PERCEPTIONS OF ACCESS AND STATUS AMONG
UNDERGRADUATE BUSINESS STUDENTS

BY

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DISSERTATION

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ABSTRACT

Fraternal organizations have existed on campus since the founding of Phi Beta Kappa in 1776 (Baird, 1991; DeSantis, 2007; *Phi Beta Kappa*, n.d.; Thelin, 2011; Torbenson, 2005, 2009). Empirical evidence shows that membership brings added value to an undergraduate student experience (Biddix et al., 2014; G. D. Kuh & Lyons, 1990). However, there is also scholarship indicating that fraternal organizations often emphasize socializing over academics while their members participate in overt racism, sexism, and exclusivity (Brubacher & Rudy, 1976; Maisel, 1990).

This study examined undergraduate business student access and status using Astin's theory of student involvement (A. W. Astin, 1984) and Bourdieu's concept of habitus and theory of social reproduction (Bourdieu, 1977). Using a phenomenological approach, the study was conducted within the Gies College of Business at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. This study identified aspects of the student experience, including professional development, student involvement, and status, that were influenced by professional business fraternity membership. Furthermore, this study revealed the influence of access and support on undergraduate business students' experiences. These findings suggest that business fraternities play a significant role in the undergraduate student experience within highly selective business schools. Implications for theory and research include disrupting social reproduction on college campuses, while implications for policy and practice highlight opportunities within student services, diversity and inclusion, oversight, and collaborative practices.

Keywords: professional fraternities, student involvement, student organizations, fraternal organizations, undergraduate business students

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To Vincent Alexander Truttling

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

"Fraternity is understanding,

it is recognition,

it is a joining with men,

in common enterprises,

it is a willingness

to share and to participate,

it is discipline.

It is selflessness.

It is these things and many more

It is above all an attitude."

Jack Anson, 1965 (Baird, 1991)

"Whenever bodies of young men have been gathered together, more or less permanently, they have tended to separate into groups based upon kindred tastes, aims, interests or other causes" (Birdseye, 1907, p. 208). Fraternal organizations have existed within higher education for more than two centuries yet continue to fill campuses with controversy. Contemporary fraternal organizations would be unrecognizable to their historical predecessors. These organizations have evolved from academic support groups with social foundations to social clubs that, along with academic support and professional development activities, are home to rampant substance use, sexual assault, and hazing. Today, they continue to hold substantial power within higher education institutions.

Statement of the Problem

There is empirical evidence that membership in a Greek-letter organization brings value to a student's undergraduate experience (Biddix et al., 2014; G. D. Kuh & Lyons, 1990).

However, social Greek-letter organizations, in particular, have failed to create inclusive practices that support their organizations' and their institutions' values. Studies have shown that fraternities and sororities "at their very best, do not hinder student development but do not enhance positive value development either" (Baier & Whipple, 1990, p. 44). Fraternities and sororities, in particular, are criticized for racism, sexism, exclusivity, and emphasis of social activities over academic responsibilities (Brubacher & Rudy, 1976; Maisel, 1990). Maisel wrote that:

> Social fraternities and sororities are all too often antithetical to these values and, in fact, to the very essence of higher education, of a college and university system that began, here in the United States, with moral education as its guide. (p. 9)

Undergraduate students who participate in selective co-curricular opportunities within their collegiate academic programs benefit from access to professional mentorship, influential alumni, as well as exclusive internship and job shadow opportunities. Students who do not participate in these selective organizations and do not have access to the same resources may perceive a difference in their student experience at the same institution. It is critical that student and academic affairs administrators strive to create consistent undergraduate student experiences that support students' holistic development. However, the presence of fraternal organizations appears to directly contradict those efforts. It is imperative that higher education administrators across the country consider the presence of these organizations on campuses and seek to understand and define the role of fraternal organizations within higher education institutions.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this dissertation study was to understand student perceptions of differential access and status based on participation within selective co-curricular organizations.

Specifically, this study sought to understand students' perceptions of differences in the student experience for professional business fraternity members and non-members within a highly selective undergraduate business program. The existing literature on academic and professional fraternal organizations is limited and is often tied to studies on social fraternal organizations. While all types of fraternal organizations can trace their roots to the founding of Phi Beta Kappa in 1776 at the College of William & Mary (Baird, 1991; DeSantis, 2007; *Phi Beta Kappa*, n.d.; Thelin, 2011; Torbenson, 2005, 2009), the social fraternity or sorority experience is not necessarily reflective of the academic or professional fraternal experience on modern college campuses. In order to fill a gap in the existing literature, a qualitative single instrument case study was conducted at one highly selective college of business. Through individual interviews with graduating undergraduate students in the business school, a descriptive phenomenological approach was used to understand how students perceived their undergraduate business student experience, as well as how their choices and factors outside of their control impacted their individual experiences.

Research Questions

Undergraduate members of professional business fraternities have increased opportunities to build personal and professional networks solely based on their membership status within their institutions. Given this, it is possible that this access and status given to business fraternity students creates disparities in the student experience. This phenomenological study examined the awareness of access and status within the undergraduate experience of students enrolled in the Gies College of Business at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign (UIUC).

Guiding Research Questions

RQ1: To what extent do business fraternity students perceive benefits from their status within the business school?

