This kind of analysis may provide information that a satisfaction survey does not.

My conclusion is that the influence of assessment on programs exists but is minimal. Program changes are influenced by several factors other than assessment results including staff turn-over, anecdotal feedback from participants, satisfaction surveys, structural realignment, budget considerations and shifts in program philosophies. Also, as in the case of Howard University, sometimes assessment is misunderstood and even overlooked.

Program Structure Analysis

At the beginning of this study, I was primarily concerned with organizational structures as they related to the office or functional area in which emerging leader programs were sponsored. My questions centered on how the presence of the program in the sponsoring office impacted the program in ways that might be different if the program were housed in a different office. For example, two of the programs I studied were sponsored by offices that included civic engagement or community service as a central part of their mission. My hope was to understand how a program's presence in a particular office impacted the program in ways that might be different if the program was sponsored by a campus activities unit or an office of fraternity and sorority life. I gained insight into this sort of organizational structure but was surprised to learn how important the delivery structure of the program was. In other words, there seems to be a connection between the way an emerging leader program is delivered and the participant experience that is worth further analysis and exploration. I will provide an analysis of the impact of structures on

emerging leader programs from the perspective of the host-office and then I will provide additional analysis on the delivery structures within the programs.

Sponsoring Office Structure. The three emerging leader programs in this study reported to two different kinds of units within their university's structure. The Emerging Leader Institute at the University of South Florida and the Emerging Leader Experience at Emory University are both hosted by subunits within the student affairs divisions focused on service, civic engagement, and leadership. In contrast, the Howard University Freshman Leadership Academy is coordinated at the vice president level as a sponsored program by the student affairs division. Participants and facilitators involved with programs sponsored by civic engagement and service offices reported strong beliefs that the sponsoring office was best suited to sponsor the program, drawing specific references to the connections between leadership and service. As I asked follow up questions of participants and other affiliates about imagining that the program was sponsored by another unit, there seemed to be an idea that other units would be ill-equipped to facilitate such a program. One of the students at the University of South Florida suggested that most other functional area offices had such specific programmatic and large-scale event planning goals that they wouldn't really be particularly well suited to teach leadership. The director of the Office of Student leadership and Service at Emory University suggested that part of why her office was ideally situated to sponsor this program was that her office had a broader reach than units like residence life and fraternity and sorority life that could only reach certain segments of the student population. Participants and other affiliates at the program sponsored by a vice president's office at Howard University also expressed a belief that the best office was sponsoring the program. However, at Howard University the reasoning seemed less about

issues like staff specialization and more about issues of networking with high-profile campus professionals. Additionally, professionals associated with Howard University's program suggested that a connection to an executive-level office was ideal for both student tracking and budgetary support. The program at Howard University is the only program in my study that includes study abroad, and the related costs are substantial. The chief of staff in the vice president's office suggested that the only way a program could receive this level of financial support is by both getting good results and by having sponsorship at the executive level.

Program Delivery Structure. The variation of delivery format structures between programs was significant. Two critical structural components emerged through the study. The first was program delivery format, or how many meetings the program consisted of and over what timeframe. The second structure was one of student mentorship, which took a variety of forms.

The delivery format for the Emerging Leader Institute at University of South Florida is a single weekend retreat in January. Conversely, the Freshman Leadership Academy at Howard University involves bi-monthly meetings through participants' entire freshman year and a follow-up cultural immersion experience abroad. The Emory University Emerging Leader Experience was most recently offered as a retreat with six follow-up meetings. One of the interview questions I asked exposed an assumption that I had going in to the project on length of program. The question concerned why students continued to be part of their respective programs after starting. Obviously, that question does not fit a program that is contained in its entirety on a single over-night retreat. The students at University of South Florida used the word retreat interchangeably with program or experience, whereas students

from the other two institutions in the study referenced a retreat as simply a part of their emerging leader experience. After I learned that the program at the University of South Florida was a single weekend retreat, I changed how I asked my question to explore first whether or not a participant had found a way to continue to participate in the program, and if so, what that continued participation entailed.

Examination through Grounded Theory

In this section I will explore the connection between the data and the two bodies of theory at the heart of this study. First, I will discuss the ways in which student development theory was reflected in the data. After that I will show the intersections between leadership theory and the data. Finally I will share the connections that bridge the gap between these two bodies of research as they intersect the data and each other. Some of the richest data involved interviews during which students discussed growth and development in the context of leadership, and this exploration will be critical to any understanding the hallmarks of successful emerging leader programs.

Student development is a complex process that cuts across many aspects of an individual including cognitive development, identity development, social development, emotional development and a host of other aspects of self (Evans, Forney, & Guido-DiBrito, 1998). Even within a single body of developmental research such as identity development, there may be multiple operant theories including those of race, gender identity, sexual preference identity and others. Keeping these theories present during my data collection and interpretation process felt very natural to me, as these theories are present in my work as a practitioner. My colleagues and I regularly reflect on various college student development

theories and how they inform our work. Additionally, my personal work presenting and publishing on the regional and national level has forced me to regularly articulate the ways in which theory and practice intersect (Mueller, 2006). One limitation of my study is that the scope of my interview questions was not probative enough to unearth all of the developmental complexity of each interviewee. However, I have done my best to bring to bear the most foundational college student development theories through this process.

The data reflected many intersections with college student development theory. Identifying these intersections was easier at times and more difficult at other times. For example, during an interview with my eighth participant at Emory University, I learned that he was an international student. Several of my questions may have relied ontologically on English as a primary language and may not have translated very well. For example, I asked participants to discuss the personal benefits they received from participating in the program. From a college student development perspective, this question may not be ideally phrased for students from some cultures in which individual benefits are seen through the lens of community. This student's responses were the outlier in terms of their tone. His level of enthusiasm relative to the other students in the study challenged a bias that may have been developing throughout the process. Specifically, there was a kind of enthusiasm I experienced in most of the interviews that he did not seem to exude, even though his responses fit thematically with the responses of many of the other students who had participated in Emory University's Emerging Leader Experience.

