University of South Dakota

USD RED

Spring 5-8-2021

From Sisterhood to the Senate: The Sorority Experience and Preparing Women for Political Leadership

Kelli L. Susemihl
University of South Dakota

Follow this and additional works at: https://red.library.usd.edu/honors-thesis

Part of the Adult and Continuing Education Commons, American Politics Commons, and the Higher Education Commons

FROM SISTERHOOD TO THE SENATE: THE SORORITY EXPERIENCE AND
PREPARING WOMEN FOR POLITICAL LEADERSHIP

by

Kelli Susemihl

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
Of the Requirements for the
University Honors Program

_____

Department of Political Science
The University of South Dakota
May 2021

The members of the Honors Thesis Committee appointed
to examine the thesis of Kelli Susemihl
find it satisfactory and recommend that it be accepted.

_____

Dr. Julia Hellwege
Professor of Political Science
Director of the Committee

_____

Sarah Wittmuss, JD
Coordinator, Supplemental Instruction & Tutoring
Academic & Career Planning Center & Honors Program

_____

Katey Ulrich
Director of Admissions and Marketing
USD Knudson School of Law

Abstract

From Sisterhood to the Senate: The Sorority Experience and Preparing Women for
Political Leadership

Kelli Susemihl
Director: Julia Hellwege, Ph.D.

Since the founding of the first Greek organizations in colonial America, fraternities and sororities have aimed to provide communities of support and empowerment for their members. Research on outcomes of sorority participation has shown increased social skills, confidence in leadership, and professional networking and connections. Existing literature surrounding women's underrepresentation in U.S. politics shows that to bridge the political gender gap, more women need to be encouraged to run for office and have prior political socialization and experience. To compare skills acquired from the sorority experience and preparation for political careers, this study conducts a survey of 274 current and alumnae members of National Panhellenic Conference organizations, asking participants to reflect on how their experience has helped equip them for leadership roles outside of the organization. The results of this survey found that this sample of women's sorority experiences were consistent with what was found in literature and that their experience helped them acquire technical, social, and leadership skills. Results also demonstrate that sorority life is a successful source of support, empowerment, and professional development during one's time in higher education. This study can be used to expand programming on values and skills for sorority members, establish the relevance of Greek organizations, and help women understand one way they can develop skills needed to hold public office.

KEYWORDS: Sorority, Greek life, Leadership, Women in politics, Professional development, Empowerment, Skills

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

There are an innumerable amount of people who made it possible for me to complete this project. I cannot express enough my appreciation to my parents and friends for believing in me. Your insisting that "You'll get it done!", even if you weren't necessarily sure yourself that I, a notorious procrastinator, could actually pull it off, helped me push through when the going got tough. Although it is impossible for me to thank each of them individually, there are several shoutouts I would like to give to those who helped me complete this project.

First, I want to thank the University of South Dakota Greek community for supporting me through this project by participating in and distributing my survey. The help I received in this project was the culmination of the Greek Unity I have experienced in my time at USD; in fact, as I sat down to write these acknowledgements, Alpha Phi had welcomed dozens of Pi Phis into their home after a gas leak evacuation, a true testament to what the USD Greek community stands for. Thank you Kappa Alpha Theta, Alpha Xi Delta, and Alpha Phi for taking the time to provide your insight into my survey and for allowing me to experience pieces of your organizations over the past four years!

Second, I want to thank my Pi Phi "sisters" for the inspiration for this project. My time in this organization has opened my eyes to the greatness women can achieve, and I have been honored to spend my last four years in the presence of our future teachers, nurses, doctors, politicians, and business leaders. When I served on SD Alpha's Executive Council as New Member Coordinator and in 2020 as Chapter President, I was able to witness even more the resilience and power of the women I was leading. In particular, my role as Chapter President in a year of such unprecedented challenges and

7

changes taught me invaluable skills that I will carry with me throughout my life, including how to lead with confidence, how to lead by example, and how to make difficult decisions in order to benefit the organization as a whole. My participation in Pi Beta Phi has also given me unique experiences of collaborating with other leading college women from universities across the country, gaining wisdom from alumnae women as they navigate their own careers, and even lobbying Congress on behalf of Pi Beta Phi and other fraternal organizations. These experiences were the inspiration of this thesis, as my experience in sorority life has better prepared me to enter the professional world and helped me develop skills that I can take to future educational opportunities and careers. Being chosen to lead such an amazing organization of women has been one of the greatest honors of my life so far; I cannot think of how different my college experience would have been had I not made the decision to go through the recruitment process and join Pi Beta Phi.

Lastly, I want to thank the individuals who took the time to help me develop the ideas, research, and writing in this project. Dr. Hellwege, you have been an inspiration and role model to me throughout my time at USD, and I cannot thank you enough for your guidance not only on this thesis, but in the classroom and in life as a whole. You are a huge piece of my desire in work in higher education someday, and you have undoubtedly touched many lives alongside my own. Sarah Wittmuss, from helping me pick out my first college class schedule to helping me make these thesis ideas a reality (along with the gentle nudge to actually get started), you have been a constant throughout my time in the USD Honors Program. Katey Ulrich, you are the definition of Pi Phi's core value of lifelong commitment; thank you for showing me how Pi Phi can continue to

shape our lives even after graduation. Finally, I cannot thank Maddy, my lifelong best friend, for the immense time she took to proofread and give feedback on every single word of this project. To say the least, there are not many friends who would be willing to read a 70-page paper on top of their own busy lives, but, again, there are not many friends that are as consistent, helpful, and supportive as Maddy.

Completing this thesis project has allowed me to reflect upon my own sorority experience and appreciate how it has developed me into the person I am today. This writing and research experience will be something I carry with me into graduate school and my future career, and I again thank my parents, friends, Greek peers, and advisors for helping me pull this off.

DEDICATION

For the women of 118 N. Plum.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

On April 28, 1867, twelve women attending Monmouth College in Illinois gathered in a second-floor bedroom to create the first women's fraternity, I.C. Sorosis, later known in 1888 as Pi Beta Phi.[1] Three years later, in 1870, Bettie Locke was denied full membership in her brother's fraternity at DePauw University in Indiana, and subsequently created Kappa Alpha Theta, the first women's organization to refer to itself using Greek letters.[2] In 1882, Gamma Phi Beta became the first women's fraternity to utilize the term "sorority," which has become the common term to distinguish between female Greek organizations and their male counterparts, fraternities.[3] These three "firsts" in the world of women's fraternities and sororities have expanded into the twenty-six women's-only social organizations in the National Panhellenic Conference (NPC), North America's sorority system. In these twenty-six organizations are 3,288 chapters located on more than 670 college campuses, with over 400,000 active undergraduate members.[4] Created with the purpose of uniting like-minded women through their college education, shared values, and social endeavors, these women's organizations have created environments for women to develop leadership skills, give back to their communities, and be empowered throughout their college education.

Throughout the past 150 years, since the founding of the first women's fraternity, sororities have maintained their similar commitment to values and cultivating successful

[1] Pi Beta Phi Fraternity for Women, "Timeline: Through the Years," Pi Beta Phi, last modified 2021, accessed March 13, 2021, https://history.pibetaphi.org/about/timeline.

[2] Kappa Alpha Theta, "Theta Roots," Kappa Alpha Theta, last modified 2021, accessed March 14, 2021, https://www.kappaalphatheta.org/about-us/theta-roots.

[3] Craig L. Torbenson, "From the Beginning: A History of College Fraternities and Sororities," in *Brothers and Sisters: Diversity in College Fraternities and Sororities*, ed. Craig L. Torbenson and Gregory S. Parks (Madison, WI: Fairleigh Dickson University Press, 2009), 23.

[4] Panhellenic Club of Annapolis, "The National Panhellenic Conference," Annapolis Alumnae Panhellenic, last modified 2021, accessed March 14, 2021, https://panhellannapolis.org/NPC.

women. According to the National Panhellenic Conference, their organizations strive to create meaningful, supportive relationships among members, based on their core values of friendship, leadership, service, knowledge, integrity, and community.[5] Individual sororities have similar values reflected in their organizations; for example, Alpha Phi's six core values are sisterhood, service, scholarship, leadership, loyalty, and character.[6] Studies have shown that women in sororities develop higher levels of leadership than women who are unaffiliated.[7] Students in Greek life also tend to have higher rates of socialization and involvement in other extracurricular activities.[8] In addition, although there is no clear relationship defined between higher rates of academic achievement and Greek affiliation, students involved in sororities experienced higher levels of academic support, both from universities and their Greek organizations. Women involved in sororities also have higher rates of involvement in philanthropic efforts and community service.[9] Women are often encouraged to join Greek organizations for the benefits of a "home away from home," personal and professional development, socialization, and the opportunity to be involved in other campus organizations.[10]

---

[5]National Panhellenic Conference, "Mission, Vision, and Purpose," National Panhellenic Conference, last modified 2021, accessed March 14, 2021, https://www.npcwomen.org/about/mission-vision-and-purpose/.
[6]Alpha Phi, "Join a Sisterhood Full of Heart," Alpha Phi, last modified 2021, accessed March 14, 2021, https://alphaphi.org/join-alpha-phi/.
[7]Georgianna L. Martin, Michael S. Hevel, and Ernest T. Pascarella, "Do Fraternities and Sororities Enhance Socially Responsible Leadership?," *Journal of Student Affairs Research and Practice* 49, no. 3 (August 22, 2012): 267, https://doi.org/10.1515/jsarp-2012-6245.
[8]Gary R. Pike, "The Influence of Fraternity or Sorority Membership on Students' College Experiences and Cognitive Development," *Research in Higher Education* 41 (February 2000): 135-136, accessed March 6, 2021, https://doi.org/10.1023/A:1007046513949.
[9]Ashley M. Asel, Tricia A. Selfert, and Ernest T. Pascarella, "The Effects of Fraternity/Sorority Membership on College Experiences and Outcomes: A Portrait of Complexity," *Oracle: The Research Journal of the Association of Fraternity/Sorority Advisors* 4, no. 2 (September 2009): 1-2, accessed March 6, 2021, https://doi.org/10.25774/2p5f-gt14.
[10]University of New Mexico, "Benefits (Why Join)," The University of New Mexico: Fraternity and Sorority Life, last modified 2021, accessed March 14, 2021, https://greeks.unm.edu/become-a-member/joining-a-greek-organization/benefits-why-join.html.

Even in 2021, women still face obstacles in becoming involved in U.S. politics, including societal expectations of women, the pressures of maintaining a family life, lack of political ambition, and less familiarity with political environments. However, the social, leadership, and networking skills taught through the sorority experience can assist in political success. In fact, many well-known female politicians and other public figures were involved in sorority life during their undergraduate college experience. For example, current Alaska Senator Lisa Murkowski is a Pi Beta Phi; current Massachusetts Senator Elizabeth Warren is a Kappa Alpha Theta; former U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice is an Alpha Chi Omega; former Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg was an Alpha Epsilon Phi; and former California Senator and now U.S. Vice President Kamala Harris is a member of Alpha Kappa Alpha.[11] With 76 percent of U.S. Congressional representatives belonging to a Greek chapter, both fraternities and sororities are setting their members up for political success.[12]

Amidst the discussion of benefits of the sorority experience, it is also important to acknowledge contemporary criticism of Greek life. One movement surrounding the criticism of sororities is the "Abolish Greek Life" movement. This movement calls for chapters to disband in order to address their contribution to perpetuating privilege and exclusivity on college campuses, although the movement's critics argue that this response is incomplete and does not properly solve the issues Greek life has created.[13] It is

[11]Fran Becque, "Female U.S. Senators and Their Sorority Affiliation – 2021 Edition," Fraternity History and More, last modified 2021, accessed March 19, 2021, https://www.franbecque.com/female-senators-sorority-affiliation-2017-edition/.

[12]Clio Chang, "Separate but Unequal in College Greek Life," The Century Foundation, last modified August 12, 2014, accessed March 19, 2021, https://tcf.org/content/commentary/separate-but-unequal-in-college-greek-life/.

[13]Joey Lautrup, "Abolish Greek Life? See How a Campus Debate Reflects the Nationwide Racial Justice Reckoning," Time, last modified December 16, 2020, accessed March 17, 2021, https://time.com/5921947/abolish-greek-life-debate/.

important to acknowledge that Greek life has had an exclusionary past regarding socioeconomic status, race, and other forms of privilege that can make getting a bid to a Greek organization more feasible. While still recognizing the professional and personal benefits that result from participating in Greek Life, critics argue that these opportunities are not available for all college students from different backgrounds.[14] However, many organizations are taking active steps to combat this history and promote equitable policies in their chapters, such as completely eliminating preferential treatment for the descendants of current and alumnae members, referred to as legacies.[15] Organizations have also pushed for improvements in diversity by adding diversity and inclusion positions to their leadership teams. Goals of these positions are to create mindfulness surrounding topics of diversity, equity, and inclusion within the chapter, promote awareness of social issues, and build partnerships with external cultural organizations.[16] Understanding how sororities can set up their members for success post-graduation is vital to combating negative stereotypes surrounding women in Greek life and to help establish their relevance in today's society. As this paper will demonstrate, sorority life also provides an outlet for women in higher education to empower one another, an environment to develop leadership, communication, and problem-solving skills that can be applied in post-graduate life.

This study explores skills learned throughout the sorority experience as a way women can prepare themselves to run for public office. To do this, I reviewed literature

---

[14]Chang, "Separate but Unequal," The Century Foundation.
[15]Kappa Alpha Theta, "Kappa Alpha Theta Legacy Policy Update," Kappa Alpha Theta, last modified July 23, 2020, accessed March 19, 2021, https://www.kappaalphatheta.org/blog/fraternity/kappa-alpha-theta-legacy-policy-update.
[16]*Director Diversity and Inclusion: Pilot Chapter Officer Job Description* (Pi Beta Phi Fraternity for Women, 2020), 1.

on the outcomes of sorority involvement and women in politics. I then conducted a survey of 274 women who are currently or have previously been involved in a sorority, asking participants to reflect upon how their experience has helped equip them for leadership roles outside of the organization. I asked questions about encouragement, empowerment, and skills-acquisition within their chapter, as well as asking them to rank skills they had learned from their experience. I then assessed the responses to the survey to existing literature and found that the responses of my participating women were consistent with this research. From these responses, I also found that sorority participation can provide members with experiences that literature says are important for women in politics, such as familiarity with leadership and encouragement to run. Styles of leadership for women were also consistent between survey responses and other research, demonstrating that the professional and leadership skills learned in the sorority experience can prepare women to both run for and hold political office. This study is important to sorority women, and women as a whole, as it helps understand one way to develop the skills necessary for successful political leadership. This study is also important in establishing the relevance of Greek life in today's higher education environment. The results of this research demonstrate that sorority life is a successful source of support, empowerment, and professional development during one's time in higher education.

CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This chapter will cover existing literature on sorority history, outcomes of sorority participation, obstacles for women in politics, and preparing women to run and hold political office. Literature exploring the history of sororities focuses on their desire to create social organizations that were for women, not just men, as well as their commitment to holding their members to a higher standard of values. Research studying the effects of participation in Greek life explores both positive and negative effects of participating in these organizations, in areas such as leadership, socialization, and academics. Research studying women in politics focuses on obstacles in comparison to men, incentives to run for political office, and styles of leadership.

Survey of Sorority History

Understanding the history of sororities and their expansion, culture, and organizational structures is critical to the study of these groups as values-based organizations. Greek life in higher education began with the founding of men's organizations called fraternities. Men's fraternities have their roots in college life in colonial America, as students congregated in large communities to gain an education. At the time, learning at universities was primarily based on the English-style of learning of memorization and repetition, and little discussion was permitted in the classroom. During this period, college administration served as parental substitutes for university students; there were strict rules and curfews regarding socialization, studying, and eating and drinking.[17] In retaliation to their rigid university structure, students formed extracurricular, off-campus student organizations that could revolve around topics such

---

[17]Torbenson, "From the Beginning," 16.

as religion, sharing ideas and poetry, and smoking and drinking.[18] The most important

and influential of these organizations were literary societies, which spiked in popularity

in 1760. These organizations, usually two to three per campus, competed with each other

for members, taught their members skills in speaking and writing, and used secret rituals,

mottos, and badges.[19] On December 5, 1776, five male students at the William and Mary

College in Virginia formed Phi Beta Kappa, the first organization to use Greek letters in

its name.[20] After Kappa Alpha Society, Sigma Phi, and Delta Phi were founded in the late

1820s, fraternity life became firmly established in American university culture as the

movement expanded to colleges around the country.[21] With the creation of fraternities,

the concept of creating like-minded social groups to encourage their members in their

endeavors was born.

Creation of Women's Only Organizations

Sororities, first known as women's fraternities, began as the female counterparts

of fraternities and were a way for women to enjoy similar benefits of these male social

organizations. As more women began to attend college in the 1830s, many prominent

universities became coeducational, but women continued to find themselves in male-

dominated environments. In the growing coed college campuses of the Midwest and

South, as opposed to the East's women's only institutions, female students sought out

opportunities to unify and to organize into communities for support.[22] One way they

sought to do this was through joining the already established men's fraternities. However,

---

[18]Ibid., 18-19.
[19]Torbenson, "From the Beginning," 18-19.
[20]Ibid., 15.
[21]Ibid., 21-22.
[22]Ibid., 22.

while some organizations allowed women to "belong" to their group, they did not extend full membership. Although fraternities such as Sigma Alpha Epsilon and Pi Kappa Alpha were known to have women as members, their role was primarily to use the fraternity homes to entertain, decorate for, and feed their "brothers," and they were unable to enjoy the full benefits of membership.[23] In objection, women began to form their own single-sex organizations to provide similar benefits and activities and to elevate their position on campus.

The first women's-only college organizations began as literary societies at Wesleyan College in Georgia in 1851. These first organizations eventually became chapters of the national Greek organizations Alpha Delta Pi and Phi Mu in the early 1900s.[24] The first organization founded in direct contrast to the men's fraternities was the women's fraternity of Pi Beta Phi in 1867, known at the time as I.C. Sorosis. After the founding of its second chapter in 1869 in Mount Pleasant, Iowa, it officially became a national organization.[25] Shortly after, in 1870, Bettie Locke was asked to promote her brother's fraternity by wearing their pin, but was still denied the benefits of full membership in the organization. Alongside three other students, all among the first women to be admitted into DePauw University in Indiana, Locke formed Kappa Alpha Theta, the first women's organization to use Greek Letters.[26] In 1882, the literary society of Gamma Phi Beta at Syracuse University became the first women's fraternity to distinguish themselves using the word "sorority," which has become the umbrella term

[23]Ibid., 23.
[24]Torbenson, "From the Beginning," 23.
[25]Pi Beta Phi Fraternity for Women, "Timeline: Through," Pi Beta Phi.
[26]Kappa Alpha Theta, "Theta Roots," Kappa Alpha Theta.

for women's-only social organizations.[27] For the purpose of this paper, the terms "women's fraternity" and "sorority" are used somewhat interchangeably, although certain organizations, such as Pi Beta Phi, officially call themselves women's fraternities, and not sororities.

Expansion of Greek Life

The expansion of fraternities and sororities across the United States and Canada can be categorized into three major waves. The first wave, from 1824 to 1874, consisted primarily of white, male, Protestant fraternities in New England; 17.7 percent of the national organizations today were founded during this wave. The second wave of expansion of fraternity life, from 1885 to 1929, saw creation of organizations created to cater to specific cultural groups, such as Jews and African Americans. This wave also saw a boom in the expansion of sororities, and expansion across all spectrums of Greek life occurred across New England, the Midwest, and the South. Thirty-five percent of total national organizations were founded during this period. The third wave occurred from 1975 to 1999. Although traditional Greek life had already been firmly established at this point, this wave saw an increase in multicultural organizations, particularly among Native Americans and Asian Americans. This wave, taking place primarily on the West Coast in California, accounted for 38.1 percent of current national sororities and fraternities.[28] In 1887, the first sorority, Kappa Alpha Theta, was established in Toronto.[29]

---

[27]Gamma Phi Beta, "Gamma Phi Beta History," Gamma Phi Beta: True and Constant, last modified 2021, accessed March 20, 2021, https://www.gammaphibeta.org/History/Decades.
[28]Torbenson, "From the Beginning," 23-26.
[29]Kappa Alpha Theta, "Theta Roots," Kappa Alpha Theta.

In 1891, the first meeting between national women's fraternity organizations took place. The attending organizations discussed the importance of unity amongst sororities, and was officially named the National Panhellenic Conference (NPC) in 1911. Today, the NPC consists of 26 social sororities and women's fraternities, and although each member organization is an autonomous entity, this conference serves as guidance in responding to current events, recruitment, and maintaining the importance of values (Appendix A).[30] However, in the era of legal "separate but equal" segregation under Plessy v. Ferguson, Greek life was restricted from non-white populations. In opposition, Greek organizations based on culture, as well as socialization, were formed. One example of this is the founding of African American fraternities and sororities, the first being Alpha Phi Alpha at Cornell University in 1906.[31] To govern these historically-black Greek organizations, the National Pan-Hellenic Council, also known as "The Divine Nine," was created in 1930 at Howard University, with a similar mission to the National Panhellenic Conference.[32] The forming of umbrella organizations to guide Greek life communities has helped individual member organizations stay committed to being values-based organizations.

Throughout the 19th and 20th centuries, Greek life flourished throughout North America, and today there are more than 350 national social fraternities and sororities across the United States and Canada. In addition to national sorority and fraternity

---

[30]*Manual of Information* (Carmel, IN: National Panhellenic Conference, 2021), 8-9, accessed March 20, 2021, https://www.npcwomen.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/2037/2017/11/NPC-Manual-of-Information.pdf.

[31]Lawrence C. Ross, *The Divine Nine: The History of African American Fraternities and Sororities* (New York: Kensington Publishing, 2001), 5-6.

[32]Oklahoma State University, "History of the National Pan-Hellenic Council, Inc.," Oklahoma State University: Fraternity and Sorority Affairs, last modified 2021, accessed March 20, 2021, https://lcl.okstate.edu/gogreek/history-national-pan-hellenic-council-inc.html.

organizations, local Greek chapters with similar purposes and styles of ritual continue to be formed in campuses across the continent.[33] A theme in the formation of Greek life is the desire to create communities of support in the face of exclusion and adversity. This theme permeates the history of Greek life, demonstrated by the formation of fraternities in adversity to colonial America's rigid university structure, the creation of sororities in traditionally male-dominated universities, and the formation of Black fraternities as a response to exclusion. Drawing upon its history of empowerment, sorority life today can draw upon its roots to prepare women for leadership in a male-dominated society and political systems.

Outcomes of Sorority Involvement

Emphasis on Values

Sororities were created with the intention of forming communities of support, along with cultivating values and encouraging academic success among their members. Today, sororities still place a high emphasis on values, with each chapter having their own listed "core values." These values include themes of friendship, philanthropic service, leadership, community, respect, personal and intellectual growth, and integrity.[34] Even before joining an organization, these values are important, as sororities try to select members with their organization's values during the recruitment process.[35] Through new member education and programming such as Pi Beta Phi's Leading with Values, which are a series of lesson plans the chapter completes together at various points throughout the year, sororities continue to instill their values in their members throughout their

---

[33]Torbenson, "From the Beginning," 15.
[34]*Manual of Information*, 3.
[35]*Manual of Information*, 44.

college experience.[36] For this reason, NPC sororities are referred to as "values-based organizations."[37] Most research on sorority and fraternity life investigates risks associated with membership, such as drug and alcohol use. However, there is a gap in research regarding individual outcomes of sorority membership. In addition, most research on this topic has lumped both fraternities and sororities together, even though there are major differences surrounding the goals and cultures of men's and women's groups.[38] Existing research on outcomes of sorority participation focuses on whether sororities are effectively practicing their values.

Although Greek organizations emphasize instilling positive values in their members, some students may feel hesitant about joining Greek life due to the possible negative side effects. One study, published in the *Journal of College Student Development,* explored the impact joining a sorority or fraternity can have on a first-year student's collegiate success. This study identified five areas in which they would compare Greek-affiliated first-years with their unaffiliated peers: moral reasoning, cognitive development, intercultural effectiveness, inclination to inquire and lifelong learning, and psychological well-being.[39] The researchers selected 4,501 college students to be administered surveys before and after their first year of college to examine the differing responses from Greek-affiliated and non Greek-affiliated students.[40] The results

---

[36]Pi Beta Phi Fraternity for Women, "Connecting to Our Core Values," Pi Beta Phi, last modified 2021, accessed March 20, 2021, https://www.pibetaphi.org/collegiateLWV.
[37]*Manual of Information*, 44.
[38]Larry Long, "Unchallenged, Professed Core Values: Do Undergraduate Fraternity/Sorority Members Actually Benefit in the Areas of Scholarship, Leadership, Service, and Friendship?," *College Student Affairs Journal* 30, no. 2 (2012): 16, accessed March 29, 2021.
[39]Georgianna L. Martin et al., "New Evidence on the Effects of Fraternity and Sorority Affiliation During the First Year of College," *Journal of College Student Development* 52, no. 5 (September/October 2011): 543, accessed March 21, 2021, https://doi.org/10.1353/csd.2011.0062.
[40]Martin et al., "New Evidence," 545-546.

showed that there were no significant differences between the two groups, and that the students' participation in Greek life did not harm their cognitive ability. However, one limitation of this study was that it failed to assess the experiences of affiliated members for the next three years of their involvement in the organization. This would have been useful to investigate, as many members take on leadership positions and become more involved as upperclassmen.[41] This study demonstrated that values and skills acquisition as a member of a Greek organization does not happen in the freshmen year, but instead takes place as the member becomes more involved and potentially holds leadership office.

Other studies focused on the outcomes and experiences of sorority members throughout their involvement. The acquisition of values is one lens in which outcomes of sorority participation can be studied. One study, conducted by Larry Long, researched whether graduates of sororities and fraternities had actually grown in the areas of scholarship, leadership, friendship, and service: all of which are values that Greek organizations promote. This study, which surveyed active sorority and fraternity members from 15 southeastern U.S. higher education institutions, found that participants from all grades had experienced growth in these areas.[42] In leadership, the students responded that they had gained confidence in decision-making skills, time management skills, and oral communication skills. The participants of this study also showed high degrees of participation in community service.[43] Another study, published in *The Research Journal of the Association of Fraternity/Sorority Advisors*, sought to address

---

[41]Ibid., 550-551.
[42]Long, "Unchallenged, Professed," 19-20.
[43]Ibid., 24-25.

both the positive and negative outcomes of being a member of a sorority or fraternity, in regards to certain values such as socialization/friendship, community service, and overall campus involvement. After surveying 3,153 first-year and senior students, the researchers found that participation in Greek organizations increased social integration, community service, and involvement in a broad range of campus activities in comparison to their unaffiliated peers.[44] However, the study also discovered negative outcomes related to Greek life, such as higher rates of participation in binge drinking and lack of diversity in members' social circles. As a whole, the article concluded that participation in Greek life and its impact on college experience is complex and can differ depending on the member, the organization, or the host institution.[45] In regards to core values that sororities promote, such as friendship, service, and integrity, studies have found both positive and negative impacts on participating students.

Another value that is held in high regard by sororities is scholarship and academic success. Various studies researching this topic have formed differing opinions on participation in a sorority's effect on academic performance. For example, Long's study described some of the mechanisms that these organizations have in place to help their members strive for academic success, including study hours, study events, and incentives for good grades. Long's study also showed, however, that members in these organizations did not spend as much time on their academics as they should, hypothesizing that their sorority experience has directed their time and attention elsewhere.[46] The study previously discussed, conducted by Asel, Selfert, and Pascarella,

---

[44]Asel, Selfert, and Pascarella, "The Effects," 5-7.
[45]Ibid., 7.
[46]Long, "Unchallenged, Professed," 23-24.

found that in the first-year students and seniors that were surveyed, there were no differences in academic performance or success, and that participation in Greek organizations had no impact, positive or negative, on their college success. However, another study, conducted by Ronald Yates, found that sorority and fraternity communities can greatly influence academic success, leading to a more well-rounded college experience and higher graduation rates. The purpose of this study was to offer insight to higher education administrators into whether adding social Greek organizations to their campuses would have positive or negative effects on students' educational environment.[47] Data was collected from 33 institutions that had added a sorority or fraternity community between 2000 and 2015, and results showed that these schools experienced higher rates of involvement among campus organizations as a whole, as well as higher graduation rates from both affiliated and unaffiliated organizations. This study showed the positive impact sorority and fraternity organizations can have not only on their own members, but on the entire student body.[48] Studies have shown that participation in sorority and fraternity life can either benefit, harm, or cause no effect on members' academic performance, demonstrating that other external factors may play a role in this area.