RQ2: How do business fraternity students and students who are not members of business fraternities perceive disparities in access and status within the undergraduate student community?

Significance of the Study

As described in Chapter 2, the existing literature is descriptive of the social fraternity and sorority experience for traditional-age college students as well as the impact of student involvement on the college experience. However, there is a dearth of literature focused on professional or academic fraternal organization involvement. Informed by these gaps in the literature, this study explored students' perceptions of professional business fraternity membership. Specifically, this study examined students' self-perceptions and perceptions of others' access and status within the context of a Midwestern highly selective undergraduate business school. The study is significant because of the highly selective nature of the institution, which may be associated with access and status, and the likelihood of social reproduction within the institution.

Theoretical Frameworks

This study considered student development, academic outcomes, co-curricular involvement, career decision-making and readiness, and professional preparation by examining the undergraduate student experience through the lens of professional business fraternity member access and status.

Student Involvement Theory

Astin's theory of student involvement (A. W. Astin, 1984) provides the primary framework for examining involvement in fraternal organizations. This theory suggests that "the greater the student's involvement in college, the greater will be the amount of student learning and personal development" (A. W. Astin, 1984, p. 529). Astin's theory (A. W. Astin, 1984) proposes five basic assumptions: a) involvement requires an investment of psychosocial and physical energy which may be general or highly specific; b) involvement is continuous but the amount of energy invested varies from person to person and from situation to situation; c) involvement may be measured using qualitative and/or quantitative methods; d) student development as a result of involvement in any program is directly proportional to the quantity and quality of student involvement in said program; and e) the effectiveness of any academic program or policy is directly correlated to the opportunity for that program or policy to increase student involvement (A. W. Astin, 1984).

The value of this theoretical framework is that it specifically connects desired higher education outcomes to the growth and development that college students experience as a result of their co-curricular involvement. This study seeks to understand the impact of specific co-curricular involvement on college seniors' perceptions of their experiences in a highly selective undergraduate business school. This necessitates a framework where outcomes as a result of involvement are the primary consideration.

Social Reproduction

Bourdieu (1977) defines cultural capital as knowledge, disposition, values, or property that passes on from one generation to the next. Bourdieu asserts that schools operate within a class-conscious context, rewarding the cultural capital of the dominant class and systematically

oppressing the cultural capital of non-dominant classes (Bourdieu, 1977, 2018; McDonough &

Nunez, 2007). Bourdieu claims that school structures, curricula, language, and requirements

favor the dominant class and lead to greater educational benefits for those citizens who need

them least. As such, he notes that students with high levels of social capital know how to develop

a network and use their cultural capital to their advantage (Bourdieu, 1977).

The concept of habitus was defined by Bourdieu (1977) as a system of common

perceptions and experiences held by members of the same group that define an individual's

expectations, goals, attitudes, and futuristic thinking. The concepts of cultural capital and habitus

"explain how individual agency combines with socially structured opportunities and aspirations

to reproduce the existing social structure" (Walpole, 2003, p. 49). Walpole (2003) argues that "a

Bourdieuian framework is significant because it incorporates sociocultural factors and individual

agency to explain the reproduction of existing social structure" (p. 49).

Institutional habitus paired with students' backgrounds shape students' college choices,

which are inherently unequal because students' choices are impacted by their families, schools,

and their individual outlook on opportunities (McDonough, 1997). McDonough (1997) argues

that "these different resources contribute to the persistence and reproduction of a social-class-

based stratified system of postsecondary opportunity that thwarts meritocratic ideas" (p. 150).

Students from a higher socio-economic status are at an advantage because they inherit both

cultural capital and habitus, both of which are highly valued in higher education settings

(McDonough, P.M., and Nunez, 2007). McDonough suggests that post-secondary education is a

cultural asset that can increase an individual's social mobility (1997).

The value of this theoretical framework is that it specifically connects the combination of

sociocultural factors with individual choices to explain social reproduction. This study seeks to

understand the impact of specific co-curricular involvement on college seniors' perceptions of

their experiences in a highly selective undergraduate business school. This necessitates a

framework where the intersection of sociocultural factors and individual decision-making is a

primary consideration.

Definition of Terms

DeSantis (2007) operationalized three categories of Greek-letter organizations and these

definitions will also be used in this paper. Specifically, he defined the categories as such:

There are *professional* fraternities and sororities that bring students together on the basis

of their professional or vocational field (e.g., Phi Delta Phi, founded in 1869, is a

coeducational fraternity for students interested in the study of law). There are *honor*

societies that are composed mainly of students who have achieved distinction in

scholarship (e.g., Tau Beta Phi, founded in 1885, is a coeducational fraternity for students

who have excelled in the study of engineering). And, finally, there are *social* fraternities

and sororities, the organizations that are commonly associated with big parties, pledging

and hazing, and communal housing. (p. 3).

Within this dissertation research, I discuss social fraternities and sororities, as well as

academic, professional, service-based, and honorary Greek-letter organizations. These

organizations, as well as their national or international administrative organizations, are

discussed interchangeably throughout the paper. Any combination of fraternal organizations is

operationalized within this paper as Greek-letter organizations. Social fraternities and sororities

are referred to as social Greek-letter organizations; additionally, modifiers are used to identify

other types of Greek-letter organizations, including academic, professional, honorary, or service-

based. Traditionally, students are permitted to join as many professional, honor, or other non-

social Greek-letter organizations as they like; however, social fraternity or sorority membership is restricted to one affiliation per student (DeSantis, 2007).