It has been critical to reflect on my assumptions of what I think the interviewees are saying in their interviews. The process of development is an internal one, and students who are experiencing various stages of development may say similar things. In a 2006 piece I suggested that language used by students may seem dualistic and simple, but that ascribing less-complex frames to those students may be missing much more complicated internal processes (Mueller, 2006). It was therefore important for me to listen to the entirety of each interview multiple times for clues that would help me better understand what the interviewees were and were not saying.

I found several connections to college student development theory emerge around the areas of navigating college, engagement, transition, and self-exploration. Additionally, there are several ideas present that support the notion that college students who participated in this study found good conditions in which to build community, learn, grow, and change. The two bodies of college student development theory that emerged most strongly from the data were those of engagement theory and cognitive development theory. The co-founder of Howard University's Freshman Leadership Academy said that other students on campus "recognize that FLA members are going abroad, studying abroad … they are becoming different" (Interviewee twelve, personal communication, September 30, 2014). Several interviewees suggested that there was a gap between the way first-year students understand their experiences and the way that those same students see those experience years later. One of the facilitators of Emory University's Emerging Leader Experience said that the program might not meet their expectations, but it meets a need that they don't know they have. One of the participants in the University of South Florida's Emerging Leader Institute said, "You don't really know… how this was going to change you as a person" (Interviewee six,

personal communication, September 23, 2014). This shift speaks to the importance of developmental stage theories in these programs and also suggests a potential area for further study. In other words, this participant is articulating that she sees her experience differently now than she did while participating in the emerging leader program. This is typical of students as they traverse psychological stages of increasing complexity.

Although the data also intersected other forms of college student development theory such as career fit theory, gender identity theory and ethnic identity theory, the themes of engagement and cognitive development were the most present. I'll address each of these areas below.

Engagement Theory

According to Tinto (1998), students will persist better at colleges and universities if they find ways to get engaged on campus. During her interview, one of the facilitators of the Emerging Leaders Experience at Emory University explained that some students at her university want to get engaged in leadership roles on campus, but they simply don't know where to start (Interviewee four, personal communication, October 6, 2014). Similarly, the co-founder of Howard University's Freshman Leadership Academy indicated that many students at his institution don't figure out how to engage effectively in campus leadership and community until they are juniors. However, he went on to suggest that program participants often engage in leadership roles "previously reserved for juniors and seniors much earlier in their college careers" (Interviewee twelve, personal communication, September 30, 2014).

One of the interviewees, a student participant who later became a student facilitator in the University of South Florida's Emerging Leader Institute, explained that for him the Emerging Leader Institute was life-changing. He said "that one little weekend" set him on a course that resulted in a change of academic major and life goals (Interviewee five, personal communication, September 23, 2014). He went on to discuss how the Emerging Leader Institute has helped him deal with rejection. He explained that he applied for many campus leadership positions including that of resident assistant and that he didn't get selected for several positions. Then he began to shift his focus from high-status positions to leadership opportunities for which he had a passion. He attributes much of this shift in attitude to the Emerging Leader Institute. The ability to contextualize rejection may speak to increased complexity of thought typified by what Perry (1970) calls multiplicity, a stage during which individuals recognize that competing ideas can have equal senses of validity. Some participants expressed that topics like changing, growing and developing were introduced to them as program expectations by the facilitators of the program.

Another student explained that when she participated in the Emerging Leader Institute at University of South Florida that her facilitators told her she would have to be "open to the experience… willing to change" (Interviewee six, personal communication, September 23, 2014). This speaks specifically to a theme I heard continuously which is that program facilitators and mentors expect participants to engage fully in these experiences. Throughout all of the literature presented by all three emerging leader programs in the study, it is clear that a part of the goal of the program is to foster on campus and off campus engagement among participants.

Cognitive Development Theory

Cognitive development theory is a body of work that explores how the ability of students to make meaning of the world around them grows in complexity over time (Evans, Forney, & Guido-DiBrito, 1998). Cognitive theory is often presented as stages through which people progress as they develop. Although stages are often presented by theorists as being sequential, value should not be assigned to any particular stage. No stage is of higher value than another; rather, further stages simply represent increased complexity in the progression toward development.

One important aspect of cognitive development is that many of these processes are going on in the subconscious of an individual (Chickering, 1972). This is important to understand as much of the data in this study suggest that students saw their experience differently over time. One of the facilitators of Emory University's Emerging Leader Experience explained that participants "…don't know that they're looking for community, they don't know how important these friendships are going to be for them in the long run" (Interviewee four, personal communication, October 6, 2014). In other instances, student participants discussed this kind of development in terms that suggested that they either had an awareness of it as it happened or could at least see the changes in retrospect. For example, a participant in Howard University's Freshman Leadership Academy talked about being pushed by a peer mentor, while at the same time, holding herself accountable. She said that, "There's a transition from teenager into *being* [*sic*] an adult… the Freshman Leadership Academy helped me to make that transition" (Interviewee three, personal communication, September 30). She went on to say that it is "one of the reasons why I am the person that I am today; because they really pushed me." Another student framed college

student development in a way that resonated with my experience. A young woman who had participated in the University of South Florida's Emerging Leader Institute described the experience as one of a shift in perspective. She said, "I guess for freshmen, you can't really put it in the perspective of what I've already learned because they don't understand it. It's like a 'why not' thing" (Interviewee eleven, personal communication, September 23, 2014). She went on to explain that after students participate that:

> …everyone is like born again and they're like, wow, I'm going to change the world, and then two weeks later they go back to their everyday routine…while that may happen, there is probably one part of them that was changed; that one part is going to lead to another change, is going to lead to another change, is going to lead to another change.