Developing Leadership Skills

Leadership opportunities and development of leadership skills are also values that are promoted by sororities, although research has not had consistent findings on the topic.

---

[47]Ronald Yates, "Student Involvement and Graduation Rates: A Quantitative Study on the Impact of Adding A Greek System at Colleges and Universities in the United States," *Oracle: The Research Journal of the Association of Fraternity/Sorority Advisors* 15, no. 1 (Summer/Fall 2020): 1, accessed March 6, 2021, http://web.a.ebscohost.com/ehost/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?vid=2&sid=6c32d189-4a53-48f1-9c51-9ac78971d4de%40sdc-v-sessmgr01.
[48]Yates, "Student Involvement," 4-5.

Some studies have found that sorority leadership is atypical from other leadership opportunities. According to Long's study, leadership in sororities is often viewed as positional, or associated with what chapter office one held and what responsibilities it entailed. However, Long also emphasized that leadership in sororities can be practiced even without holding an elected or appointed position. Long recommended any member can learn leadership skills from their sorority experience, and they can make a difference or contribute to the chapter, even as a new member or without an official position.[49] Another study conducted among seven chapters at Louisiana State University found that sorority leadership is correlated with older members with more university experience and more involvement in other extracurriculars. However, this particular study found that sorority leadership is less dependent on ability in comparison to other student leadership opportunities. This study is limited because it focuses on one sorority leadership experience at only one university.[50] Long's research demonstrates that the sorority and fraternity leadership experience is unique.

Research has also shown that holding leadership status in a Greek organization is a part of developing values in the sorority experience. Anita Jo Cory, a PhD graduate from Washington State University, conducted research for her dissertation on the influence of sorority membership on leadership development skills and leadership identity. For this study, 23 undergraduate fraternity and sorority leaders were nominated by Greek life advisors to participate in interviews.[51] Cory's research found that certain

---

[49]Long, "Unchallenged, Professed," 24.

[50]Bernard M. Bass et al., "Situational and Personality Factors in Leadership Among Sorority Women," *Psychological Monographs: General and Applied* 67, no. 15 (1953): 1, accessed March 6, 2021, https://doi.org/10.1037/h0093660.

[51]Anita J. Cory, "The Influence of Fraternity or Sorority Membership on the Leadership Identity Development of College Student Leaders" (PhD diss., Washington State University, 2011), 53-54, accessed March 6, 2021, http://hdl.handle.net/2376/2920.

leadership styles were unique to the Greek experience. Relational leadership, defined as "leadership that focuses on the idea that leadership is a process of people together attempting to accomplish positive change," was one of these styles. Relational leadership emphasizes working together for a common purpose, diversity of thoughts and opinions, empowerment, and is based on values and standards.[52] For this reason, relational leadership, practiced in sorority organizations, is also considered "values-congruent leadership." According to the interview participants, this style of leadership means using their social power for good rather than themselves. The participants also emphasized their dedication to their Greek organization's core values and their desire to live them out through their leadership.[53] Cory's study found that the basis of values in sorority leadership creates stronger bonds between leaders and other members and allows leaders to develop a stronger sense of identity and confidence.

Similarly, a study conducted among sororities and fraternities at 24 different institutions researched the impact of sorority and fraternity membership on developing socially responsible leadership. To do this, the researchers used the Socially Responsible Leadership Scale, a quantitative instrument that measures leadership capabilities based on self-awareness, actions in accordance with personal values, investment of time, ability to work with diverse opinions and backgrounds, sense of civic responsibility, and desire to make the world a better place.[54] The results of the study showed that Greek-affiliated leaders scored higher in the categories of civic responsibility, desire to make the world a better place, and ability to work with different opinions. No differences were found

---

[52]Cory, "The Influence," 102.
[53]Cory, "The Influence," 103-104.
[54]Martin, Hevel, and Pascarella, "Do Fraternities," 269.

between affiliated and unaffiliated leaders in the other categories.[55] This study

recommended sorority membership for women because of the skills and advantages it

provides.[56]

Studies have collectively shown that outcomes of sororities revolve around the

communities of support and sense of belonging they provide members throughout the

undergraduate experience.[57] The leadership and community service opportunities, as well

as the opportunity to network with other alumnae members, has been linked to the

success of corporate and political leaders who are also members of fraternities and

sororities.[58] Research studying the outcomes of participation in sorority and fraternity life

has shown benefits, drawbacks, and neutral results. Some research has found that

participation in sorority life does not improve academics, can lead to risky behaviors such

as binge drinking, or can inhibit diversity in social groups. However, other studies have

found that sorority life gives members a community of support, encourages involvement

in other campus activities, develops leadership skills and identity, and helps members

strengthen values of service, friendship, and scholarship. These skills are comparable to

those desired of political leaders, particularly in female candidates.

<u>Women in Politics</u>

Women have always played a role in American politics, even before earning the

right to vote. From Abigail Adams' letters urging her husband to "remember the ladies,"

to women's abolition groups in the 1800s, women have found a place in political

advocacy and discussion. Since women gained suffrage in 1920 through the 19th

---

[55]Ibid., 275.
[56]Ibid., 276.
[57]Long, "Unchallenged, Professed," 23.
[58]Martin et al., "New Evidence," 543.

Amendment, women's roles in politics have increased throughout the 20th century.

Throughout the 1920s and 30s, women won dozens of seats in state legislatures and the

U.S. Congress.[59] In the 1960s, another wave of feminism arrived, with the women's

liberation movement. This movement gave women the ability to choose her future,

whether it be in the home, at work, or in politics. After a dip in the number of women

being elected to Congress in the socially conservative 1980s, the 90s saw another rise in

female representation, followed by another dip in the 2000s.[60] In 2018, driven by anti-

Trump sentiment, the #MeToo movement, and national women's marches, more women

declared candidacy for public office during the midterm elections, breaking more records

for female representation in the United States.[61] In recent election cycles, women such as

Hillary Clinton and Kamala Harris have made unprecedented progress in presidential

races, being the first female nominee from a major party and the first female vice

president, respectively. Today, there is an all-time record number of women holding

elected office positions, with 2,280 women in state legislatures, 117 U.S. representatives,

and 24 U.S. Senators.[62] Although they continue to break records, the United States still

has a long way to go in regards to equality for women in political representation, as only

26.4% of seats in Congress are filled by women, not representative of their make-up of

over half of the overall U.S. population.[63] Research surrounding the topic of women in

politics focuses on obstacles, incentives to run, and differing styles of leadership.

---

[59]Doris Weatherford, *Women in American Politics: History and Milestones* (Los Angeles: SAGE Publications, 2012), 1: *ix*.
[60]Weatherford, *Women in American*, 1: *x*.
[61]Kira Sanbonmatsu, "Women's Underrepresentation in the U.S. Congress," *Daedalus* 149, no. 1 (Winter 2020): 46, accessed March 6, 2021, https://doi.org/10.1162/daed_a_01772.
[62]Rutgers Eagleton Institute for Politics, "Current Numbers," Center for American Women and Politics, last modified 2021, accessed April 3, 2021, https://cawp.rutgers.edu/current-numbers.
[63]Rutgers Eagleton Institute for Politics, "Current Numbers," Center for American Women and Politics.

Obstacles to Women in Politics

Women face several challenges and obstacles in pursuing political careers. In their 2005 book titled *It Takes a Candidate: Why Women Don't Run for Office*, Jennifer Lawless and Richard Fox establish their theory that the leading explanation of women's reluctance to pursue public office is a lack of ambition. This "missing link" is caused by several factors, including societal pressures and norms, lack of political socialization, and actually taking the leap to declare candidacy.[64] However, Lawless and Fox argue that there is a lack of research on why this gender gap in political ambition exists, especially since women are more likely to sign petitions and register to vote than men. One hypothesis they make to explain this phenomenon was checkbook activism; since men are more likely to donate to political campaigns, they create the name recognition and networking that are important parts of the candidate recruitment process.[65] Lawless and Fox also explore the concept of a gender gap in political ambition in a 2014 study published in the *American Political Science Review*. By surveying nearly 4,000 high school and college students, the researchers discovered that women have a disadvantage in political socialization. They have received less parental encouragement, had less participation in competitive activities, and possessed lower self-confidence in comparison to their male peers.[66] Political socialization and networking connections are another aspect of the lack of political ambition hypothesized by Lawless and Fox to be the explanation for fewer women in public office.

---

[64]Jennifer L. Lawless and Richard L. Fox, *It Takes a Candidate: Why Women Don't Run for Office* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 13.

[65]Lawless and Fox, *It Takes*, 38-40.

[66]Richard Fox and Jennifer Lawless, "Uncovering the Origins of the Gender Gap in Political Ambition," *American Political Science Review* 108, no. 3 (August 2014): 499, accessed March 6, 2021, https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003055414000227.

Societal pressures and norms are another factor in women's political ambition. A study conducted by Dawn Teele in 2018 identifies three major forms of societal bias that may impact women's political ambition and representation: outright hostility, double standards, and the pressures of being a wife and mother.[67] Teele describes the final factor as a double bind; based on a survey of American voters and of public officials, voters prefer candidates that are married and have children. However, this preference creates a conflict for women, as they are also expected to be taking care of these children. This creates a paradox where women without families are less desired in office, but women with families are criticized for not focusing on their home lives when running for office. While this study found no evidence that double standards and outright hostility are currently at play regarding women in American politics, societal expectations are still hindering women's ability to succeed in the political arena.[68] Lawless and Fox also discuss societal pressures surrounding women and family life. In *It Takes a Candidate*, they identify gender roles as a significant factor in women's political ambition. This "traditional gender socialization" creates the burden of household and childcare responsibilities. Because women already face the "balancing act" of career and family obligations, the "third job" of a political career falls to the back burner.[69] The societal pressures for women to maintain their familial responsibilities puts them at a disadvantage to men in the political world.

---

[67]Dawn Teele, Joshua Kalla, and Frances Rosenbluth, "The Ties That Double Bind: Social Roles and Women's Underrepresentation in Politics," *The American Political Science Review* 112, no. 3 (August 2018): 525, accessed April 3, 2021, https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003055418000217.
[68]Teele, Kalla, and Rosenbluth, "The Ties," 528-529.
[69]Lawless and Fox, *It Takes*, 7-9.

A woman's affiliation with a political party can also influence her likelihood of holding office. As recruiters and gatekeepers, political parties play an integral role in American political dynamics. There is currently an imbalance in partisan identities of women in political office; there are more female office-holders that belong to the Democratic Party than those who belong to the Republican party.[70] In both the federal and state levels, the majority of female legislators are Democrats, and the majority of male legislators are Republicans. Lawless and Fox attribute this phenomenon to several factors. First, women are more likely to identify with liberal ideologies and agendas and are more likely to hold progressive views on the topics of feminism, taxes, abortion, health care, and hate crimes.[71] Female candidates are also more likely to identify with the Democratic Party because of their prioritization of policies deemed as "women's issues," such as education, the environment, and poverty.[72] Because of their alignment with certain issues, women are more likely to be recruited by the Democratic Party. However, significant gender gaps still exist in both the Democratic and Republican parties, due to electoral gatekeepers and incumbent men.[73] Partisanship can impact a woman's political ambition as well as likelihood of being encouraged to run for office.

Recruiting Women for Political Office

Because of the obstacles facing women interested in holding public office, the recruitment process is a crucial aspect of the political process. Highly-qualified and politically-connected women are less likely to be recruited to run for office than their

---

[70]Sanbonmatsu, "Women's Underrepresentation," 44.
[71]Lawless and Fox, *It Takes*, 79.
[72]Ibid., 80.
[73]Ibid., 83.

male counterparts.[74] Another study by Lawless and Fox, conducted in 2010, analyzes this trend using data from a survey of more than 2,000 potential candidates in 2008. They found that women, including those in the fields of education and law, are less likely to receive encouragement to run from a party leader, elected official, or political activist. The "being asked to run" aspect of the recruitment process is crucial in increasing female representation in legislatures.[75] It also can influence the candidate's self-perception of political viability, their ability to win the election, and their ability to uphold the duties of office. Being asked to run also indicates the amount of support that they will receive when campaigning.[76] In *It Takes a Candidate*, Lawless and Fox indicate that there are no gender differences in the likelihood of winning an election, but that the disparity between men and women in office is a result of the role of gender in the initial stages of declaring candidacy.[77] Being specifically encouraged and asked to run for office, which women experience less frequently, is the link between having interest in political office and actually making the decision to run.

Other factors are also important in the process of creating political interest and deciding to run for office. One of these factors is prior political experience. In the ladder of electoral politics, which starts with local and school board positions and works up to national offices, women are less likely than men to run for the initial office, making them less likely to run for state or national office later on. In addition, women are more likely than men to indicate that their desired ending goal is a local position, rather than having

---

[74]Richard Fox and Jennifer Lawless, "If Only They'd Ask: Gender, Recruitment, and Political Ambition," *Journal of Politics* 72, no. 2 (April 2010): 310, accessed March 6, 2021, https://doi.org/10.1017/S0022381609990752.
[75]Fox and Lawless, "If Only," 314.
[76]Ibid., 321.
[77]Lawless and Fox, *It Takes*, 41.

their sights set on a state or national office.[78] Another important factor in women pursuing public office is a supportive personal environment. In comparison to men, women are less likely to receive personal encouragement to run for office from a spouse/partner, family member, or friend. Because women also tend to place a greater importance on opinions from those in their personal lives, this impacts their likelihood of running for office.[79] Self-perception of intelligence and skills are another factor that comes into play in the political gender gap, as women are more likely to underestimate their skills and relevant experience and consistently rank their abilities lower than men.[80] Being asked to run, political socialization, supportive family and friends, and self-confidence in skills and abilities are all important pieces in recruiting women to run for office, which is necessary to close the gender gap in political representation.

The Importance of Female Leadership

Female representation is important to a functioning democracy. With over half of the U.S. population being women, having female representation allows legislatures and the government to more accurately represent the needs and interests of their constituents. As of the 2020 Census, women make up 50.8% of the U.S. population.[81] However, only 26.4% of Congress is female.[82] For certain demographics of women, such as women of color, Republican women, and low-income women, this representation is even lower. Twenty U.S. states have never elected a female governor. In comparison to other countries, the United States is falling behind, ranking 67th in terms of female

---

[78]Ibid., 48-49.
[79]Lawless and Fox, *It Takes*, 69-70.
[80]Ibid., 96-97.
[81]U.S. Department of Commerce, "Quickfacts," United States Census Bureau, last modified 2020, accessed April 8, 2021, https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/US/LFE046219.
[82]Rutgers Eagleton Institute for Politics, "Current Numbers," Center for American Women and Politics.

representation in legislature.[83] This is a problem that needs to be solved, since women have much to offer to political offices and positions.