This dissertation study also discusses selective co-curricular organizations, a term I use to describe both university-recognized registered student organizations and programs. A selective co-curricular organization involves a competitive recruitment process, including interviews, and a selection process that inevitably excludes some interested and qualified students. Examples of selective co-curricular organizations within the Gies College of Business include the Investment Banking Academy (and its feeder organizations including Prime Mergers and Acquisitions), Investment Management Academy, Enactus, and Illinois Business Consulting. The phrase "selective co-curricular organization" is not used to describe professional business fraternities.

Limitations and Delimitations of the Study

This study used accepted qualitative research methods, but some limitations may have influenced the study findings. First, this study relied upon one interview with each student and this may have limited my ability to build a trusting relationship with each participant. I worked as the Assistant Dean of Academic Affairs and Honors Programs within the Gies College of Business while collecting data, and my role within the institution may have hindered some participants' candor during their individual interviews. Participants may have been reluctant to share their experiences with a researcher who is also a practitioner within their college. In addition, the generalizability of the study findings may be limited because of the available pool of participants and the institutional context of one college within one institution. However, given the diverse context of American undergraduate business schools and the nature of qualitative inquiry, this study does not seek to be generalizable.

This study is also bounded by some delimitations, which may also influence study findings. Each interview participant was a senior preparing to graduate in May 2020 and was either selected or not selected for business fraternity membership in their freshman or sophomore year of their undergraduate program. For the purposes of this study, a senior is defined as a student who has earned at least 90 credits and was on the college's degree list for May 2020 graduation. Their perspective on business fraternity recruitment and membership privileges may have been impacted by the length of time since their own involvement in the recruitment process. In addition, each participant committed to a full-time job offer or a graduate school program by the time that interviews took place, and this may have had an impact on the participant's perspective as well. Once a student approaches graduation and has secured employment, memories of past experiences may not be objective. Finally, I interviewed business students only in order to better understand the undergraduate business student experience, even though many business fraternity members are students in other colleges within the university.

CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

More than 725,000 undergraduate students belong to social Greek-letter organizations, comprising a Greek participation rate of as much as 80% of the total student population in some institutions (Jozkowski & Wiersma-Mosley, 2017). Students are not only influenced by their field of study, but also their living environment, their extra-curricular organizations, their peers, and their networks (A. W. Astin, 1993; G. D. Kuh, 2003). Astin (1993) wrote that "the student's peer group is the single most potent source of influence on growth and development in the undergraduate years" (p. 398). Interest in joining social fraternities and sororities has declined steadily over the past 40 years, but their influence on college campuses and on their individual members remains significant (A. W. Astin, 1993; Mauk, 2006).

Fraternal Organization Governance

The North American Interfraternity Conference (NIC), formed in 1909, oversees social fraternities and the fraternal experience. The NIC also oversees Interfraternity Councils (IFC) on college campuses, which exist to "advance fraternity on campus and provide interfraternal leadership to the entire community" in any environment where two or more NIC fraternities exist on campus (*North American Interfraternity Conference*, 2019). IFC exists "to promote the shared interests and values of our member fraternities: leadership, service, brotherhood, and scholarship" (*North American Interfraternity Conference*, 2019) and works to create cooperation among fraternities. The NIC membership includes 66 partner or associate partner affiliated men's social fraternities (*North American Interfraternity Conference*, 2019).

The National Panhellenic Conference (NPC) was established in 1902 and oversees 26 social sororities or women's-only member organizations, specifically providing administrative support and leadership for College Panhellenics, formed when at least two active NPC member

organizations are on a campus, and Alumnae Panhellenics, which include alumnae members of NPC organizations and are based on members' geographic proximity to each other (*National Panhellenic Conference*, n.d.). NPC promotes the shared values of "friendship, leadership, service, knowledge, integrity, and community" (*National Panhellenic Conference*, n.d.).

The National Pan-Hellenic Council (NPHC) was formed in 1930 and formally incorporated in 1937. The organization exists to oversee nine international Greek letter sororities and fraternities: Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, Iota Phi Theta Fraternity, Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, Sigma Gamma Rho Sorority, Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity, and Omega Psi Phi Fraternity (*National Pan-Hellenic Council*, n.d.). All nine member organizations are historically Black fraternities and sororities, formed in response to widespread segregation and disenfranchisement of Black people. NPHC promotes interaction, cooperation, and engagement among the "Divine Nine" member organizations (Ross, Jr., 2000). NPHC member groups are also referred to as Black Greek-letter organizations.

Additional governing associations for social fraternities and sororities exist and are referenced within this paper, including the National Association of Latino Fraternal Organizations, the National Multicultural Greek Council, and the United Council of Christian Fraternities and Sororities. However, their relatively recent formation means that relevant peer-reviewed scholarship on the student experience is unavailable.