This student articulated something valuable about cognitive development, but also seems to point at a potential area for future study on the structure of emerging leader programs as it relates to development. Her program is a single weekend retreat, but the other two programs in the study are currently multi-week programs that include a retreat. This insight raises the question as to whether a multi-week format may have development advantages to a single weekend retreat format. It does seem clear that regardless of delivery format, emerging leader participants report that participation in their programs leads them to look at a variety of topics in increasingly complex ways. A student who had participated in Howard University's Freshman Leadership Academy explained that she found the process invaluable and that she learned to see leadership as a much more diverse and complex idea, as the program pushed her to examine various leadership styles. She went on to explain that this exploration caused tension and disagreements, but "in our disagreements, in our

struggles, in our failures, we grow… it's literally a community that fosters growth"

(Interviewee ten, personal communication, September 30, 2014). This move from simple

ideas to complex ones was echoed by most participants in the study, and in most cases was

situated around new ways of understanding leadership.

Leadership Theory

I found several specific examples in the data that point to the presence of leadership

theories. First of all, I found that one of the primary themes present was the deconstruction

of hierarchical forms of leadership in favor of flexible and shared leadership (Komives et al.,

2011). Often student participants expressed surprise that their previously held notions of

leadership were incomplete, that leadership is far more than having a title and being in

charge of organizations. One student in Howard University's Freshman Leadership

Academy said that in high school she saw leadership as one thing but that through the

program she came to understand that "there are several different types of people, several

different types of leadership" (Interviewee five, personal communication, September 30,

2014). When asked to articulate a program philosophy, the director of the Office of Student

Leadership and Service which hosts the Emerging Leader Experience at Emory University

said "the philosophy is probably that we believe that all of our students have the capacity to

lead" (Interviewee seven, personal communication, October 6, 2014). This sentiment was

also articulated by a former participant in the University of South Florida's Emerging

Leader Institute who referenced the use of *StrengthsQuest* (Clifton, Anderson, & Schreiner,

2006) as a way of keeping the focus on personal strengths and explained that the use of the

tool at the retreat helped him develop into the person he is (Interviewee nine, personal

communication, September 23, 2014). StrengthsQuest is a strengths-based way of looking at personal leadership competencies.

One interesting feature I discovered through an analysis of the data is that hierarchical leadership often may be lauded in one breath and deconstructed in the next. Some participants at the University of South Florida regularly talked about status as something towards which they aspire, while also explaining that leadership could be about qualities that have nothing to do with status. Additionally, the Howard University Freshman Leadership Academy program, while intentionally housed in an executive-level office, strives to teach students that leadership is not always about holding positional power. The director of the Freshman Leadership Academy at Howard University suggested that because the program is sponsored by the Vice President's office, the students get to see the hierarchy and that there is a power in that the unit is sponsored up the chain (Interviewee two, personal communication, September 30, 2014). The Freshman Leadership Academy program seems to have established a good balance with student participants about how to contextualize hierarchy and shared leadership in a developmentally appropriate way.

Another strong example of leadership theory I found was what Kouzes and Posner describe as *modeling the way* (Kouzes & Posner, 2002). In the three programs there were peer mentors who served various roles as described in Chapter Four. One participant from Howard University's Freshman Leadership Academy explained that his journey was one that began with a desire to stand out and "be a leader among leaders" (Interviewee eight, personal communication, September 30, 2014). He explained that the student mentors were always reaching out on his behalf to help him reach his goals. He said, "Once you hear and see that, I guess in time it becomes… I don't need to stand out; I need to work with them."

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This represents not only a shift in perspective about whether personal attention for leadership is important, but also a clear recognition that others are modeling a form of shared leadership worth emulating. The advisor of Howard University's Freshman Leadership Academy spoke of the impact of the program on him by saying, "We've made an impact on the number of students studying critical languages …it prompted me to go back into the classroom; I speak Chinese. I study a critical language because I want to practice what I preach" (Interviewee four, personal communication, September 30, 2014). He goes on to say that "… the primary face from an executive standpoint is not just someone yelling out orders, it's someone who understands the commitment and understands the encouragement for African American students to study critical languages." This action is a perfect example of modeling the way and demonstrates to students a continuing commitment by accomplished professionals to engage continuously in leadership development.

I found some examples of the social change leadership model (Astin & Astin, 1996) in two programs: Howard and Emory. Several students in the study referenced doing service either in the program or after the program, often pointing to their emerging leader experience as the way they became engaged in service. Some of the University of South Florida Emerging Leader Institute participants, and all of the student facilitators, referenced this model in their interviews. One student participant, who went on to become a facilitator, said that when students "leave the Emerging Leader Institute they should be equipped to go into the community and make lasting, positive social change" (Interviewee three, personal communication, September 23, 2014). Although neither program specifically references the social change leadership model, students in both Howard University's Freshman Leadership

Academy and Emory University's Emerging Leader Experience participate in service

projects as part of their emerging leader experience. One student in Howard University's

Freshman Leadership Academy explained that while she facilitated a service project she

learned how to deal with others who didn't follow through and that she got "a lot of real

world experience… in a kind of heightened, shorter time frame" (Interviewee eleven,

personal communication, September 30, 2014) A former participant and student facilitator in

the University of South Florida's Emerging Leader Institute explained that he thinks:

> …a lot of students think *the* [*sic*] leadership office is all about leadership, service
>
> engagement is all about service; not at all. We have service portions of our
>
> leadership and we have leadership in civic engagement. (Interviewee five, personal
>
> communication, September 23, 2014)

Another aspect related to the social change model that showed up in the data specifically at

Emory University and Howard University were ideas relating to race and privilege. In

Howard University's Freshman Leadership Academy the director specifically mentioned

that the program "explores new strategies for fighting racism" (Interviewee two, personal

communication, September 30, 2014). The director of Emory University's Center for

Student Leadership and Service explained that "for some students, the concepts of privilege

and diversity are new" (Interviewee seven, personal communication, October 6, 2014).