Women's leadership styles in approaching legislation and collaborating with other legislators vary from their male counterparts. Three studies published in the book *The Impact of Women in Public Office* explore the positive impacts of having female leadership in government. The first study, conducted by Susan Carroll, surveyed state legislators from across the United States, asking how their legislatures have been impacted by the increase in female representation. One benefit the respondents described was an increased focus on legislation that would help women. In addition, the majority of male respondents in this study answered that the increasing presence of women in their legislature has allowed more policy to be passed and that the government has become more transparent.[84] A second study, conducted by Lyn Kathlene, conducted interviews with Colorado state legislators, and compared their responses to bills they had sponsored.[85] This analysis showed that women are able to provide a different perspective on policy making than their male counterparts; for example, women are more likely to consider marginalized populations and institutional biases.[86] Women's intentions for public office also tend to be different than men's; the majority of women run for office to better society and their communities, in contrast to gaining personal power.[87] A third study also researched the leadership styles of female mayors. The study found that

[83]Veracity Media, "By the Numbers," Represent Women: Parity for Women in Politics, last modified 2021, accessed April 8, 2021, https://www.representwomen.org/current-women-representation#states.
[84]Susan J. Carroll, "Representing Women: Women State Legislators as Agents of Policy-Related Change," in *The Impact of Women in Public Office* (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2001), 6-7.
[85]Lyn Kathlene, "Words That Matter: Women's Voice and Institutional Bias in Public Policy Formation," in *The Impact of Women in Public Office*, ed. Susan J. Carroll (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2001), 32-33.
[86]Kathlene, "Words That," 42-43.
[87]Ibid., 28-29.

women are more likely to approach leadership with a "hands-on" style and emphasize teamwork, in comparison to male leadership styles of delegating responsibilities and "commands." Interviews of mayors also revealed themes of patience, cooperation, and listening in female political leaders.[88] Women's approaches to political leadership have been found to have positive impacts on communities and legislation, through increasing transparency, communication, and offering new perspectives.

Female representatives are more likely to make personal connections with their constituents, effectively problem solve, and work across party lines. Debbie Wasserman Shultz, who has represented Florida in the U.S. House of Representatives since 2004, describes her experiences working with other female legislators in the foreword of *Women in American Politics: History and Milestones*, saying:

> Women bring an undeniably unique perspective to politics, and American democracy suffers when women's voices are excluded from the dialogue. Women have a different way of looking at policy and of approaching the obstacles before them. In my experience, women are especially effective at working across party lines, building consensus, and coming up with creative solutions to problems.[89]

Dianne Feinstein, a former mayor of San Francisco and a U.S. Senator from California since 1992, also wrote a foreword for the book *Women in Power: The Secrets of Leadership*. She describes the skills and abilities women attain through their climbing of the political ladder that make them especially equipped to hold public office, saying:

> By then they have learned to negotiate, mediate, champion causes, and, yes, even compromise. They have become team players, not headline seekers. They do their homework, are prepared, speak concisely, lobby intensively, and work long hours. Over the years, such a woman becomes a leader with an electoral base who looks to her for leadership. She is sought out and consulted. She is respected. Her legislation is enacted and direction carried out. She can win elections now. Her

---

[88]Sue Tolleson-Rinehart, "Do Women Leaders Make a Difference? Substance, Style, and Perceptions," in *The Impact of Women in Public Office*, ed. Susan J. Carroll (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2001), 154-158.
[89]Weatherford, *Women in American*, 1: *ix.*

colleagues support her. She understands power, and can wield it constructively. She moves people to act. She demonstrates that she understands leadership and how to use it. The community looks to her to solve problems and to lead them.[90]

As Schultz and Feinstein describe, women's leadership styles and abilities to connect with constituents make them valuable members of legislatures and executive offices.

Several studies have been conducted to research what makes a successful female leader. In *Women in Power*, researchers interviewed 25 female political leaders in order to access the skills and qualities they felt were necessary for successful female political leadership. Three common themes throughout the interviews emerged: competent self, creative aggression, and woman power.[91] In another book, *Developing Leadership: Learning From the Experiences of Women Governors*, author Susan Madsen conducted interviews and case studies of ten female governors and shared their advice to women pursuing political careers.[92] One piece of this advice, from former Arizona Governor Jane Dee Hull, said to begin political networking early and gain as much political experience as possible, whether it be with an organization or local government. Another piece of Hull's advice was to have a positive post-secondary educational experience, and to take as many opportunities as possible to develop leadership skills and experience.[93] Political networking, leadership experience, and self-confidence are important skills for women to develop in order to become effective and successful political leaders.

The skills, abilities, and leadership styles women bring to the table as mayors, governors, and legislators allow the government to more effectively represent the

---

[90]Dorothy W. Cantor and Toni Bernay, *Women in Power: The Secrets of Leadership* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1992), *xv.*
[91]Cantor and Bernay, *Women in Power*, 16-17.
[92]Susan R. Madsen, *Developing Leadership: Learning from the Experiences of Women Governors* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 2009), xii-xiii.
[93]Madsen, *Developing Leadership*, 94.

American people and create legislation that positively impacts constituents. However, women face several obstacles in developing political ambition and making the decision to run for office, including societal bias, family pressures, and lack of political experience. In order to overcome these obstacles and have success in pursuing a political career, women legislators and other studies encourage women to develop a variety of skills, such as leadership, self-confidence, and communication. According to existing literature, these are skills that are developed through the sorority experience.

CHAPTER THREE: THEORY

Research has demonstrated that participating in a sorority experience gives

members a variety of benefits, such as increased social skills, confidence in leadership,

and professional networking and connections. Leadership in Greek life emphasizes

positional responsibilities and the holding of an office and a title.[94] Sorority leadership

also creates socially responsible leaders who are dedicated to relationships, bettering

society, and working together to create positive change.[95] Because of the core values built

into the backbone of the sorority experience, women in these organizations have an

increased understanding of relational leadership and values-congruent leadership.[96] In a

variety of studies, Greek-affiliated students have shown higher levels of leadership

development.

In addition, because of the obstacles and hesitation women face in entering the

world of politics, the development of these skills is necessary for women who have

political aspirations. Because of societal bias and family pressures, it is important for

women interested in politics to have an encouraging personal environment and to be

directly encouraged to declare her candidacy.[97] Research has also found that female

political leaders are particularly effective because of their ability to communicate with

other representatives, build relationships with constituents, and compromise across party

lines.[98] Self-perception of political viability and self-confidence are also important factors

---

[94]Long, "Unchallenged, Professed," 24.
[95]Martin, Hevel, and Pascarella, "Do Fraternities," 275.
[96]Cory, "The Influence," 103-104.
[97]Lawless and Fox, *It Takes*, 7-9.
[98]Weatherford, *Women in American*, 1: *ix.*

in increasing female representation in public office.[99] Experienced female legislators and governors recommend that women interested in pursuing political careers find opportunities to develop their communication, leadership, and networking skills.[100]

The acquisition of skills and the values-based nature of sorority organizations is the mechanism that allows these organizations to equip their members for future political leadership. Although sororities are not the only place where women can learn these skills and gain these experiences, this survey seeks to find if the women surveyed did experience the growth consistent to what was described in the literature review. The survey also provides qualitative data on how their sorority experience equipped these women to become involved in political discussions and empowered them to become leaders. Literature surrounding outcomes of sorority life reports that certain values and skills are acquired throughout membership. Similarly, literature on women's political ambition shows that similar skills are beneficial for women seeking political office.

Skills useful for women seeking political leadership are taught through the sorority experience via female empowerment, leadership opportunities, and professional development. These skills allow women to perceive themselves politically viable, feel confident in their skills and abilities, build confidence in leadership, and have a support system. The results of this survey are consistent with these findings, with a majority of participants responding that participating in a sorority helped them acquire technical,

---

[99]Lawless and Fox, *It Takes*, 96-97.
[100]Madsen, *Developing Leadership*, 94.

social, and leadership skills, as well as made them feel encouraged to pursue both

leadership and career opportunities.

CHAPTER FOUR: METHODS

Research Design

In order to collect responses regarding current and alumnae sorority members' experiences, I conducted a survey of 20 questions (Appendix D). The first section of the survey asked questions about personal experience, such as the university the participant attended, their major, and when they earned their bachelor's degree. The second section asked questions about their experience in their sorority, particularly their experiences with leadership, skills acquisition, and exposure to professional and political environments. This section began by asking the participant's chapter affiliation and then asked why they decided to join a sorority by having participants select the reasons that applied to them. The next part of this section focused on leadership. If the participant selected "yes" for holding a leadership position in their organization, they were then prompted to list which leadership positions and select the reasons they decided to hold those offices. The next question asked participants to rank skills they learned from their sorority experience from most learned to least learned. The next part of this section regarding sorority experience consisted of four questions. These questions asked the participant to rank their experience in a certain area from 0 to 10 and then provide an explanation for their ranking. The third and final section of the survey was only for alumnae. This section's only question asked alumnae participants to rank their sorority experience's preparation for their post-graduate career from 0 to 10 and then provide an explanation for their ranking. None of the questions were required, and a consent information document was distributed along with the survey (Appendix C).

I present the demographical data from the first section in pie chart format. I then

present the quantitative data from the second section in both bar graphs and pie charts. To

describe the results of the ranking questions, I share both the minimum and maximum

ranking for each question, along with the mean. I compare these means in a chart to

illustrate what was emphasized in the participants' sorority experiences. To analyze the

qualitative data from these ranking questions, I looked for themes in the explanations.

The explanations were not tied to individual rankings, but instead were displayed by

Qualtrics in list format. I looked through these lists of explanations to identify themes

among responses. I considered a "theme" to be an answer that had similar keywords

appear in at least four different open-ended answers.

Procedures

This survey was distributed to active and alumnae members of organizations that

are part of the National Panhellenic Conference (Appendix A). Distribution was limited

to these organizations in order to create a more concise study on these traditional, social

sororities, as purposes and structures vary for other local or interest-based sororities.

Existing research discussed in the literature review also focused on NPC sororities, so

survey distribution was limited to these organizations as a control factor. Both current

collegian members and alumnae members both qualified to participate in the study. All

responses were anonymous.

Participants accessed the survey via Qualtrics and were provided with an

informational consent document that did not need to be signed (Appendix C). The survey

was distributed via email to current University of South Dakota sorority presidents, who

were asked to pass along the information to their members and alumnae groups. The survey was also distributed via email to sorority leaders from South Dakota State University, the University of Alabama, San Diego State University, and University of Dayton, because of my own personal connections with leaders from these schools. The survey was also shared via Facebook group to past and present Chapter Presidents of Pi Beta Phi from various universities, who were also asked to share with the rest of their chapter members. Participants were also given the option to pass along the survey to friends and family who were sorority members if they wished.

CHAPTER FIVE: RESULTS

274 sorority members participated in the survey (N=274). Because some participants skipped questions or did not complete the survey, the sample size is smaller for some questions.
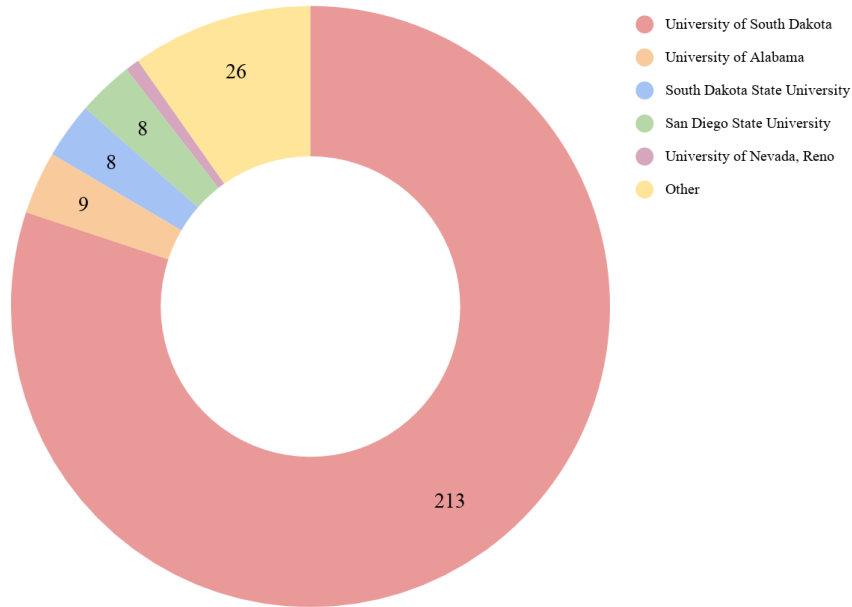
<u>Participants</u>

University Affiliation

One question asked participants what school they attended for their undergraduate degree, when they would have participated in a sorority experience (Figure 1). 213 participants, the overwhelming majority of participants, attended the University of South Dakota. A significant drop leads to the University of Alabama having the second-most participation in the survey, with nine participants. San Diego State University and South Dakota State University were tied for participation, with eight participants each. The University of Nevada, Reno, had two participants in the survey. All universities that had one participant were categorized as "Other" in Figure 1 and are listed below the chart. All schools attended by participants are universities. The sample schools include a variety of demographics, from small to large universities, both public and private schools, and from different regions of the United States. One participant's school, the University of Western Ontario, is located in Canada. The University of South Dakota, the main university attended by participants, is located in Vermillion, South Dakota, has over 7,000 undergraduate students, and is home to four sorority organizations.[101]

---

[101]U.S. News and World Report, "University of South Dakota," U.S. News and World Report, last modified 2021, accessed April 4, 2021, https://www.usnews.com/best-colleges/university-of-south-dakota-10300.