Participation Rates

In 2017, 2.9 million students graduated from high school and 67 percent of these students enrolled in college immediately following high school completion (*National Center for Education Statistics Undergraduate Enrollment*, 2019). The total undergraduate enrollment in

degree-granting postsecondary institutions was 16.8 million students in 2017 (*National Center for Education Statistics Undergraduate Enrollment*, 2019). There are approximately 123 fraternities and sororities with 9 million current and alumni members (*National Pan-Hellenic Council*, n.d.; *National Panhellenic Conference*, n.d.; *North American Interfraternity Conference*, 2019). Nationwide, NIC fraternity and NPC sorority membership includes approximately 780,000 students ("National Panhellenic Conference," n.d.; "North American Interfraternity Conference," 2019). This represents approximately 4.6% of students, out of a total of 16.8 million undergraduate students.

The NIC represents the largest social fraternal organization membership, with "6,100 chapters on 800 campuses, 380,000 undergraduate members, and 4.2 million alumni" (*North American Interfraternity Conference*, 2019). NPC includes sororities on "more than 670 campuses with more than 400,000 undergraduate members in more than 3,250 collegiate chapters", as well as more than 3,700 alumnae associations worldwide (*National Panhellenic Conference*, n.d.). NPHC does not publish membership data and its member organizations do not separate undergraduate and alumni data. However, the nine member organizations indicate that there are more than 6,600 undergraduate and alumni chapters with more than 1.5 million student and alumni members (*Alpha Kappa Alpha*, 2018; *Alpha Phi Alpha*, n.d.; *Delta Sigma Theta*, 2017; *Iota Phi Theta*, 2019; *Kappa Alpha Psi*, n.d.; *Omega Psi Phi*, n.d.; *Phi Beta Sigma*, n.d.; *Sigma Gamma Rho*, n.d.; *Zeta Phi Beta*, 2017).

Presence and Contributions of Fraternal Organizations

Historical Context

The colonial colleges were nine fully chartered institutions that colonists founded that were intended to mirror British university structures, particularly the University of Oxford and

the University of Cambridge (Thelin, 2011). The nine colonial colleges are presently known as Harvard University, College of William & Mary, Yale University, Rutgers University, Columbia University, Brown University, University of Pennsylvania, Princeton University, and Dartmouth College. All nine colleges implemented British university physical structures (buildings, quadrangles, separate residential spaces) and instructional approaches (recitation, instruction in Greek and Latin) (Thelin, 2011; Torbenson, 2005). The Oxford-Cambridge model emphasized students learning and living in community (Thelin, 2011).

The first known student organization in British North America was founded in 1703 at Harvard, intending to allow students to pray together and mingle within a religious context under faculty supervision (Torbenson, 2005). As more and more student organizations were created and learned to sustain their membership as members graduated, literary societies became popular and known as important, influential organizations (Thelin, 2011; Torbenson, 2005). Colonial colleges focused on rote learning and memorization and literary societies gave students an opportunity to develop their writing and speaking skills (Torbenson, 2005). Political advances between 1760 and 1860, in addition to the Enlightenment, created a "spirit of intellectualism that was lacking in the college classroom" (Torbenson, 2005, p. 41). Literary societies distinguished themselves as "a college within a college", utilizing separate selection processes, identifying their members with secret rites, mottoes, and society pins, and implementing rush processes and new member hazing (Torbenson, 2005).

Social fraternities and sororities can trace their beginnings to the colonial colleges' literary societies. Fraternities were formed by small groups of students who wanted to create change on campus and an environment for brotherhood among students (Thelin, 2011; Torbenson, 2005). Greek-letter organizations typically aspired to academic excellence,

brotherhood, leadership, and service, and where "literary societies once filled the intellectual vacuum of college life, Greek-letter fraternities filled the social vacuum" (Torbenson, 2005, p. 43). These fraternities were typically forbidden by college administrators and were known for more than five decades as college secret societies (Birdseye, 1907).

Historically, there are deep connections between academic and social fraternal organizations. Phi Beta Kappa, the first Greek-letter fraternal organization in the United States was founded on December 5, 1776 at the College of William & Mary (Baird, 1991; DeSantis, 2007; *Phi Beta Kappa*, n.d.; Thelin, 2011; Torbenson, 2005, 2009). Now the nation's oldest and most prestigious college honor society, Phi Beta Kappa was formed as a social organization with Masonic influences, including secret handshakes, initiation rituals, and members-only social activities (Baird, 1991; Thelin, 2011; Torbenson, 2005, 2009). These traditions, fueled by a peer-controlled membership selection process, continued as Phi Beta Kappa expanded, resulting in autonomous chapters operating at each institution (*Phi Beta Kappa*, n.d.; Torbenson, 2005).

In the 1820s, a national anti-secrecy movement combined with public skepticism about Masonry led to Phi Beta Kappa distancing itself from the Masons and eventually becoming a scholastic honorary society in 1831 (Torbenson, 2005). Members of the Phi Beta Kappa chapter at Union College lost control of their organization to faculty and ultimately formed three new Greek-letter organizations that relied on Phi Beta Kappa's founding characteristics: Kappa Alpha Society (1825), Sigma Phi (1827), and Delta Phi (1827) (Torbenson, 2005). The formation of these fraternities launched a movement that quickly led to three additional fraternities and Union became the "Mother of Fraternities" (Torbenson, 2005). In fact, Union's president, Dr. Eliphalet Nott, said that "he would rather teach a young devil than a young saint; that there was some fun in the former case but none in the latter" (Birdseye, 1907). This mindset was especially

welcoming for the early developmental era of fraternity organizations and social Greek Life culture on campus.