Students in Emory University's Emerging Leader Experience program referenced deep

experiences with difference throughout their program, and also discussed specific activities

in the program that illustrate privilege. One of the activities used in Emory University's

Emerging Leader Experience is a privilege walk. The activity starts with participants

standing next to each other in a line. A facilitator asks participants to step forward or step

backward based on responses to prompts that are illustrative of privilege. Some of these prompts include questions about facing increased scrutiny or discrimination based on a participant's race, prompting those who have experienced these to step backwards. Similarly participants who have lives that have intersected privilege by having college educated parents, for example, are asked to step forward. The result of this process through several rounds of prompts is to physically illustrate the way privilege operates in the lives of college students.

Between the Theories

One of the richest aspects of this study involves the intersection between college student development theory and leadership theory. Foundational documents in student affairs suggest learning and development are synonymous (Keeling, 2007). The substance of most of my interviews with participants in the emerging leader programs supported this idea. One of the facilitators of the Emerging Leader Experience at Emory University stated that students often say that they "never really thought how instrumental conversations about inclusive leadership were going to be" (Interviewee four, personal communication, October 6, 2014) until years later when they are serving as the president of an organization and it comes up for them and they remembered the conversation we had in the Emerging Leader Experience. This was typical of many of the interviews with participants who suggested that their personal understanding of leadership changed as they grew and developed. One of the participants in Emory University's Emerging Leader Experience spoke of the beginning of the program as a competition of alpha leaders that then transitioned into collaboration as multiple leadership models were presented. When discussing leadership, the participant

explained that everyone had different opinions on what leadership was and that he learned that:

> …leadership is much more than just a position, and *it is* [*sic*] also something that should be continued throughout life. It's a journey …it doesn't just end after the last meeting, it's like a progress that you continue throughout your whole college career. (Interviewee ten, personal communication, October 6, 2014)

This student has captured a great deal of complexity by making clear that he fully expects to grow and develop as a leader continually. A participant in Howard University's Freshman Leadership Academy described a similar idea by saying, "looking at some of the older members, seeing how much they had developed and how poised they were only encouraged me more to want to grow and develop as they had" (Interviewee five, personal communication, September 30, 2014). The same participant discussed then in turn giving back to younger students to "…watch them develop into leaders." A former participant and student facilitator in the University of South Florida's Emerging Leader said that it was his…

> …first exposure to student affairs and how important leadership is in your college career…the Emerging Leader Institute is preparing you to get involved throughout your time at the University of South Florida and then even beyond that in personal development. (Interviewee two, personal communication, September 23, 2014)

There were many more examples of the intersection of leadership and development, but several students expressed something that seemed to reach a level of significance that is hard to relegate in a paper to a set of theories. There was a depth of expression that some

participants expressed that was seemingly so strong and life-altering that it is worthy of an entire study. One student who had participated in The University of South Florida's Emerging Leader Institute (ELI) explained that the program provided ample opportunities for self-exploration and that "ELI was more than a leadership program….We learned that we were capable of more than we thought we were" (Interviewee four, personal communication, September 23, 2014). These students spoke of these programs changing their lives. Another ELI participant explained that the program encouraged students to "make their own choices, versus being influenced by someone else's passion" (Interviewee five, personal communication, September 23, 2014). At times this was expressed in ways that was attached to a specific aspect of the student's personality as many spoke of their emerging leader experiences as helping them come out of their shell. Still others spoke of concrete shifts in outlook on professional goals and academic majors. Interestingly, a third kind of language about transformation emerged. Several students spoke of their emerging leader program as life-changing in ways that seemed to cut across any single leadership lesson or skill development activity. These students talked about their emerging leader experiences as having changed who they are.

There are data in this study that are not readily evident in the interview transcripts, and are only partially perceptible in the interview recordings. These data are found in the body language of a few students who were talking about how their life changed through their emerging leader experience. Sometimes this showed up as an unusually assertive statement that differed from the rest of the interview, but more often I perceived this as the way the student looked at me while expressing the thought. In several instances I was emotionally moved by what the student said, and one time I even stopped the interview

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briefly to collect myself. A young woman who had participated in the Howard University Freshman Leadership Academy was discussing the support system she experienced in the program and said that there was significant focus on bringing participants together "because these are the people that you are going to be leading with" (Interviewee nine, personal communication, September 30, 2014). She went on to explain what the benefits of the program were to her:

> …Oh my gosh, I've grown so much. I have grown as a young woman, as a leader, really as an African American woman just because we're surrounded by these powerful, powerful African American people…it gives me hope to become something more than *who I was* [*sic*] when I came … here as a freshman.

This sentiment intersects so many theoretical lenses that it would be beyond the scope of this study to unpack them all, but most certainly theories of African American identity development (Evans, Forney, & Guido-DiBrito, 1998) and those of women's identity development (Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger, & Tarule, 1997) are present. Although I can analyze this young woman's expression of her experience dispassionately through several lenses there is also a kind of empowered look at the past, present and future that speaks a truth so powerful I am just humbled as a researcher to have experienced it. In some ways it feels disingenuous to take such a strong statement about personal growth and faith and dissect it. As a practitioner I have experienced moments in emerging leader programs with students that have transcended curriculum, delivery format, andragogy and formal considerations like program mission and assessment. This interview emotionally drew me back to those moments in a way I wasn't expecting.