Figure 1

<div align="center">Universities Attended By Participants</div>
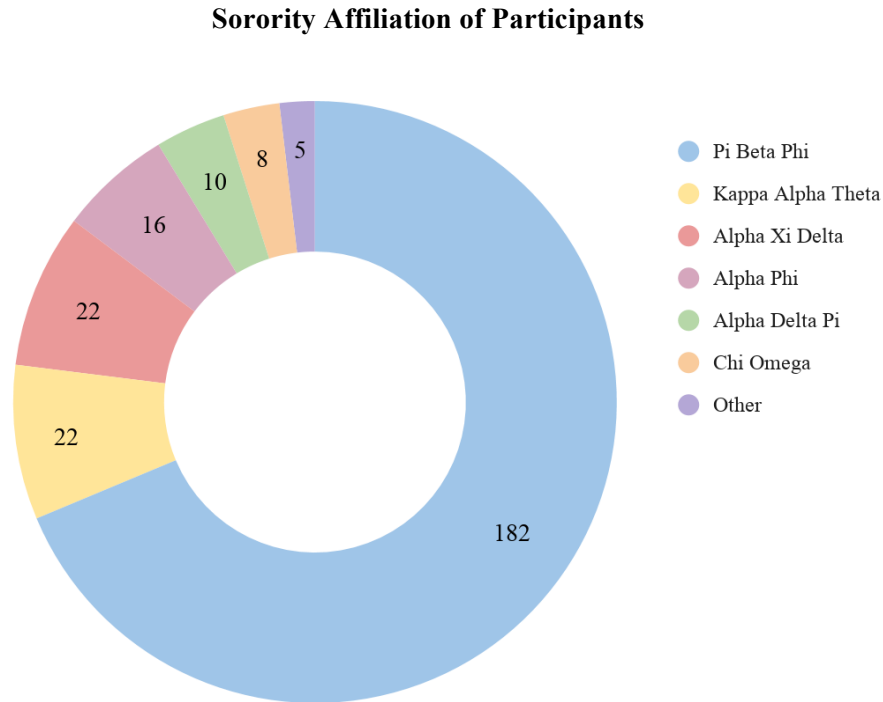

Note: Universities with only one participant were categorized as "Other." These institutions were Auburn University, Case Western Reserve University, Eastern Michigan University, Florida State University, Franklin College, Hillsdale College, Iowa State University, Long Beach State University, Mississippi State University, North Carolina State University, New York University, Rutgers University, Stetson University, University of Arizona, University of California Irvine, University of Chicago, University of Guelph, University of Iowa, University of Louisville, University of Memphis, University of Lincoln-Nebraska, University of South Carolina, University of Western Ontario, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, Washington and Lee University, and West Virginia University.

Sorority Affiliation

Another question asked the participants which NPC sorority organization with whom they were affiliated (Figure 2). With 182 participants, members of Pi Beta Phi made up the majority of survey respondents. Both Kappa Alpha Theta and Alpha Xi Delta had 22 participants, the second highest amount of participants in the survey. Alpha Phi had 16 participants, Alpha Delta Pi had 10 participants, and Chi Omega had eight participants. Sororities that had one member affiliate with them were categorized as "Other" in Figure 2. These organizations were Alpha Chi Omega, Delta Delta Delta, Delta Zeta, Phi Mu, and Sigma Delta Tau. All participants identified with a sorority that

is a member organization of the National Panhellenic Conference. The organizations with the most respondents (Pi Beta Phi, Alpha Xi Delta, Kappa Alpha Theta, and Alpha Phi) all have chapters at the University of South Dakota, the university with the most participation in the survey.

Figure 2

Sorority Affiliation of Participants

Note: Sorority organizations with only one participant were categorized as "Other." These organizations were Alpha Chi Omega, Delta Delta Delta, Delta Zeta, Phi Mu, and Sigma Delta Tau.

Time Since Undergraduate Experience

Another survey question asked participants how long it had been since they had received their four-year degree (Figure 3). Out of 167 respondents, those currently earning their four-year degrees made up the majority of participants. Alumnae also made up a significant portion of respondents, with 102 respondents having already completed their four-year degrees. 24 respondents answered that they had completed their undergraduate experience less than 5 years ago. 13 participants completed their four-year

degree between five and ten years ago, 21 completed their degree 11 to 20 years ago, and

31 completed their degree 21 to 30 years ago. Thirteen of the participants finished their

four-year undergraduate degree over 30 years ago. One participant answered that she was

no longer pursuing her four-year degree, but she had been at one point. Later in the

survey, a question asked participants if they were an alumnae of their organization. Only

87 participants answered that they were an alumnae, in comparison to the 102

participants who indicated that they had finished their degree in this question. This can be

attributed to both participants' incompletion of the survey and the categorization of an

"alumnae." Some sorority organizations require dues to be considered an alumnae, even

if the member graduates.

Figure 3

Time Since Receiving Four-Year Degree
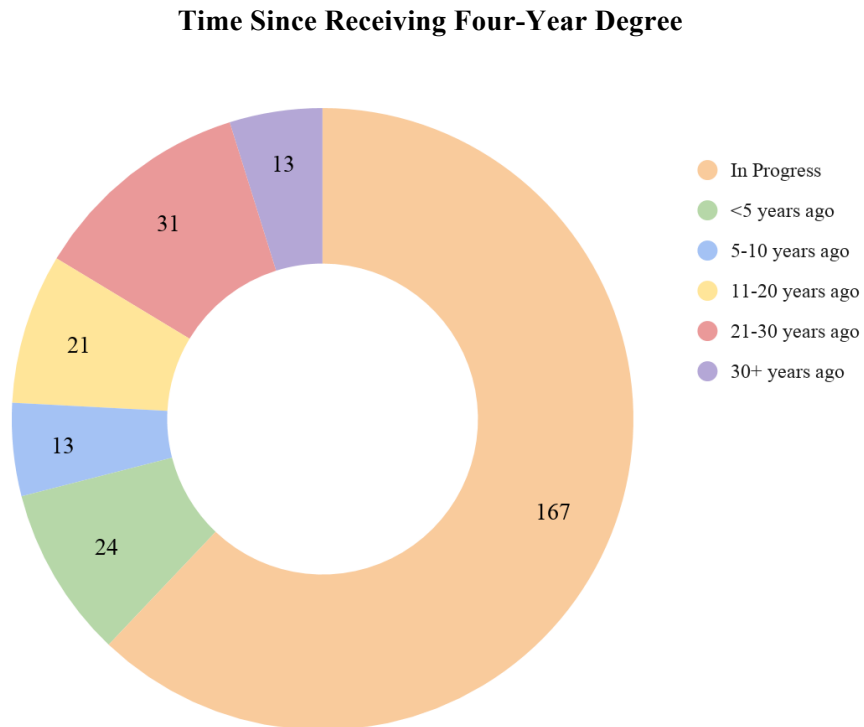
Note: One respondent is no longer pursuing a four-year degree but was at one point.

Sorority Experience

The second and third sections of the survey asked participants about their experiences in their sorority organizations. The questions included topics of leadership, empowerment, development of skills, professional development, and political advocacy.

Sorority Leadership

Several questions asked participants about their experiences with leadership both within and outside of their sorority chapters. 176 participants said that they had held a leadership position within their organization, while 91 said they had not. The following question asked participants to list the positions they had held. Another following question asked participants why they decided to run for a sorority leadership position by checking which reasons applied to them (Figure 4). "To better my organization" was the most selected answer, with 98 participants choosing this reason. Tied for second were the answers "To develop professional skills" and "I was encouraged by other members," which both were selected by 92 participants. Less popular reasons were "To boost my resume" and "To explore an area of interest," which were selected by 63 and 60 participants respectively. As discussed further in Chapter 6, the frequency of the answer "To better my organization" is consistent with literature on female leadership styles, both in sororities and in political office.

Figure 4

Reasons for Running for Sorority Leadership
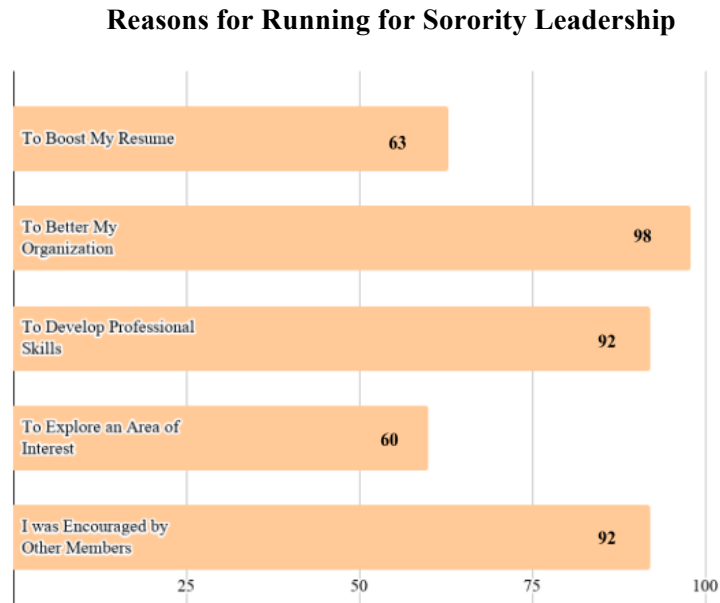
Another question asked participants to rank on a scale from 0 to 10 how well their sorority chapter encouraged members to apply for leadership positions within the chapter. 218 respondents participated in this question (n=218). The minimum ranking was 2, while the maximum was 10. The mean ranking was 8.22. The following question asked participants to explain their ranking. There were several themes in these explanations. One theme was that every member was encouraged to apply for a leadership role. A contrasting theme was that they felt only certain members, who had already been unofficially selected, were encouraged to apply and that popularity played a bigger role than skills. Another theme in these explanations was that the focus on leadership only seemed to occur during the election season. Competition for positions and the pressure to achieve once elected were also themes in the explanations. One explanation said that leadership could be more encouraged within the chapter, saying, "Leadership positions are talked about and encouraged, but I feel like more can be done. It's kind of just forgotten about after the initial push." Another explanation emphasized

the importance of encouragement, saying, "My members encouraging me was 95% of the reason I ran for [Chapter President]."

The survey also asked participants to rank on a scale from 0 to 10 how well their chapter encouraged members to apply for leadership positions outside of the organization. 217 respondents participated in this question (n=217). The rankings for this question were lower in comparison to those regarding leadership within the chapter. The minimum ranking was 1, and the maximum was 10. The mean ranking was 7.12. Again, the following question asked participants to explain their ranking, and there were several themes identified in the explanations. One theme was that focus was often placed on applying for leadership positions within the sorority chapter, rather than other outside campus organizations, and that other opportunities were not discussed. An opposing theme was that since other chapter members were involved in other campus organizations, they would bring other sorority members along and encourage them to be involved. A similar theme was that the sorority experience allowed them to hear about other leadership opportunities in outside organizations. Other responses explained that involvement in at least one other campus organization was required by their chapter. As discussed in Chapter 6, this emphasis on encouragement to apply for leadership positions, both within and outside the chapter, is consistent with research showing the importance of support systems for women seeking political office.

Acquisition of Skills

The survey also asked participants about skills they had developed from their sorority involvement. Respondents were presented with a list of 12 skills that are commonly attributed to the sorority experience and were asked to rank them in order

from "most-learned" to "least-learned." Figure 5 illustrates the amount of participants who ranked each skill as their number 1 "most-learned" skill. Likewise, Figure 6 depicts the amount of participants who ranked each skill last, as their "least-learned" skill. Several trends were noted from the results of this question. Social skills/making friends, self-confidence, public speaking, and time management were consistently ranked as the top skill learned from the sorority experience. In contrast, social media strategy, managing budgets, event planning, and self-care were all consistently ranked last. The skills participants said they acquired from the sorority experience are consistent with existing research on outcomes of the sorority experiences, as well as with research on skills necessary for women's political success.
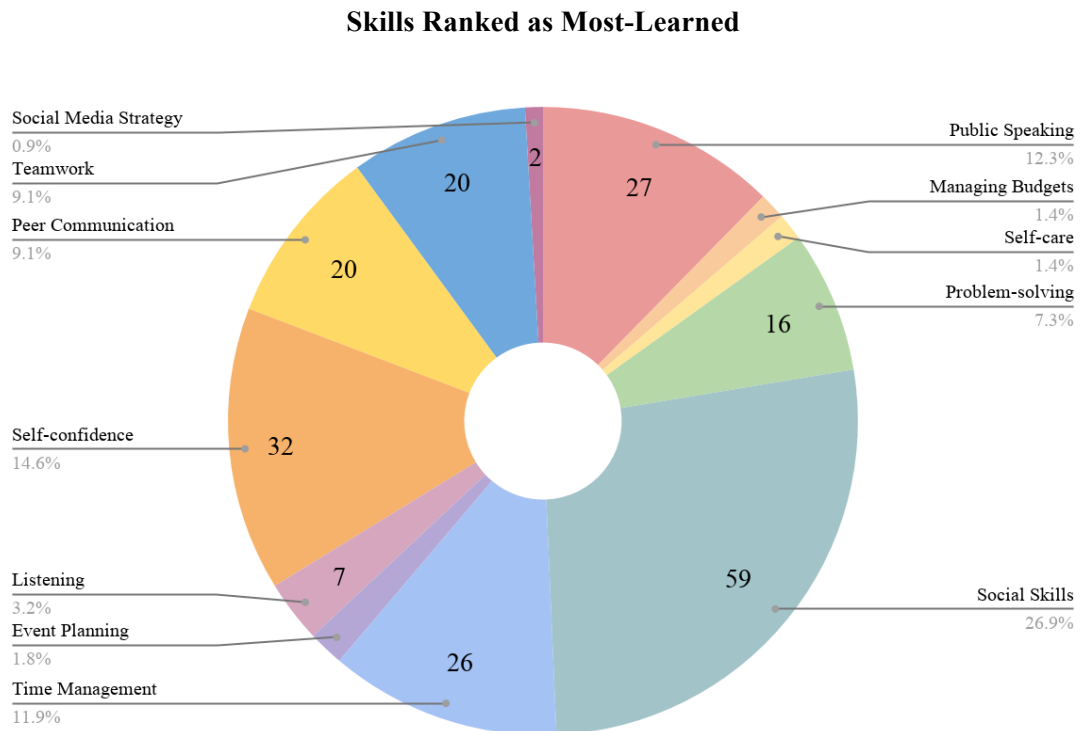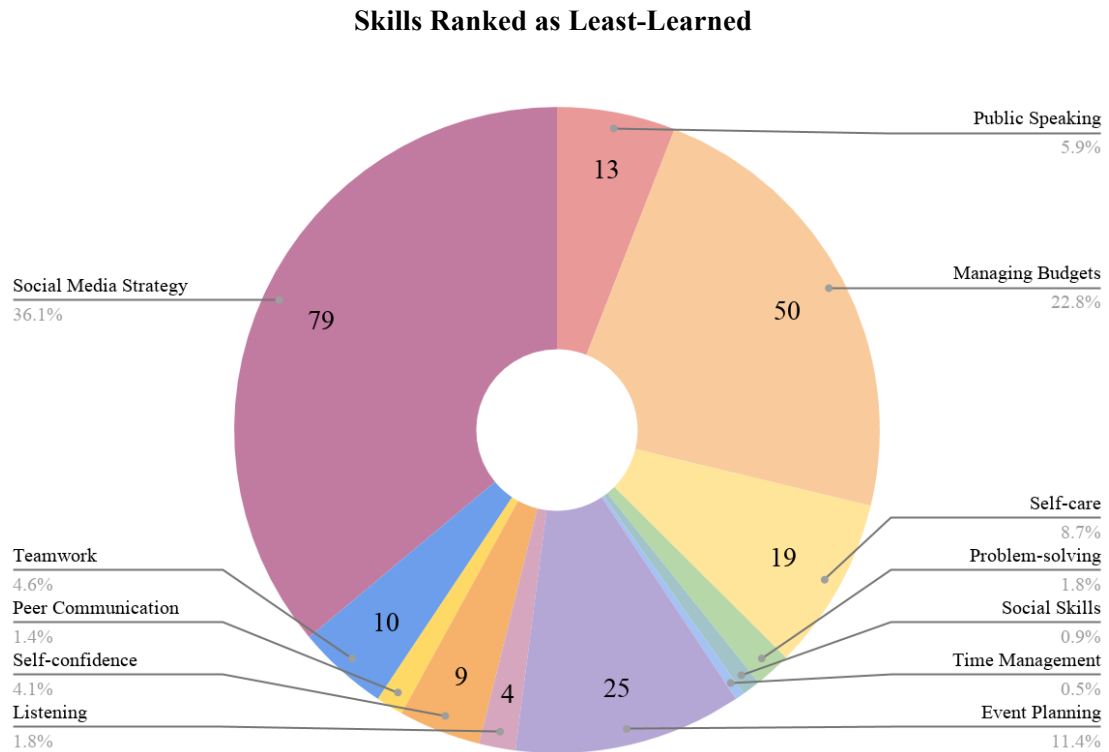
Figure 5