College faculty, who were predominantly trained for ministry, opposed fraternities and encouraged students to conform to their standards and exercise few freedoms; this approach led to more secrecy (e.g., secret meeting places) in some cases, whereas newer smaller colleges encouraged fraternities to help attract new students (Torbenson, 2005). These social fraternities had an unspoken intention for white, male, Protestant members; in response, organizations for Black, Jewish, and other identity-based groups formed in the early 1900s (*National Pan-Hellenic Council*, n.d.; Thelin, 2011; Torbenson, 2005). While women's colleges were growing in the East, it was the co-educational colleges in the Midwest and South that led to the formation of social sororities, allowing women to organize for social opportunities and participate in campus activities (Torbenson, 2005).

Historically white sororities existed as local organizations through the 1800s and experienced rapid expansion at the start of the twentieth century. Alpha Delta Pi was founded as the Adelphean Society in 1851 and is recognized as the first secret society for women (*National Panhellenic Conference*, n.d.; Torbenson, 2005). Pi Beta Phi became the first national sorority when it expanded to a second chapter in 1869 (Torbenson, 2005). The first Greek-letter women's fraternity, Kappa Alpha Theta, was founded in 1870 by four women who were among the first women to be admitted to what is now DePauw University in Greencastle, Indiana and were rejected from joining an all-male fraternal organization (Freeman, 2018; *National Panhellenic Conference*, n.d.). In 1874, the term sorority was used for the first time to describe the Syracuse University Gamma Phi Beta chapter (Torbenson, 2005). The formerly all-male social fraternity

turned honor society Phi Beta Kappa admitted its first woman member in 1875 in Vermont (*Phi Beta Kappa*, n.d.).

While social Greek-letter organizations began to increase in popularity in the mid-nineteenth century, overall fraternity enrollment declined during and immediately after the Civil War due to numerous enlistments and casualties among fraternity members (Thelin, 2011; Torbenson, 2005). This was followed by the rise of Populism, when many people began to openly oppose fraternities' selectivity and immorality (Torbenson, 2005). "Before they quite knew what had happened, most college presidents found that their undergraduates had ushered into the American college community a social system that they had neither invited nor encouraged (Rudolph, 1990, p. 145). At the start of the twentieth century, American families began to prosper in greater numbers and sending a child to college was an important indicator of status (Thelin, 2011). Previously, college students focused on ministry, teaching, or law. However, college enrollments quickly grew at predominantly white institutions, and this resulted in a similar increase in social Greek-letter organization membership (Torbenson, 2005).

Throughout the 1920s and 1930s, a period of "golden age of college life" (Thelin, 2011, p. 219), socioeconomic stratification was evident on predominantly white college campuses, and there were sharp divides between students with and without socioeconomic privilege. This divide typically occurred between students who were members of social fraternities and sororities and students who were independent of this system (Thelin, 2011). However, most college students were still wealthy white Protestant males, and many older fraternities established rules to exclude members of other races or religions (Torbenson, 2005). By the early 1930s, numerous fraternities and sororities had been established that represented non-white ethnicities and non-Protestant religious backgrounds, particularly Judaism and Catholicism (Torbenson, 2005).

The rise of social fraternities and sororities is generally closely linked with the demise of collegiate literary societies (Baird, 1991; Syrett, 2018; Torbenson, 2005, 2009). Fraternities and sororities inspired more loyalty to the organization among members than literary societies did, because "their goals often included correcting the perceived wrongs of the college administration, providing social activities for students, and obtaining more rights for students. In reality, however, their purpose was to create a compatible brotherhood or sisterhood for friendship" (Torbenson, 2009, p. 20). Once chapter houses were introduced to campuses, created exclusionary spaces that served as sources of power and wealth on campuses (Syrett, 2018; Torbenson, 2009).

During much of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, social fraternity and sorority systems expanded rapidly as membership was offered to wealthy students from high-status, powerful families, creating socioeconomic segregation on campus (Bowen et al., 2005). New Greek-letter organizations were established at unprecedented rates as existing organizations rapidly expanded throughout the United States. As higher education enrollment continued to climb, social fraternities and sororities built and managed their own residences in response to scarce university housing at all types of institutions. According to DeSantis (2007):

> These developments played no small part in precipitating one of the most significant (and troubling) changes to the institution of the social Greek organization: The older organizations, which brought members tighter for conversation and camaraderie, were transformed into social clubs dedicated primarily to amusement. Poetry readings, literary circles, and dining were replaced with beer, sex, and rock and roll. (p. 5)

Beginning in the 1920s, fraternities, in particular, saw a sharp increase in their power on college campuses. Fraternity members dominated intramural sports and fraternity and sorority

members were more likely to participate in extra-curricular activities than their independent peers (Syrett, 2018). A study at Syracuse University found that non-member students were frustrated by social Greek-letter organization members' dominance in clubs and sports; however, fraternity members believed that their talent and popularity meant they had earned the right to dominate all aspects of campus life (Syrett, 2018). The increase in fraternity membership and in the number of fraternal organizations on campus beginning in the 1920s also resulted in less emphasis on exclusivity, and for the first time, non-white students, Jewish students, and Catholic students found fraternities willing to welcome them as full members (Syrett, 2018). This trend in membership led to sharply defined hierarchies among social Greek-letter organization chapters on campuses.