There are strong intersections between the experience of student in these programs and the bodies of theory reference in my conceptual framework. The most interesting and noteworthy finding is the ways in which students use language to discuss their own development specifically as it relates to their understanding of leadership concepts. This kind of reflection suggests that students who engage in emerging leader programs are learning to frame future leadership experiences both as they participate and for many years after their emerging leader experience.

CHAPTER SIX: IMPLICATIONS FOR THE FUTURE AND THE HALLMARKS

OF SUCCESSFUL EMERGING LEADER PROGRAMS

Throughout this chapter I will discuss how the findings of the study speak to gaps in

the scholarship surrounding first-year, co-curricular, non-positional leadership programs.

Additionally, throughout the chapter I will discuss the limitations of the study. I will then

connect the study findings to my conceptual framework and discuss any emergent theories

discovered through the grounded theory methodology. Through this process I will discuss

the hallmarks of successful emerging leader programs. Finally I will present the implications

of the study and suggest areas for further research.

Implications

This study helps to establish a place for the specific exploration of first-year, co-

curricular, non-positional emerging leader programs where none had previously existed.

There are references to these kinds of programs (Komives et al., 2011) but they have rarely

been studied outside of the context of larger leadership programs. Researchers interested in

emerging leader programs can use this study to establish critical elements of future studies.

Additionally practitioners involved in the facilitation of these kinds of programs at colleges

and universities can use this study in a few ways. First of all they can explore the data and

findings on office structure and program structure to identify potential benefits and

drawbacks to the various models. Secondly they can use this study to establish assessment criteria and related mission statements, learning outcomes and program outcomes. These criteria along with other literature referenced in this study may lay the foundation for new ways of evaluating program mission statements and also forming assessment plans.

Specifically the findings of this study suggest that the assertions of the W.K. Kellogg Foundation report that two of the four hallmarks of successful leadership programs concerning direct connections to academics through a formal connection to an academic affairs unit and curricular activities (Zimmerman-Oster & Burkhardt, 1999b) are incomplete. None of the programs in this study maintained formal cinnections to academic affairs and none of them involved curricular activities. This study calls into question whether an academic home beyond the department level is critical for success. If nothing else, the programs in this study achieve parts of their stated missions, though none of them have a formal connection to curricula or even a division of academic affairs. This is important as it further supports the notion that significant student learning occurs outside of formal curriculum and traditional classroom settings (Keeling, 2007).

Additionally, the learning reported by many participants in this study was life-changing and profound. George Kuh (2009) coined the term *high impact practice* to denote educational activities in which colleges and universitries can engage that strongly influence student persistence. The experience described by students in these emerging leader programs most certainly rises to a level I would call high impact. Students often refer to their emaerging leader experience throughout this study as tramsformative and life-changing. Even in instances in whih the program is contained withing a single over-night retreat, the students describe the impact of these programs as profound and significant. Additionally,

these programs share many aspects in common with other high-impact practices. Although the high impact practice known as *learning communities* generally denote linked academic courses or courses connected to a residential requirement (Lenning & Ebbers, 1999), by the most substantial measures the emerging leader programs in this study are learning in community. Most participants responded to my interview questions by switching regularly between the first person singular and first person plural. There is significant power in hearing students talk about their learning as a representative of their cohort.

Another implication of this study is that assessment of emerging leader programs is inconsistent between colleges and universities and also within each program. The rich experiences described by the students in this study make clear that they attribute a great deal of growth and development with their experience in the program, and that the kind of gains they describe are consistent with the program goals. There are also developmental gains that participants describe through their emerging leader experiences that are sometimes far beyond the scope of the program mission. In my professional experience the impetus for program assessment is often driven by two factors, accreditattion and program budget justification. One implication of this study is that assessment may also be important to provide critical information to program coordinators and facilitators about the experiences of participants in a way that can improve the delivery of the programs. In at least two of the programs I studied, students are experiencing growth and transformation in ways that transcend the program goals. This information is important as it is entirely possible that these outcomes are satisfying other institutional goals related to learning, persistence, institutional connection. Some participants explained that the connections they made in this program made a difference in their decision to persist at the instution, and impacted their

level of loyalty to their institution in ways that will translate to alumni giving. There are certainly other functional units and initiatives at these instutions invested in promoting student persistence and fostering young alumni connections. If the offices that sponsors these programs can think more broadly about the ways they assess their emerging leader programs, they may find aditional support from other areas in their division and between divisions.

Implications for Practice

The University of South Florida was the only program that used students who had never participated in their emerging leaders program to serve as student facilitators. Their rationale for this policy was to broaden the perspective of the teams leading the retreat. This model has significant benefits, as it can hard for students to see programs objectively, suspending their experience of the program for the purpose of creating strong learning environments for other students. Although the programs I studied had a level of institutional support that suggested they were not in jeopardy of being eliminated, I know of several emerging leader programs that have started at colleges and universities that have ceased operations when key personnel leave the institution (E. Cosentino, personal communication, March 3, 2015). The oldest program in this study was Emory University's Emerging Leader Experience which has existed for more than twenty years but has undergone many format changes. The youngest program, Howard University's Freshman Leadership Academy has only existed for five years. The issues of valuing outside perspectives in program facilitation and of finding sustainable models resonated with me as a professional involved in emerging leader programs.

Connections With my Practice. In the most recent emerging leader program in which I have worked we began the program using a shared leadership model. This program, called Sprout, is jointly housed in our campus' Office of Student Leadership and Engagement which is part of the division of student affairs and the Career Development Center which is part of the division of academic affairs. Each semester, our offices invite between one and three faculty and staff members from various areas on campus to serve as a cofacilitator for a semester. Although our program is less than four years old we have engaged faculty and staff members from three divisions and more than seven departments throughout campus including the director of admissions, the vice-president for student affairs, the associate dean of students, an assistant academic dean, the chair of the peace and conflict studies department and several more professionals who work at the assistant director level in a variety of student affairs and academic support areas.