Skills Ranked as Most-Learned

Figure 6

Skills Ranked as Least-Learned

Political Advocacy and Discussion

The survey also asked participants to rank on a scale from 0 to 10 how well their sorority chapter encouraged members to participate in political discussion and advocacy. 206 respondents participated in this question (n=206). The minimum ranking was 0, while the maximum was 10. The mean ranking was 5. The following question asked participants to explain their ranking. There were several themes in these explanations. One theme was that the tensions of the 2020 election cycle had caused conflict and split opinions in the chapter. This discouraged political discussion, since it would damage sisterhood, and when political opinions were discussed, a heavy emphasis was placed on being civil. An explanation from the University of South Dakota supported this theme, saying, "When disagreements arose, they were shut down immediately and everyone was encouraged to just be respectful rather than [be] allowed to disagree with each other."

Other explanations said they would feel uncomfortable sharing their beliefs because of the tumultuous political climate. Another theme was that politics were not discussed at all within their chapter, for better or for worse. In a contrasting theme, other respondents said that their chapters were very politically active, would encourage their members to vote, and would urge them to get involved in political movements and campaigns. An explanation from Washington and Lee University supported this theme, saying, "My chapter, mainly because of the campus we are a part of, is widely political and even won a contest on campus to see what organization could encourage the most members to register to vote in 2020." Both the qualitative and quantitative data from this question, particularly compared to rankings given to other areas, shows that political advocacy could use more focus in the sorority experience.

Preparation for Future Careers

The survey asked both past and present sorority members about their chapter's ability to prepare and empower members for their future careers. One question asked participants to rank on a scale from 0 to 10 how well their sorority chapter emphasized the importance of women in professional and political environments. 208 respondents participated in this question (n=208). The minimum ranking was 1, while the maximum was 10. The mean ranking was 6.49. The following question asked participants to explain their ranking. There were several themes in these explanations. One theme was that this was not a topic widely discussed and that more should be done in this area. Another theme said that their chapters often highlighted successful alumnae and offered networking opportunities. An explanation from Mississippi State University supported this theme, saying, "Our chapter celebrated members well who made big moves toward

professional careers. I believe this encouraged younger members to see the value in strong women in professional roles after college." Many explanations said that their chapters focused on empowerment in professional fields, but not in politics, while others said that their members' involvement in student government allowed the entire chapter to become acquainted with a political experience. Women beginning to enter the workforce in the 1960s and 70s in larger numbers was another theme in these explanations. Respondents explained that as more and more women were graduating college and entering professional fields, their sorority experience gave them the opportunity to have female role models. The dominating theme for this question was that empowering women is important to many sorority chapters.

The final section of the survey was only for alumnae members. The only question in this section asked participants to rank on a scale from 0 to 10 how well their sorority experience prepared them for their post-graduate careers. 85 participants responded to this question (n=85). The minimum ranking was 1, and the maximum ranking was 10. The mean ranking was 7.64. The following question asked participants to explain their ranking, and several themes emerged in these explanations. The dominating theme was that the respondents' sorority experience gave them the leadership and interpersonal skills necessary for their future careers. One way respondents described this preparation was through their leadership roles. An explanation from an alumnae of the University of South Dakota fit into this theme, saying:

> I believe Greek life was integral to preparing me for the real world and for future leadership positions. I started my professional career in recruitment and have grown to become the Chief Talent/HR officer at major retailers. I can certainly point to my sorority experience as a key point of preparation for me."

An alumnae from Mississippi State University had a similar experience, saying:

I wouldn't be the person I am today without the leadership experience my sorority gave me. It exposed me to things that I would have never encountered on my own. I am currently in medical school and can't tell you how much of a difference in bedside manner there is between our class in general and sorority women.

Another theme in these explanations was the importance of teamwork. An alumnae from the University of South Dakota supported this theme, saying:

I viewed my experience in Pi Phi as a collective group coming together for the purpose of making it the best sorority on campus. In order to achieve that end, most members had to work together to accomplish this goal. Emphasis was placed on teamwork, philanthropic endeavors, campus participation and personal pride

A minor theme among respondents for this question was that they received no preparation from their sorority experience for their future career and that their chapter should have emphasized this topic more.

The means of participants' answers for the five ranked questions can be compared to illustrate what areas are emphasized in the sorority chapters of the participants (Figure 7). Question 10 asked participants to rank how much their chapter encouraged members to apply for leadership positions within the chapter, and the mean of the participants' rankings was 8.22 . Likewise, Question 12 asked participants to rank encouragement for leadership positions in other organizations outside of the chapter and had a mean ranking of 7.12. Question 14 asked participants to rank their chapter's encouragement to participate in political discussion and advocacy and had a mean ranking of 5. Question 16 asked participants to rank their chapter's emphasis on women in professional and political environments and the mean ranking was 6.49. Question 19 was only for alumnae and asked them to rank their sorority experience's impact on preparation for their future careers. The mean ranking for this question was 7.64. According to these rankings, leadership within the chapter was encouraged more than leadership positions outside of

the chapter. Encouragement to participate in political discussion and advocacy was ranked lower than all other categories. Both Question 16 and 19 involved the sorority experience's ability to prepare members for their future careers, and Question 16, which asked both current and alumnae participants, had a lower ranking. These means show how different areas are emphasized more or less in the participants' sorority experiences.

Figure 7

Comparison of Means
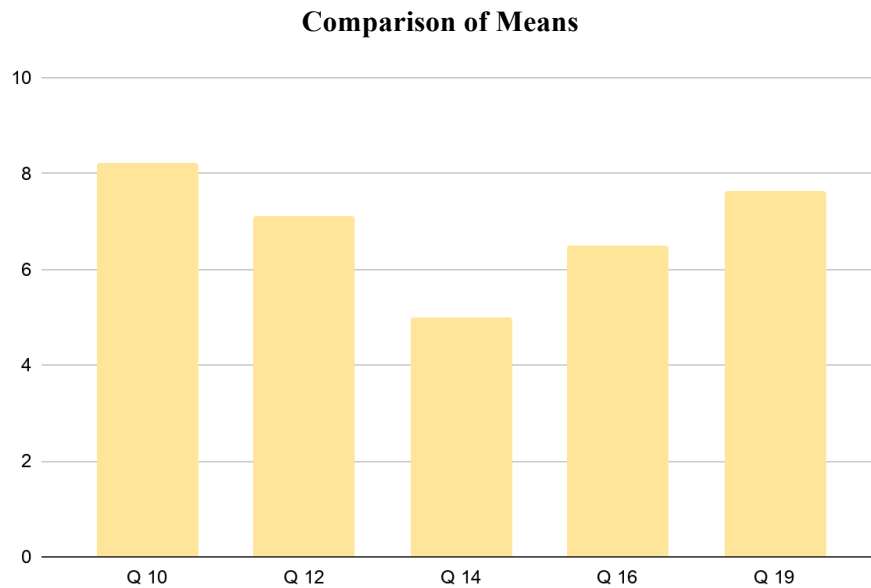
The results of this survey were categorized into four categories: sorority leadership, acquisition of skills, political advocacy and discussion, and preparation for future careers. A major trend from these results is that survey participants overall had positive experiences in these categories, even if they indicated desire for future growth. The next chapter will provide analysis to these results and draw connections to the previously discussed literature.

CHAPTER SIX: DISCUSSION

Analysis

Survey results indicate that the participants of this study had consistent outcomes from their sorority experience as the outcomes that were discussed in the literature. This analysis, broken down into the same sections as Chapter 5, discusses comparisons that can be made between skills and experiences acquired from sorority membership to the preparation of women entering political careers. The results of this survey also reveal that respondents developed traits that are recommended for successful political leadership, such as building leadership experience, acquiring relevant skills, and having a support system of encouragement and empowerment. This analysis will compare the themes of survey results with the existing research discussed in the literature review.

Sorority Leadership

Several comparisons can be made between survey results on sorority leadership and the existing literature on sorority outcomes and women's political preparation. Question 8 of the survey asked participants why they decided to run for their leadership position by selecting which reasons applied to them (Figure 4). The most popular response was "To better my organization." The frequency of this response is consistent with existing literature regarding leadership styles and motivations. For example, research has found that women are more likely than men to pursue leadership opportunities in order to better their communities and society, rather than for personal gain and power.[102] This result is also consistent with research on sorority leadership styles. Cory's research found that sorority leadership is "leadership that focuses on the

---

[102]Kathlene, "Words That," 28-29.

idea that leadership is a process of people together attempting to accomplish positive change," otherwise known as values-congruent leadership. This style of leadership also means using social power for good, rather than themselves.[103] The popularity of the answer "To better my organization," demonstrates that the participants of the survey are learning and practicing this type of leadership style.

The response "To develop professional skills" was also commonly selected by survey participants for why they chose to run for a leadership position. This can be compared to literature emphasizing the importance of self-confidence and political socialization for women interested in political careers. A lack of confidence in their political viability and possession of skills necessary for the job are factors contributing to the underrepresentation of women in U.S. politics.[104] The interviews conducted of female governors also demonstrated that the development of these skills is important, with Arizona Governor Jane Dee Hull advising women to begin developing these skills and experiences as early as possible, through a student organization or local government.[105] The frequency of this response demonstrates that the participants of this survey are actively seeking to develop these skills, which could benefit them if they were to pursue political leadership or public office. Development of skills, in both literature and survey results, is discussed further later in this chapter.

Encouragement and empowerment were other major themes in the survey results regarding sorority leadership. For Question 8, "I was encouraged by other members" was tied for the second-most selections by participants, demonstrating that this

---

[103]Cory, "The Influence," 103-104.
[104]Fox and Lawless, "If Only," 321.
[105]Madsen, *Developing Leadership*, 94.

encouragement is important for members interested in leadership opportunities. Likewise, two other questions on the survey asked participants to rank the encouragement the chapter gave them to apply for leadership positions both within and outside of the chapter. Respondents gave this encouragement average rankings of 8.22 and 7.12, respectively. Themes that emerged in the explanations for these rankings demonstrated that although internal leadership opportunities were more heavily emphasized by chapter members, their sorority experience still encouraged them to apply for positions outside of their comfort zone or explore new opportunities around campus. These elements of encouragement and empowerment are consistent with research on both sorority outcomes and women's political experiences. Since women are less likely than men to receive personal encouragement to run for office from family and friends, the community of support that the sorority experience provides can be an important factor in women deciding to declare their candidacy.[106] Likewise, the exposure to outside campus organizations, such as student government as some respondents described, can provide sorority members with the political socialization also important to a women's self-perception of political viability. The theme of empowerment and communities of support in the survey results is also consistent with these values throughout the history of Greek life. The responses to these three questions of the survey demonstrate that these participants value the importance of personal support networks and empowerment.

A final comparison to be drawn between survey results and existing literature is the importance of positions and titles in sorority leadership. Long's study found that sorority members are more likely to associate their leadership experience with positions

---

[106]Lawless and Fox, *It Takes*, 69-70.

and acquired responsibilities.[107] The survey demonstrated that this was true for participants, as all respondents who answered that they had held a leadership responsibility were able to list the office or offices that they had held. The sorority leadership experiences of the survey respondents, in regards to goals, professional development, encouragement, and the importance of positional responsibilities, align with the research discussed in the literature review.

Skills Acquisition

This study also explored if survey respondents had similar experiences with developing the skills that were discussed in existing research. Since the first Greek organizations were founded, an emphasis has been placed on instilling values and skills into their memberships.[108] Research has found that Greek organizations were often successful in developing these traits among their members. For example, Long's study found that sorority and fraternity members have shown growth in the areas of friendship, service, scholarship, and integrity.[109] Other studies found that Greek affiliated students showed higher levels of community service, overall campus involvement, and friendship and social skills than their unaffiliated peers.[110] Greek students were also found to score higher on the Socially Responsible Leadership Scale, meaning that they had successfully developed skills in teamwork, collaborating with those with diverse opinions, and their sense of civic responsibility.[111]

---

[107]Long, "Unchallenged, Professed," 24.
[108]Torbenson, "From the Beginning," 22.
[109]Long, "Unchallenged, Professed," 19-20.
[110]Asel, Selfert, and Pascarella, "The Effects," 5-7.
[111]Martin, Hevel, and Pascarella, "Do Fraternities," 275.