White social sororities also gained considerable power and status during the twentieth century, creating valuable opportunities for social inclusion, popularity, alumnae networks, and exposure to wealthy fraternity men (Freeman, 2018). Over time, both social fraternities and sororities became focused on "heterosocializing" between fraternity men and sorority women at the expense of the supportive women's-only space of the sorority house and membership experience (Freeman, 2018). Freeman (2018) also notes that:

> By emphasizing the physical appeal of sorority members as a way to promote socialization and interaction with fraternity members, the sorority members began to connect their identity, value, and understanding of self with their physical beauty. (p. 116)

In their beginnings, social sororities expected their members to be attractive, cultivate their femininity, and create campus chapters that appealed to women seeking heterosexual marriage (Freeman, 2018). As sororities rapidly grew and expanded nationwide, early sorority

members were purposeful, serious students who were focused on their educations and not as much on the social experiences available in college (Freeman, 2018). Throughout much of the twentieth century, the sorority experience shifted focus to socializing with male social fraternity members. Freeman (2018) notes that this is not problematic in itself but becomes problematic when socializing centers "primarily around attracting the admiring gazes of fraternity members (p. 117).

Postwar, college campuses nationwide became more leftist, feminist, and anti-racist; fraternity members, however, were more likely to be politically conservative and more traditional in their values and beliefs (Syrett, 2018). At this time, hazing practices became more widespread and alcohol use became a more central facet of fraternity life (Nuwer, 1999; Syrett, 2018). Fraternity and sorority chapters' traditions, such as participating in recruitment and pledge period activities, living in chapter houses on or near campus, participating in a robust social scene dependent upon alcohol availability and little oversight, and a particular focus on socializing with well-respected, high-quality chapters for the opposite sex, continue to be dominant parts of the social Greek-letter organization experience today (Horowitz, 2013; Rudolph, 1990; Thelin, 2011; Torbenson, 2005).

Social Greek-letter organizations "continue to express their dominant class origins, and current memberships reflect student bodies of an earlier, less inclusive era. Compared to non-members, Greek members are more likely to be white and to have upper- or upper-middle class backgrounds" (Walker et al., 2015). Eleven percent of incoming freshmen across all types of baccalaureate institutions indicated that they intended to join a social fraternity or sorority, including 13.1 percent of incoming students at public universities and 28.6 percent at historically Black colleges and universities (Stolzenberg et al., 2016).

Similarly to how literary societies paved the way for social Greek-letter organizations to form and flourish on campuses, social fraternities and sororities created space for academic, service, professional, honorary, and other types of Greek-letter organizations to exist within colleges and universities. Non-social Greek-letter organizations created traditions similar to their social fraternity and sorority colleagues. Each group had Greek letters to identify it, created symbols and badges, and developed initiation rituals for prospective members (Baird, 1920; Birdseye, 1907). Students were permitted to join one social fraternity or sorority and also pursue other types of Greek-letter organizations, which created even more opportunities for social fraternal organizations' traditions to carry over to other types of Greek-letter organizations on campus (Baird, 1920; Birdseye, 1907; Torbenson, 2005).

Today, academic and professional fraternal organizations have little resemblance to social fraternities and sororities. Academic and professional fraternal organizations are co-educational and do not own official chapter housing on college campuses. While socializing is an important aspect of many academic and professional fraternal organizations, the party culture of social fraternities and sororities has not translated to their academic and professional counterparts.

Presence on Campus

Multi-institutional surveys on student engagement and campus life estimate that approximately 12 percent of undergraduate men and 10 percent of undergraduate women affiliate with a social Greek-letter organization during their undergraduate college career (*National Survey of Student Engagement Annual Results*, 2004). In addition to numbers of members, social fraternities and sororities have a visible physical presence on many campuses through their chapter housing. The first fraternity house dedicated to member lodging rather than just meeting

space was built at the University of California in Berkeley in 1876 (Syrett, 2018). By 1879, 13 fraternity chapters owned housing and required their members to occupy these homes; in 1920, there were 775 fraternity houses nationwide (Baird, 1920; Syrett, 2018). Today, houses are most common at large institutions with space on and around the campus, such as large public institutions in rural and suburban areas.

Dugan (2011) identified a taxonomy of eight classifications of students, including affinity group affiliates, identity and expression leaders, academic careerists, cultural collegiate, athletes, social recreators, recreational academics, and social collegiates. Nearly all of these categorizations include Greek-letter organizations of some kind, particularly social fraternities and sororities and academic or professional fraternal organizations (Dugan, 2011). The depth and breadth of the impact of fraternal organization involvement on the college student experience is evident through numerous studies on the benefits and drawbacks of these individual and group experiences.

Benefits and Drawbacks

College student involvement, engagement, and psychosocial development are all concepts that are linked to each other as well as to academic outcomes such as persistence and retention, graduation rates, and academic performance (A. W. Astin, 1993; Biddix et al., 2014). College students learn more when they are engaged in "a variety of educationally purposeful activities" (Kuh, 2003, p. 25). Empirical evidence also indicates that students who are full-time undergraduates living on campus and who began their education at that same institution they are currently attending are more likely to be engaged on campus than their peers (G. D. Kuh, 2003).