This shared leadership model was critical in the fall semester of 2013 at which time two significant changes befell the program. First of all, the program co-founder who was the director of the Office of Student Leadership and Engagement left the institution shortly before the semester began. The second factor was that the program had engaged an average of 14 students a semester in each of its first four semesters, but the 2013 sign-up list had forty-eight students on it. The shared leadership model allowed us to offer two fall cohorts simultaneously. This was a significant tipping point in a program that draws from a freshman class that averages 350 students.

The grounded theory portion of the methodology does not provide any kind of reliable findings that can be generalized; however, grounded theory does provide space for a generalizable theory that is situated well for further study. In other words, the exploration of

the programs through the theoretical lenses employed in this study many have value for other like programs that rely on these two theoretical bases in their divisional, departmental or programmatic missions. For example, programs that cite leadership theory and student development theory as central to their operations, even on the departmental or divisional level, and also offer first-year, co-curricular, non-positional emerging leader programs may find value in examining the findings of this study.

Colleges and universities exploring the feasibility of creating emerging leader programs at their institutions could use this study as a roadmap. Specifically this study could be used to establish goals, structures and assessment plans. Additionally, the experiences articulated by student participants in this study can provide one way of understanding the potential impact of such programs. Although all students who participated in this study reported some form of positive outcome, a subsection described outcomes that were transformational. This potential most certainly warrants further study.

Revisiting the Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework worked well as a lens for this study. The success of the framework was mitigated by inconsistent, unavailable and poorly executed assessment within the programs; however, the assessment data that were available or referenced in interviews aided the understanding of the hallmarks of success of the programs. In future studies an examination of available assessment data as part of the conceptual framework is still important. Even the institutional decision to conduct formal assessment and the form of that assessment speaks to the program character and the hallmarks. For example, students conducted the University of South Florida's assessment annually. This decision speaks

strongly to a commitment of the sponsoring office to a student-run program. Additionally, at Howard University the program assessment efforts center largely on tracking the quantifiable successes of its graduates including the attainment of leadership positions on and off campus. This is consistent with the emphasis on professionalism throughout their program and also consistent with a positivistic view of program outcomes. In other words, the emphasis on quantifiable measures of student success suggests a certain value judgment on which outcomes matter most. Although this form of tracking is consistent with program goals, the students' experiences suggest that there are other transformational outcomes that may be difficult to measure quantitatively such as attitude shifts, increases in cognitive complexity and understanding and application of leadership theory.

Finally, as I discussed earlier in this chapter, the model may benefit from a more multi-faceted look at organizational structures. Specifically, program delivery format is substantially different from the structures of the hosting offices, such that these aspects could easily be considered as separate lenses in a framework. Of course, there is intersection between these two structural aspects of the programs in terms of the way that office mission statements and philosophy connect with the way programs are run. For example, at Howard University, the executive nature of the sponsoring office impacted several key aspects of the program format including the way participants dress, and the way they talk about personal outcomes related to networking with faculty, staff and administrators.

The Hallmarks of Successful Emerging Leader Programs

Through this study I have identified three specific hallmarks of successful first-year, co-curricular, non-positional emerging leader programs. These hallmarks differ significantly

from those Zimmerman-Oster and Burkhart established (1999b), but fit, at least

thematically, with the programmatic attributes of high-quality leadership programs

established by Darren Eich (2008). It is important to note that each of the aforementioned

sets of hallmarks and attributes were developed to discuss leadership programs generally

and not emerging leader programs specifically.

The first hallmark to emerge from this study is the importance of *peer mentorship*.

Throughout the entirety of this study student participants regularly referenced the

importance of student facilitators in ways that were significant to them. This fits Eich's

(2008) assertion that being student-centered is an important component of these programs.

The Emerging Leader Institute at the University of South Florida exemplified this hallmark

by engaging a team of student leaders in a cycle that would begin in the later part of each

spring semester to prepare for the retreat the following January. The students involved

engaged the program in ways consistent with the practice of student affairs professionals.

They examine previously conducted assessment reports, established a recruitment strategy,

recruited student participants through an application process and selected the program

participants. Additionally these student leaders plan the retreat by examining student

learning outcomes and program outcomes and constructing program activities designed to

achieve these goals. As previously mentioned, in some ways the student facilitator

experience in this program could almost be considered a leadership program within a

program. This program might be classified as an emerging leader facilitator program. The

Emerging Leader Institute at University of South Florida even has specific articulated

outcomes for students participating at this level. My experience as a student affairs

practitioner has reinforced the notion that this form of student engagement provides an

opportunity for students to develop many skills including marketing, networking, group facilitation and educational event planning.

The second hallmark is that of *connection*. Although connection was expressed differently in different programs, the theme was clear. Student participants related most of their emerging leader experiences and learning through the lens of relationships they had formed. Sometimes these connections were framed as practical tools like the creation of a network of leaders, while at other times these connections were framed through emotionally powerful words like family. The Freshman Leadership Academy at Howard University exemplified this hallmark in a powerful way. The students and other affiliates overwhelmingly spoke of the experience as a family. Not only did students indicate that they formed a family-like bond with other members of their cohorts, they viewed the experience through the lens of family. Specifically what I mean is that connection in this case was not just an outcome of the program that could be measured by following the connections students in each cohort made with each other, but instead the entirety of the program takes place in a paradigm of connection. Students in this program also spoke of other program affiliates who were part of the Freshman Leadership Academy as family even if they were not part of the same cohort experience. This may be reinforced by the shared intercultural experience embedded in the program, and may also speak to the cultural connectedness that many minority groups feel in a society dominated by a culture that is not their own.