The results of the survey are consistent with the conclusions drawn from existing research. Question 9 asks participants to rank a list of 12 skills in order from "most-learned" to "least-learned." The skills of social skills/making friends, public speaking, self-confidence, and peer communication were most frequently ranked as the most-learned skills. The skills of social media strategy, managing budgets, and event planning were frequently ranked as the participant's least-learned skill. The frequency of these skills, particularly in those ranked most-learned, demonstrate that the participants of this survey have acquired the skills described in the literature review. Likewise, the skills that were typically ranked in the middle, such as time management, problem-solving, and listening, show that participants have been developing these skills, but could use additional focus. The intermediate ranking of time management is also consistent with Long's research that demonstrated that the demands of sorority participation can reprioritize students' time away from their schoolwork.[112]

The skills of peer communication, teamwork, problem-solving, self-confidence, listening, and socialization, which according to their rankings the participants of this survey have developed, are also skills that are valued in women in politics. For example, interviews of mayors from across the United States have revealed that successful female leaders exhibit patience, cooperation with others, and listening skills.[113] These skills were also described as characteristics of women in politics by Dianne Feinstein, a U.S. Senator from California. Feinstein said that female representatives are able to work in teams, cooperate with their peers, make connections with their constituents, and have confidence

---

[112]Long, "Unchallenged, Professed," 23-24.
[113]Sue Tolleson-Rinehart, "Do Women Leaders Make a Difference? Substance, Style, and Perceptions," in *The Impact of Women in Public Office*, ed. Susan J. Carroll (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2001), 154-158.

in their leadership abilities.[114] Other studies also found that these skills of teamwork, patience, and ability to form personal connections were important to the success of female political leaders.[115] The results of this survey found that participants were developing similar skills to those described in existing research. In addition, according to research on female political leadership, these abilities are critical to success, suggesting that a sorority experience is one way to obtain skills to help prepare for a future political career.

Political Advocacy and Discussion

This survey also asked participants about their sorority's encouragement to participate in political advocacy and discussion. In comparison to rankings on encouragement regarding leadership positions, this category scored lower, with an average ranking of 5. Many participants explained that this was not a topic commonly discussed in their chapter. Others said that conversations concerning politics were encouraged to remain civil, reducing the ability to effectively communicate ideas and opinions. However, other participants had differing experiences, with their chapters providing the resources to join political groups, participate in student government, advocate for certain causes, and register to vote. These results can be connected to literature on the importance of political socialization for women interested in political careers. In order to increase a woman's sense of political viability, familiarization with the political process is crucial.[116] In this way, the results of this survey demonstrate that sorority organizations have room for improvement in this area, although some chapters

---

[114]Cantor and Bernay, *Women in Power*, xv.
[115]Tolleson-Rinehart, "Do Women," 154-158.
[116]Fox and Lawless, "Uncovering the Origins," 499.

have already worked to provide their members with political experiences in advocacy and discussion.

Preparation for Future Careers

The survey also explored the sorority experience's ability to prepare members for their future careers, through the lens of skills acquisition and empowerment. This was tested through two survey questions. The first asked both current and alumnae members to rank how much their chapter emphasized the importance of women in professional and political careers. The average ranking for this question was 6.49. The second asked only alumnae members to rank their experience's impact on preparation for their future career. This question saw a higher ranking, with an average of 7.64. The first question's explanations had themes that chapters did not emphasize these roles directly, but that members were able to watch other older members and alumnae achieve politically and professionally, providing them with role models. In contrast, the explanations for the alumnae only question focused more on the technical skills that they learned in their sorority experience.

Both the use of skills development and empowerment can be connected with existing literature on sorority involvement and women in politics. First, the previously discussed skills, including teamwork, communication, and leadership, allow women to feel more confident in approaching professional and political careers. As noted in Lawless and Fox's research, it is important for women to feel capable and prepared when making their decision to declare candidacy for political office.[117] Second, the ability for sorority women to witness their peers and role models succeed politically and

---

[117]Fox and Lawless, "If Only," 321.

professionally can help combat the societal bias and familial pressures that face women interested in politics. By knowing that other women have been able to tackle these obstacles, sorority women can better prepare for their careers. Finally, the sorority experience can provide members with the ability to professionally network. Through alumnae organizations and the similar experiences and rituals that unite members of a sorority, women can discover new opportunities through word of mouth or even stand out in a job application process.[118] All three of these themes were indicated in the responses of survey participants, demonstrating that elements of professional development described in the literature review are being implemented in participants' chapters to help them prepare for their future careers.

<u>Limitations</u>

This study has several potential limitations. First, this study focused only on the 26 sororities that are a part of the National Panhellenic Conference. This limitation was created because of my sphere of influence, as a member of a NPC organization. Surveying members of all types of sororities, including local chapters, interest-based, culturally-based organizations, would have improved this study's capacity for understanding how the social organizations of sororities help women develop values needed for political leadership. This study could also be strengthened by accounting for the differences in Greek culture at different institutions; Greek life at Midwestern universities will be different than Greek life at universities in the American South. Likewise, this culture can differ at public institutions in comparison to private institutions.

---

[118]Martin et al., "New Evidence," 543.

Another limitation of this study was the survey's failure to differentiate between ages of current students. Rather, the study lumped all undergraduate members together, eliminating the ability to ask freshmen and sophomores if they planned to become involved in sorority leadership experiences in the future. This question would have been an opportunity to gauge whether certain personality types are more inclined to pursue these positions. Similarly, the study was limited in that it did not account for whether certain prior experiences made particular members more likely to pursue leadership experiences. For example, the survey could have asked current undergraduate members about their high school leadership experiences, and whether that impacted their decision to join a sorority.

Another piece of feedback I received on my survey was confusion on Question 9 (Appendix D) and how to rank skills that the participant already possessed before their sorority experience. For example, some participants did not know where to rank "social skills/making friends," since they already possessed this skill before they joined a sorority. Some participants that had this confusion ranked this skill high, since they improved on it because of their sorority experience. Others ranked it low, since they didn't believe they had learned it from their sorority experience. This confusion on how to rank skills that may have already been possessed before the participant's sorority experience may have skewed results.

Recommendations for Further Research

There are several ways in which the research of this paper could be furthered in order to fully understand its conclusions. The following are suggestions for future

research in the topic of sorority participation and its preparation for women pursuing political involvement:

This study could be expanded to outside of the 26 National Panhellenic Conference organizations. A similar survey could be sent to other sorority organizations who are not members of the NPC in order to have additional focus on local, multicultural, or other interest-based sororities. To be able to compare and contrast responses from different types of sororities, the data from the survey could be kept separate. A expanded study in this field would allow conclusions to be drawn about the benefits from different types of sorority organizations.

In addition to the survey, the qualitative aspect of this study could be expanded through interviews. These interviews could be conducted of both current and alumnae members, and would allow them to provide more detailed descriptions of their sorority experience. Similar to the benefit of the explanations for the rankings in the survey, conducting interviews would allow researchers to understand why and how members had certain experiences.

Distribution of the survey could be expanded to include students who are not members of Greek organizations. This expansion could include both students who are involved in other campus organizations, such as athletics, and also students who are involved in no extracurricular campus organizations. This would allow researchers to compare the results of this survey between affiliated and unaffiliated students in order to see if the skills attained through the sorority experience are unique to sorority organizations, or if they can be experienced by unaffiliated undergraduate students as well.

This study could also be expanded to include recommendations on how to improve member experience. A section could be added to the survey to ask respondents what they would have liked to see from their sorority experience, and how their organizations could improve in the areas of professional development, empowerment, and political involvement. These improvements could include expanding leadership development skills and opportunities to new members or to those who do not hold leadership positions. These suggestions could be distributed to sorority organizations and tested for effectiveness by conducting another survey after their implementation.

Similarly, further research could also be done to understand how sororities can improve on teaching their members the skills that were ranked last in Question 9 of this survey (Appendix D). These skills included social media strategy, managing budgets, self-care, and event planning (Figure 6). This research could be provided to sorority organizations for suggestions on how to develop future programming on skills and values.

Conclusion

Throughout the Greek life's history, fraternity and sorority organizations have aimed to provide their members with a premier higher education experience, by offering communities of support, a place to develop skills and values, and the opportunity to hold leadership offices. Sororities were created with the intent for women to have a safe space of empowerment and encouragement amidst male-dominated college environments. Today, this type of gender parity persists in the United States government, as it falls behind most of the developed world in female representation. This paper seeks to connect the sorority experience to the experience of women in politics. By understanding the

ability of the sorority experience to provide networking opportunities, leadership experience, and skills development, sorority membership is established as a viable opportunity to learn the skills necessary to overcome the obstacles facing them in political leadership.

This study's survey, conducted of both current and alumnae sorority members, found that participants have consistently been developing the skills described as crucial for women's success in politics. In the category of sorority leadership, participants demonstrated that they identified their leadership experience with elected positions, that they were encouraged to run by their peers, and that they pursued office to better their organization and develop skills. In the category of skills acquisition, this survey's participants showed that their sorority experience taught them skills in teamwork, public speaking, self-confidence, and making friends. In political advocacy and discussion, results showed that this area was less emphasized in the participants' sorority experiences. However, identified themes showed that chapters encourage their members to vote and engage in respectful political conversation. In the category preparation for future careers, participants answered that their sorority experience allowed them to professionally network, feel more confident in their skills and abilities, and have female role models already in the workforce.

Female leadership is important for a functioning democracy; it allows the American people to be more accurately represented in their government and to focus on issues that matter most to them. Since the creation of the first women's fraternities in small bedrooms and classrooms in the face of adversity, sorority life has grown exponentially. Values and purposes have been expanded and honed, chapters and

organizations have spread throughout campuses across the continent, and more and more sorority women have become important leaders of society. If they could see this progress, certainly the founders of the first women's fraternities would be amazed at how far their women have come.

Appendix A

List of National Panhellenic Conference Sororities

1. Alpha Chi Omega
2. Alpha Delta Pi
3. Alpha Epsilon Pi
4. Alpha Gamma Delta
5. Alpha Omicron Pi
6. Alpha Phi
7. Alpha Sigma Alpha
8. Alpha Sigma Tau
9. Alpha Xi Delta
10. Chi Omega
11. Delta Delta Delta
12. Delta Gamma
13. Delta Phi Epsilon
14. Delta Zeta
15. Gamma Phi Beta
16. Kappa Alpha Theta
17. Kappa Delta
18. Kappa Kappa Gamma
19. Phi Mu
20. Phi Sigma Sigma
21. Pi Beta Phi
22. Sigma Delta Tau
23. Sigma Kappa
24. Sigma Sigma Sigma
25. Theta Phi Alpha
26. Zeta Tau Alpha[119]

---

[119]National Panhellenic Conference, "National Panhellenic Conference Member Organizations," National Panhellenic Conference, last modified 2021, accessed March 21, 2021, https://www.npcwomen.org/about/our-member-organizations/.

Appendix B

IRB Approval

UNIVERSITY OF
SOUTH DAKOTA

Date: March 3, 2021

The University of South Dakota
414 E. Clark Street
Vermillion, SD 57069

PI: Julia Hellwege
Student PI: Kelli Susemihl
Re: Initial - IRB-20-282, *Sorority Leadership and Preparation for Women in Politics*

The University of South Dakota Institutional Review Board has rendered the decision below for this study. The approval is effective starting March 3, 2021 and will expire on March 3, 2022.

Decision: Approved
Category:
Associated Approvals: Advertisement, Date-Stamped Consent Statement, Waiver of Documentation of Consent, Survey

---

Dear Julia Hellwege,

The study submission for the proposal referenced above has been reviewed and approved according to the procedures of the University of South Dakota Institutional Review Board.

Your study has been granted a waiver of documentation of informed consent. As a replacement for a signed consent you must provide your subjects with an informed consent document without signature lines. You must document this informed consent process in your study records. Attached in your file is the original consent document that has been stamped with IRB approval and expiration dates. Please use this original document to make copies for subject enrollment. If appropriate, please give a copy to your subject.

Prior to initiation, promptly report to the IRB, any proposed updates/amendments (e.g., protocol amendments/revised informed consents) in previously approved human subjects research activities.

Any research-related injuries (physical or psychological), adverse side effects or other unexpected problems encountered during the conduct of this research study needs to be reported to the IRB within **5 days** of notification of the occurrence.
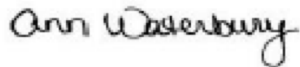
Any modifications to the approved study must be submitted for review through Cayuse IRB. All approval letters and study documents are located within the study details in Cayuse IRB.

You have approval for this project through March 3, 2022. When this study is completed please submit a closure form through Cayuse. If the study is to last longer than one year, a continuation form needs to be submitted through Cayuse at least **14 days** prior to the expiration of this study.

If you have any questions, please contact: humansubjects@usd.edu or (605) 658-3743.

Sincerely,

The University of South Dakota Institutional Review Board

Ann Waterbury. M.B.A
Director, Office of Human Subjects
University of South Dakota
(605) 658-3767

Appendix C

Survey Informed Consent Statement

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH DAKOTA
Institutional Review Board
Informed Consent Statement

Title of Project: Sorority Leadership and Preparation for Women in Politics

Principal Investigator: Julia Hellwege, Dakota Hall, Vermillion, SD 57069,
                                             Julia.hellwege@usd.edu
Other Investigators: (Student Investigator) Kelli Susemihl, (712) 938-2527,
                                             kelli.susemihl@coyotes.usd.edu
                                       Sarah Wittmuss, Academic and Career Planning Center,
Vermillion, SD

                                             57069, sarah.wittmuss@usd.edu
                                       Katey Ulrich, USD School of Law, Vermillion, SD 57069,
                                             katey.ulrich@usd.edu

Invitation to be Part of a Research Study

You are invited to participate in a research study. In order to participate, you must be a past or present member of a women's fraternity or sorority. Taking part in this research project is voluntary. Please take time to read this entire form and ask questions before deciding whether to take part in this research project.

What is the study about and why are we doing it?

The purpose of the study is to understand how sorority leadership prepares women for post-graduate careers. About 500 people will take part in this research.

What will happen if you take part in this study?

If you agree to take part in this study, you will be asked to take an anonymous survey that will take approximately five minutes to complete.

What risks might result from being in this study?

There are no risks in participating in this research beyond those experienced in everyday life.

How could you benefit from this study?