Social

Post-secondary institutions are "quintessentially social places, shaping the number, quality, and type of social ties that particular individuals and groups enjoy" (Stevens et al., 2008). Social Greek-letter organizations promote an enhanced student experience to prospective members. Social fraternity and sorority chapters emphasize brotherhood or sisterhood, scholarship, service, professional development, and other benefits rooted in the social experience of fraternity or sorority membership (*National Pan-Hellenic Council*, n.d.; *National Panhellenic Conference*, n.d.; *North American Interfraternity Conference*, 2019).

Upper-middle-class students in particular have an orientation toward sociality, whereas first-generation students view the social aspects of college as a distraction from academic obligations (Bergerson, 2007; Stuber, 2006). Students from affluent families often dominate access to selective co-curricular opportunities (Plominski & Burns, 2018). Wealthy white students who attended affluent high schools have numerous advantages in selection processes for programs where test scores, high school rigor, interview preparation resources, and parental involvement influence outcomes (Walpole, 2003).

Socioeconomic status and family background have a significant impact on all aspects of education, including students' aspirations, retention, persistence, and degree attainment from their earliest schooling experiences and beyond college (Walpole, 2003). Overall, social Greek-letter organization members tend to have stronger social backgrounds than non-affiliated students, regardless of their family of origin's social class (Walker et al., 2015).

Social reproduction theory describes how the status quo is upheld and how inequality is reproduced across time (Bourdieu, 2018). This occurs specifically in the educational context because the American public education structure has been shaped over generations by the values

and norms of the upper class. Walpole (2003) found that students from lower socioeconomic classes devoted their extra-curricular time to paid employment rather than unpaid campus involvement, further stratifying college campuses and creating distinctly different experiences for students based on socioeconomic status. Astin's (1984) theory of student involvement argues that there is a correlation between the quality and quantity of student involvement and their learning and development in college.

Social fraternity and sorority members are less likely to seek and maintain friendships with students from different racial or ethnic groups (Walker et al., 2015). In addition, "fraternity and sorority recruitment is perhaps the most formalized and explicit version of social evaluation and exclusion on campuses" (Stevens et al., 2008). However, these members are more likely to study abroad than non-members and are more likely to have broader social networks, including students in residence halls, on campus (Walker et al., 2015). For example, social Greek-letter organization membership positively impacted underrepresented college students' sense of belonging on campus (Hurtado & Carter, 1997).

Some pre-college factors also impact the social draw of fraternity and sorority life. Social Greek-letter organization members begin college with stronger social skills and place a greater emphasis on the social experiences of college from the outset (Walker et al., 2015). Students perceive their fraternity or sorority experience as beneficial in improving their sense of belonging and creating high quality peer interactions (Long, 2012). These students more deeply value socializing well with others and expectations for social relationships as well (Walker et al., 2015). Fraternity and sorority members experience increased opportunities to interact and learn from others, which may lead to increased personal development and social learning (McClain et

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al., 2016). Greek-letter organization members also encounter increased opportunities to hone interests and preferences while developing a sense of self (McClain et al., 2016).

Professional Socialization and Leadership Development

Members of social Greek-letter organizations make up approximately 8.5 percent of the American undergraduate student population, but "they produce from among their ranks a staggering number of American leaders. Greeks, especially white fraternity members, dominate the elite realms of politics, law and business" (DeSantis, 2007, p. 7). This dominance includes 76 percent of U.S. Senators, 85 percent of Fortune 500 executives, 120 of the Forbes' 500 CEOs (including 10 of the top 30), a majority of U.S. presidents' cabinet members, 85 percent of Supreme Court justices, and 18 U.S. presidents since 1877; DeSantis (2007) states that "when they leave college, they disproportionately influence America" (p. 19).

Astin (1993) found that undergraduate student leadership development was most impacted by peer interaction, specifically by experiences that included social fraternity and sorority membership. Most research on fraternity and sorority leadership relied on the Kouzes and Posner practices of exemplary leadership model (1987), which was subsequently adapted to specifically describe college students. This model includes five individual behaviors that individual leaders deploy when at their best in leadership roles: challenging the process, inspiring a shared vision, enabling others to act, modeling the way, and encouraging the heart (Kouzes & Posner, 1987).

The Social Change Model of Leadership Development emphasizes seven interconnected values, grounded in theory, where students' leadership outcomes can be measured: individual values (consciousness of self, congruence, commitment), group values (collaboration, common purpose, controversy with civility), and societal values (citizenship) (H. S. Astin & Astin, 1996).

Since its introduction, the Social Change Model of Leadership Development has shaped much of the relevant scholarship on student involvement and leadership development. On the Socially Responsible Leadership Scale, social fraternity and sorority involvement had a positive effect on first-year gains in both citizenship and change and sorority membership was connected to stronger effects on first-year gains for both common purpose and citizenship (Martin, Hevel, & Pascarella, 2012).

Social fraternities and sororities have an opportunity to play an important role in students' leadership development because group affiliation has been identified as an important context for this particular dimension of college student development (A. W. Astin, 1993; Dugan, 2008; G. D. Kuh, 2003). Involvement, particularly in leadership roles, within social fraternities and sororities is dominated by sophomore and junior level students (Adams & Keim, 2000). Dugan (2008) emphasizes the need for supporting these students with "intentionally structured experiences that promote leadership development and operate from a clear, theoretical foundation" (p. 21).