The final hallmark I have identified is what I am calling *future framing*. Future framing is the ability of a program to teach leadership theories and ideas in ways that are developmentally appropriate, but may not have application until the future. All of these programs have figured out how to frame leadership in ways that first-year students can

understand in the present even if they will not have opportunities for application until the future.

Part of why assessment in these programs may be inconsistent is that the true outcomes of these programs may not be realized in the lives of participants until several years after they have participated in these emerging leader programs. In other words, if emerging leader programs are orientated towards fostering deeper understandings of leadership with students who are not yet in leadership positions, there may not be opportunities to fully demonstrate leadership gains until students engage in such roles.

One way to understand future framing is through the metaphor of planting seeds for future growth. Darrin Eich uses this metaphor in non-scholarly books that draws from much of his scholarship entitled *Root Down and Branch Out*. In my experience many professionals in college student development work express assumptions that their work with students is designed to create conditions that foster growth and development, the result of which may not be seen for months or years.

The concept of future framing should be used to evaluate the ways in which program assessment is constructed. The Freshman Leadership Academy at Howard University conducts longitudinal tracking of participants' grade point averages and participation in leadership roles; conversely, the Emerging Leader Institute at The University of South Florida assess the student experience through a robust set of survey questions about their learning and development, but conducts this assessment shortly after the program concludes. The concept of future framing would suggest that ideally assessment design will be longitudinal, but also focus on the learning, growth and development of the former

participants. The inter-cultural presentations delivered by participants in Howard

University's Freshman Leadership Academy are one of the best examples of capturing

future framing, and could most certainly be strengthened by articulating a rubric for these

presentations and capturing them on video.

The Hallmarks in my Professional Experience

My personal experience with emerging leader programs corroborates this

understanding. Many former students with whom I worked have contacted me to discuss

leadership and growth several semesters or even years after our shared emerging leader

experience. Three notable examples include an international student from Kyrgestan who

participated in the Kibo program at Lees-McRae College in 2005. She and I write each other

often and she frequently references the transformation and learning that she experienced in

her emerging leader experience. Another example came in the form of a series of

professional mentoring encounters with a former participant in the Emerging Leader

Program at Appalachian State University. I worked with a student a full twelve years after

her emerging leader experience on navigating the complexities of a navigating a new

leadership role at work. Our conversations referenced specific lessons and experiences from

the emerging leader experience. Finally, as I was originally establishing my potential

participant list for this study I reviewed thirty-nine programs. As I was examining the

website of one of the programs that fit my criteria I noticed a power point file that described

the program. I read the slides and when I saw the final one I immediately recognized the

name of the professional who had constructed the slides. The power point presentation was

one that had seemingly been used as partial justification of a new emerging leaders program

at the institution, and was authored by a student who was the first emerging leader program in which I ever worked.

Limitations of the Study

This study has several limitations. First of all, as with most qualitative studies, the findings in this study cannot be used to predict qualities of other emerging leader programs. This study was never intended to be generalized to other similar programs but rather to identify hallmarks of success as a starting point for understanding first-year, co-curricular, non-positional emerging leader programs. Case study as a methodology is designed to delve deeply into specific phenomena or cases in their current state without any thought that results would be identical in similar settings. The study was also limited by the lack of established research on these programs. For example, if there were a stronger body of research on the variance in program delivery format that I discussed in Chapter Four, my interview question asking participants about their continuation in the program would have been structured differently. Another factor in the shortcoming of that question is my personal experience as a researcher. I have been involved in four different emerging leader programs at three different colleges and universities, and also have friends who have offered these kinds of programs. In most of my personal and professional experience, emerging leader programs are delivered over several weeks and not simply in a single over-night retreat.

An additional limitation of this study stems from the participant selection process. Although the participant selection process was a good attempt to establish a list of successful first-year, co-curricular, non-positional emerging leader programs, in the absence

of a national standard the process was limiting. One reason for this limitation is the

relatively scant literature on leadership programs on college campuses. The panel of experts

I used to establish potential participants therefore overlapped in some affiliations. For

example, at least two of the experts had a formal affiliation at some point in their careers

with the National Clearinghouse for Leadership Programs at the University of Maryland.

Additionally, at least one other expert on my list attended the University of Maryland.

Although I did have several experts who did not share such close affiliations, it is still likely

a limitation of the study.

Finally, my original potential participant list included thirty-nine colleges and

universities. Although I provided the experts on the panel my specific criteria for the study,

only ten of the thirty-nine institutions had an emerging leader program that fit all criteria in

my study. The fact that these experts were aware of the criteria and still recommended

institutions without programs that fit supports the idea that these programs have not been

studied sufficiently as a subset of leadership programs; particularly considering the amount

of books, monographs and journal articles collectively published by my experts. Something

else interesting emerged during participant selection which was that my list included a

disproportionate amount of research institutions. I am unsure why this would be the case.

This could suggest that research institutions are in better financial positions to offer these

kinds of development opportunities to first-year students. Or perhaps the presence of these

programs at these institutions speaks to a mission critical belief that at institutions with

strong research foci, first-year students may need more engagement opportunities to connect

with their institutions. There is significant research that points to the value of programs

targeted at first-year students for persistence and student success as students develop the most during their first two years of college (Chickering, 1972).

Although these considerations would explain why emerging leader programs are more prevalent at research institutions than other institutional types, there is another possibility. When asking professionals and scholars to recommend potential participants for a study that relies as much on their opinion of programs' reputations as much as it does any objective criteria, there is a chance that other factors may impact the recommendations. Scholars and scholar-practitioners have almost all attended research institutions in their careers, but may or may not have experiences at comprehensive master's universities or liberal arts colleges. Additionally, reputation may be taken into consideration regarding research being conducted at institutions, or the presence of high-profile professionals at those institutions. In other words, if the experts were aware that there is a researcher who regularly publishes on student development or leadership development at an institution that also hosts a leadership program, this could create subconscious value for the program even if the researcher is not formally affiliated with it.