You might benefit from being in this study because of having an opportunity to reflect upon your sorority experience and how it has positively impacted your life. This research will also help

sororities help prepare their members better for post-graduate life and understand the importance of professional development.

How will we protect your information?

The records of this study will be kept confidential to the extent permitted by law. Any report published with the results of this study will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission or as required by law. To protect your privacy we will not include any information that could identify you. We will protect the confidentiality of the research data by storing the data on a password-protected hard drive. The survey will not ask for names.

However, given that the surveys can be completed from any computer (e.g., personal, work, school), we are unable to guarantee the security of the computer on which you choose to enter your responses. As a participant in our study, we want you to be aware that certain "key logging" software programs exist that can be used to track or capture data that you enter and/or websites that you visit.

It is possible that other people may need to see the information we collect about you. These people work for the University of South Dakota and other agencies as required by law or allowed by federal regulations.

Your Participation in this Study is Voluntary

It is totally up to you to decide to be in this research study. Participating in this study is voluntary. Even if you decide to be part of the study now, you may change your mind and stop at any time. You do not have to answer any questions you do not want to answer.

Contact Information for the Study Team and Questions about the Research

The researchers conducting this study are Kelli Susemihl, Julia Hellwege, Sarah Wittmuss, and Katey Ulrich. You may ask any questions you have now. If you later have questions, concerns, or complaints about the research please contact Julia Hellwege at Julia.Hellwege@usd.edu.

If you have questions regarding your rights as a research subject, you may contact The University of South Dakota- Office of Human Subjects Protection at (605) 658-3743. You may also call this number with problems, complaints, or concerns about the research. Please call this number if you cannot reach research staff, or you wish to talk with someone who is an informed individual who is independent of the research team.

Your Consent

Before agreeing to be part of the research, please be sure that you understand what the study is about. Keep this copy of this document for your records. If you have any questions about the study later, you can contact the study team using the information provided above.

Survey

Section 1: Personal Information

1) What university do you attend?

2) What is your major(s)?

3) When did you receive your Bachelor's degree?
   I am currently earning a 4-year degree
   <5 years ago
   5-10 years ago
   11-20 years ago
   21-30 years ago
   30+ years ago
   I am no longer pursuing a 4-year degree, but have at one point.

Section 2: Sorority Experience

4) What sorority chapter are you affiliated with? (ex. Kappa Alpha Theta)

5) Why did you decide to join a Greek organization? (Check all that apply.)
   Service and philanthropy opportunities
   Environment to meet friends/support system
   Leadership opportunities
   Way to elevate social status
   Social gatherings/mixers
   Professional networking
   Other *Please describe*

6) Did you hold a leadership position in your chapter?
   a) Yes
   b) No

If no, the survey skips to Question 9

7) Which positions did you hold? (Please list.)

8) If yes, why did you choose to run for/accept this position? (Check all that apply.)

To boost my resume
To better my organization
To develop professional skills
To explore an area of interest
I was encouraged by other members

9) What skills have you learned from your sorority experience? (Please drag items to rank in order, with 1 being a skill most learned.)
Public speaking
Time management
Managing money/budgets
Teamwork
Self-care
Crisis management/Problem solving
Communication with peers
Social skills/making friends
Social media strategy
Event Planning
Listening
Self-confidence

10) How well do you feel your chapter encouraged members to apply for leadership positions *within the chapter*?

Scale from 0-10

11) Please explain your previous ranking:

12) How well do you feel your chapter encouraged members to apply for leadership positions *outside of the chapter/around campus*?

Scale from 0-10

13) Please explain your previous ranking:

14) How well do you feel your chapter encouraged members to participate in political discussions and advocacy?

Scale from 0-10

15) Please explain your previous ranking:

16) How well do you feel your chapter emphasized the importance of women in politics and in professional environments?

Scale from 0-10

17) Please explain your previous ranking:

Section 3: Preparation for Future Careers

18) Are you an alumnae of your college/university?
   a) Yes
   b) No

If no, the survey will end.

19) How well did your sorority experience prepare you for your future career?

Scale from 0-10

20) Please explain your previous ranking:

We thank you for your time spent taking this survey. Your response has been recorded.

Bibliography

Alpha Phi. "Join a Sisterhood Full of Heart." Alpha Phi. Last modified 2021. Accessed
    March 14, 2021. https://alphaphi.org/join-alpha-phi/.

Asel, Ashley M., Tricia A. Selfert, and Ernest T. Pascarella. "The Effects of
    Fraternity/Sorority Membership on College Experiences and Outcomes: A
    Portrait of Complexity." *Oracle: The Research Journal of the Association of
    Fraternity/Sorority Advisors*4, no. 2 (September 2009): 1-15. Accessed March 6,
    2021. https://doi.org/10.25774/2p5f-gt14.

Bass, Bernard M., Cecil R. Wurster, Paddy Ann Doll, and Dean J. Clair. "Situational and
    Personality Factors in Leadership Among Sorority Women." *Psychological
    Monographs: General and Applied*67, no. 15 (1953): 1-23. Accessed March 6,
    2021. https://doi.org/10.1037/h0093660.

Becque, Fran. "Female U.S. Senators and Their Sorority Affiliation – 2021 Edition."
    Fraternity History and More. Last modified 2021. Accessed March 19, 2021.
    https://www.franbecque.com/female-senators-sorority-affiliation-2017-edition/.

Cantor, Dorothy W., and Toni Bernay. *Women in Power: The Secrets of Leadership*.
    Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1992.

Carroll, Susan J. "Representing Women: Women State Legislators as Agents of Policy-
    Related Change." In *The Impact of Women in Public Office*, 3-21. Indianapolis:
    Indiana University Press, 2001.

Chang, Clio. "Separate but Unequal in College Greek Life." The Century Foundation.
    Last modified August 12, 2014. Accessed March 19, 2021.
    https://tcf.org/content/commentary/separate-but-unequal-in-college-greek-life/.

Cory, Anita J. "The Influence of Fraternity or Sorority Membership on the Leadership
    Identity Development of College Student Leaders." PhD diss., Washington State
    University, 2011. Accessed March 6, 2021. http://hdl.handle.net/2376/2920.

Courtney, Nadine Jodie. "The Most Prestigious Sororities Across the Country." Town &
    Country. Last modified March 13, 2017. Accessed March 14, 2021.
    https://www.townandcountrymag.com/society/tradition/g3193/best-sororities/.

Director Diversity and Inclusion: Pilot Chapter Officer Job Description. N.p.: Pi
    Beta Phi Fraternity for Women, 2020.

Fox, Richard, and Jennifer Lawless. "If Only They'd Ask: Gender, Recruitment, and
    Political Ambition." *Journal of Politics*72, no. 2 (April 2010): 310-26. Accessed
    March 6, 2021. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0022381609990752.

———. "Uncovering the Origins of the Gender Gap in Political Ambition." *American*

*Political Science Review*108, no. 3 (August 2014): 499-519. Accessed March 6, 2021. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003055414000227.

Gamma Phi Beta. "Gamma Phi Beta History." Gamma Phi Beta: True and Constant. Last modified 2021. Accessed March 20, 2021. https://www.gammaphibeta.org/History/Decades.

Kappa Alpha Theta. "Kappa Alpha Theta Legacy Policy Update." Kappa Alpha Theta. Last modified July 23, 2020. Accessed March 19, 2021. https://www.kappaalphatheta.org/blog/fraternity/kappa-alpha-theta-legacy-policy-update.

———. "Theta Roots." Kappa Alpha Theta. Last modified 2021. Accessed March 14, 2021. https://www.kappaalphatheta.org/about-us/theta-roots.

Kathlene, Lyn. "Words That Matter: Women's Voice and Institutional Bias in Public Policy Formation." In *The Impact of Women in Public Office*, edited by Susan J. Carroll, 22-48. Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2001.

Lautrup, Joey. "Abolish Greek Life? See How a Campus Debate Reflects the Nationwide Racial Justice Reckoning." Time. Last modified December 16, 2020. Accessed March 17, 2021. https://time.com/5921947/abolish-greek-life-debate/.

Lawless, Jennifer L., and Richard L. Fox. *It Takes a Candidate: Why Women Don't Run for Office*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005.

Long, Larry. "Unchallenged, Professed Core Values: Do Undergraduate Fraternity/Sorority Members Actually Benefit in the Areas of Scholarship, Leadership, Service, and Friendship?" *College Student Affairs Journal*30, no. 2 (2012): 15-30. Accessed March 29, 2021.

Madsen, Susan R. *Developing Leadership: Learning from the Experiences of Women Governors*. Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 2009.

Manual of Information. Carmel, IN: National Panhellenic Conference, 2021. Accessed March 20, 2021. https://www.npcwomen.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/2037/2017/11/NPC-Manual-of-Information.pdf.

Martin, Georgianna L., Michael S. Hevel, Ashley M. Asel, and Ernest T. Pascarella. "New Evidence on the Effects of Fraternity and Sorority Affiliation During the First Year of College." *Journal of College Student Development*52, no. 5 (September/October 2011): 543-59. Accessed March 21, 2021. https://doi.org/10.1353/csd.2011.0062.

Martin, Georgianna L., Michael S. Hevel, and Ernest T. Pascarella. "Do Fraternities and Sororities Enhance Socially Responsible Leadership?"*Journal of Student Affairs Research and Practice*49, no. 3 (August 22, 2012): 267-84.

https://doi.org/10.1515/jsarp-2012-6245.

National Panhellenic Conference. "Mission, Vision, and Purpose." National Panhellenic
    Conference. Last modified 2021. Accessed March 14, 2021.
    https://www.npcwomen.org/about/mission-vision-and-purpose/.

————. "National Panhellenic Conference Member Organizations." National Panhellenic
    Conference. Last modified 2021. Accessed March 21, 2021.
    https://www.npcwomen.org/about/our-member-organizations/.

Oklahoma State University. "History of the National Pan-Hellenic Council, Inc."
    Oklahoma State University: Fraternity and Sorority Affairs. Last modified 2021.
    Accessed March 20, 2021. https://lcl.okstate.edu/gogreek/history-national-pan-
    hellenic-council-inc.html.

Panhellenic Club of Annapolis. "The National Panhellenic Conference." Annapolis
    Alumnae Panhellenic. Last modified 2021. Accessed March 14, 2021.
    https://panhellannapolis.org/NPC.

Pi Beta Phi Fraternity for Women. "Connecting to Our Core Values." Pi Beta Phi. Last
    modified 2021. Accessed March 20, 2021.
    https://www.pibetaphi.org/collegiateLWV.

————. "Timeline: Through the Years." Pi Beta Phi. Last modified 2021. Accessed
    March 13, 2021. https://history.pibetaphi.org/about/timeline.

————. "Understanding the Policy and Proposed Legislative Changes Related to
    Membership Recruitment, Legacies and the RIF." Pi Beta Phi. Last modified
    January 28, 2021. Accessed March 19, 2021.
    https://www.pibetaphi.org/pbp/3dedf2c9-e7a1-4f17-9dba-
    9d863274901a/Legislative-Changes-to-Membership-Recruitment-FAQ.

Pike, Gary R. "The Influence of Fraternity or Sorority Membership on Students' College
    Experiences and Cognitive Development." *Research in Higher Education*41
    (February 2000): 117-39. Accessed March 6, 2021.
    https://doi.org/10.1023/A:1007046513949.

Ross, Lawrence C. *The Divine Nine: The History of African American Fraternities and
    Sororities*. New York: Kensington Publishing, 2001.

Rutgers Eagleton Institute for Politics. "Current Numbers." Center for American Women
    and Politics. Last modified 2021. Accessed April 3, 2021.
    https://cawp.rutgers.edu/current-numbers.

Sanbonmatsu, Kira. "Women's Underrepresentation in the U.S. Congress." *Daedalus*149,
    no. 1 (Winter 2020): 40-55. Accessed March 6, 2021.
    https://doi.org/10.1162/daed_a_01772.

Sigma Kappa National Headquarters. "An Update on Sigma Kappa's Legacy Policy."
    Sigma Kappa: Live with Heart. Last modified 2020. Accessed March 19, 2021.
    https://sigmakappa.org/top-stories/legacy-policy/.

Teele, Dawn, Joshua Kalla, and Frances Rosenbluth. "The Ties That Double Bind: Social
    Roles and Women's Underrepresentation in Politics." *The American Political
    Science Review*112, no. 3 (August 2018): 525-41. Accessed April 3, 2021.
    https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003055418000217.

Tolleson-Rinehart, Sue. "Do Women Leaders Make a Difference? Substance, Style, and
    Perceptions." In *The Impact of Women in Public Office*, edited by Susan J.
    Carroll, 149-65. Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2001.

Torbenson, Craig L. "From the Beginning: A History of College Fraternities and
    Sororities." In *Brothers and Sisters: Diversity in College Fraternities and
    Sororities*, edited by Craig L. Torbenson and Gregory S. Parks, 15-45. Madison,
    WI: Fairleigh Dickson University Press, 2009.

University of New Mexico. "Benefits (Why Join)." The University of New Mexico:
    Fraternity and Sorority Life. Last modified 2021. Accessed March 14, 2021.
    https://greeks.unm.edu/become-a-member/joining-a-greek-organization/benefits-
    why-joiN.html.

U.S. Department of Commerce. "Quickfacts." United States Census Bureau. Last
    modified 2020. Accessed April 8, 2021.
    https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/US/LFE046219.

U.S. News and World Report. "University of South Dakota." U.S. News and World
    Report. Last modified 2021. Accessed April 4, 2021.
    https://www.usnews.com/ best-colleges/university-of-south-dakota-10300.

Veracity Media. "By the Numbers." Represent Women: Parity for Women in Politics.
    Last modified 2021. Accessed April 8, 2021.
    https://www.representwomen.org/current-women-representation#states.

Weatherford, Doris. *Women in American Politics: History and Milestones*. Vol. 1. Los
    Angeles: SAGE Publications, 2012.

Yates, Ronald. "Student Involvement and Graduation Rates: A Quantitative Study on the
    Impact of Adding A Greek System at Colleges and Universities in the United
    States." *Oracle: The Research Journal of the Association of Fraternity/Sorority
    Advisors*15, no. 1 (Summer/Fall 2020): 1-13. Accessed March 6, 2021.
    http://web.a.ebscohost.com/ehost/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?vid=2&sid=6c32d189-
    4a53-48f1-9c51-9ac78971d4de%40sdc-v-sessmgr01.