Areas for Future Study

One specific area of future study that would continue to fill the gap in the literature on emerging leader programs would be to conduct a comprehensive accounting of these programs and their various structures and formats. This work would aid future researchers in exploring the more complex issues of how assessment impacts such programs and an exploration of the hallmarks of successful programs.

Another area for future study may be an exploration in the ways that assessment is handled at institutions that fit different profiles. The one public institution in my study had several assessment reports and was also willing to share the data collected. Neither of the private institutions had specific program assessments that they were willing to share. This may point to a difference in the way assessment is valued at institutions of differing types, or it may point to assessment of programmatic efforts as related in some way to accountability to a state system or board.

The topic of mentorship was very present in this study, and yet the methodology employed in this study was not focused on that program aspect. An examination of mentorship in emerging leader programs is another area worth further exploration. Specifically, there seems to be a great deal of depth in various kinds of mentoring relationships in these programs and an exploration of those roles would likely be of great benefit to program coordinators and other practitioners involved in leadership development.

Finally, I believe that the experience that international students may have in emerging leader programs may differ significantly from their domestic peers. Although I was able to identify in a cursory way how the presence of the student's ethnic identity or culture may have impacted his responses, my background in student development theory has limits. I think that given the cultural aspects of leadership and also college student development theory, that exploring the experience of international students' experiences in emerging leader programs may be an important area for further study.

There were numerous intersections between the student experiences in the various emerging leader programs. Among these intersections were strong connections with college

student development theory and leadership theory. Most notably the notions of engagement theory and cognitive development theory were present in the data. Additionally, a strong theme around shifting leadership paradigms was present, specifically as it relates to the dichotomy of hierarchy and community. Successful emerging leader programs demonstrate an understanding of how college students develop; and when that development is aided by a connection with student mentors, these programs can frame the future of leadership.

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Appendix A

Interview protocol

Interview Setting

Interviews will be conducted with individuals who have either facilitated or

participated in the programs being studied; this will include current participants. Interviews

will be recorded and conducted with individuals or in small group settings. Small group

interviews will only be conducted with groups of people with similar affiliation to the

program. The determination as to whether interviews will be conducted with individuals or

in small group settings will depend largely on the availability of the participants. Interviews

may be conducted via telephone, conference call, Skype or in person.

Interview Questions for Students What drew you to participate in this program?

1. What drew you to participate in this program?

2. Why did you continue to participate in this program?

3. What have been the major benefits of this program to you personally?

4. What have been the major challenges in participation in this program?

5. Would you recommend this program to other students? Why or why not?

Interview questions for Facilitators

1. What is the nature of your affiliation with this program?

       i. Is this program regularly assessed?

      ii. How does that assessment inform the program?

   b. Follow up question if the answer to Q2 is "no"

      i. Are there specific reasons the program isn't assessed?

      ii. Are there currently plans for future assessment?

2. What do you believe contributes to the success of this program?

3. How do organizational structures impact this program?

Additional follow up questions may be needed on a per case basis.

Appendix B

Informed Consent Form

Interviewee Consent Form

I agree to participate as an interviewee in this research project, which concerns an exploration of first-year, non-positional, co-curricular emerging leader programs at colleges and universities. This study will be conducted in 2014. The interview portion of the data-collection included in this study will last no longer than 90 minutes. I understand that my comments will be recorded, transcribed and used for a doctoral dissertation to be conducted by Alan Mueller, principle investigator and doctoral student. The interview(s) will take place during spring semester 2014. There are no foreseeable risks associated with participation in this study. I also know that this study may benefit participants indirectly, as findings from this study may assist those designing and facilitating emerging leader programs in improving their programmatic offerings.

I give Alan Mueller ownership of the recordings and transcripts from the interview(s) he conducts with me and understand that tapes and transcripts will be kept in his possession. I understand that information or quotations from the interview(s) will be published in his dissertation, and that he will make every reasonable effort to insure anonymity. I understand I will receive no compensation for the interview.

I understand that the interview is voluntary and I can end it at any time without consequence. I also understand that if I have questions about this research project, I can call the principle investigator, Alan Mueller at 336-316-2313 or the advising faculty member, Barbara Howard at 336-940-2827 or contact Appalachian State University's Office of Research Protections at (828) 262-7981 or irb@appstate.edu.

☐ I request that my name **<u>not</u>** be used in connection with tapes, transcripts, or publications resulting from this interview.

☐ I request that my name **<u>be used</u>** in connection with tapes, transcripts, or publications resulting from this interview.

_____   _____
Name of Interviewer (printed)   Name of Interviewee (printed)

_____   _____
Signature of Interviewer   Signature of Interviewee

_____
Date(s) of Interview (s)

Biography

Alan Mueller is a native of North Carolina. He holds multiple degrees from Appalachian State University including a B.A. in Philsohpy & Religion, an M.A. in College Student Development, an Ed.S. in Higher Education Administration and an Ed.D. in Educational Leadership. He is also a Myers-Briggs Type Indicator Certified Interpreter. Alan has worked in sales, customer service, consumer lending and has spent the last fourteen years as an administrator in higher education. While in higher education, Alan has worked in leadership development, orientation, career services, academic advising and campus activities. He has presented and published regionally and nationally on a variety of topics including experiential education, multiculturalism, campus-based marketing, values-based education, and the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator. He currently serves as the Assistant Dean for Career Development & Community Learning at Guilford College in Greensboro, North Carolina.