Philanthropy and Service

Social Greek-letter organizations, in particular, are responsible for millions of dollars of philanthropic fundraising and thousands of hours of service to their communities every year (*National Pan-Hellenic Council*, n.d.; *National Panhellenic Conference*, n.d.; *North American Interfraternity Conference*, 2019). Social fraternities and sororities frequently cite philanthropy and service as pillars of membership, expectations for affiliation, and as part of their strategy for member recruitment and development. While social fraternity and sorority presence on most campuses is not without controversy, there are clear and significant societal contributions through these organizations' philanthropic and service endeavors.

In addition to its role in leadership development scholarship, the Social Change Model of Leadership Development also has implications for community service and volunteerism among Greek-letter organization members (H. S. Astin & Astin, 1996). The Multi-institutional Study of Leadership found that community service involvement influenced five of the seven core values of the Social Change Model, indicating that community service can be a meaningful way to develop leadership skills for undergraduate students (Dugan & Komives, 2010). However, Dugan and Komives note that practitioners should consider including meaningful reflection experiences to further develop students' personal values and sense of self as they experience and learn about social issues (2010).

In a qualitative study on a social fraternity chapter within a large public institution, Mathiasen (2005) found an emphasis on service to others when recruiting prospective members, noting:

> Members of Alpha Alpha are expected to have an awareness of and respect for values and opinions different from their own, to have a sense of fairness and social justice regarding human rights, and to work cooperatively with others in the social organization. (p. 250)

Social fraternity and sorority members "demonstrated a significantly higher belief in maintaining a responsible connection to the community than unaffiliated men and women" (Martin, Hevel, & Pascarella, 2012, p. 279). This could be attributed to the emphasis on philanthropy and community service in all types of fraternal organizations. As such, Greek-letter organization members should integrate intentional reflection activities to improve their consciousness of self as well as their congruence between their organizations' stated values and lived practices (Martin, et al., 2012).

Career

Many types of Greek-letter organizations, particularly social fraternities and sororities, promote career preparation as a benefit of group membership (Long, 2012). Members are selected through processes independent of their affiliated colleges or universities and then granted access to alumni networks that can provide particularly strong support with career decision-making and eventual job placement (Bureau & Koepsell, 2017). Members of social Greek-letter organizations have higher career decision-making self-efficacy, vocational identity, and goal directedness than non-members (McClain et al., 2016). Students who belong to social Greek-letter organizations are more likely to become involved in professional organizations and academic-focused clubs, which could indicate a stronger interest in career-related matters among fraternity and sorority members (Pike & Askew, 1990).

Student engagement in college also has an impact on early earnings after graduation. Fraternity and sorority involvement had a negative impact on early earnings, but participating in community service and working with other students outside of class, both aspects of social Greek-letter organization life, had a positive impact on early earnings (Hu & Wolniak, 2010). Multiple studies note that social fraternities and sororities can further improve students' career readiness by specifically focusing on developing members' career-related skills and abilities as a part of member education programs (Long, 2012; Pike & Askew, 1990).

Bureau and Koepsell (2017) identified a number of employability skills that are enhanced through social Greek-letter organization membership. Specifically, verbal communication, teamwork, decision-making, problem-solving, workflow planning, information processing, quantitative analysis, career-specific knowledge, computer software skills, writing and editing reports, and selling and influencing others are all employability skills that can be honed through

involvement in a fraternal organization (Bureau & Koepsell, 2017). Leadership within an organization often looks different for those who hold formal positions compared to those who do not (Dugan, 2008). However, fraternal organizations typically approach member development from the perspective that all members represent the organization. Because of this stance, a focus on developing career readiness skills and engaging in leadership education for all members through the pledge period and in ongoing member development activities is essential (Bureau & Koepsell, 2017).

Sense of Belonging

Fraternal organizations have long promoted the benefits of academic and social integration to their prospective members, and a student's sense of belonging "can be inspired or diminished by involvement experiences, such as running for student government office or pledging to join a sorority" (Strayhorn, 2019, loc. 3117). Academic and social integration play a critical role in students' decision-making regarding college enrollment and persisting to graduation from college (Davis et al., 2019; Tinto, 1987). This intentional integration can lead to holistic social connectedness, which can influence student persistence and attachment to the campus community as a whole (Farrell et al., 2018; Hoffman et al., 2002).

Tinto identified three factors that can influence student motivation to persist in college: self-efficacy, sense of belonging, and perceived value of curriculum (Tinto, 2016). Bollen and Hoyle defined sense of belonging in their work on perceived cohesion, and determined that "sense of belonging is fundamental to members' identification with a group and has numerous consequences for behavior" (1990, p. 484). Bollen and Hoyle's perceived cohesion framework, which "captures the extent to which individuals feel 'stuck to' particular social groups" consists

of two dimensions: a sense of belonging and morale associated with belonging to a particular group (p. 328).

In their study addressing the application of Tinto's model of student persistence to students from diverse backgrounds, Hurtado and Carter focused on Bollen and Hoyle's first dimension of perceived cohesion: sense of belonging. In this study, Hurtado and Carter found that "understanding students' sense of belonging may be key to understanding how particular forms of social and academic experiences affect these students" (p. 324-325). Hurtado and Carter (1997) noted that several major higher education studies consistently found that the "integrating experiences of involvement, engagement, and affiliation are central to students' development and progress in college" (p. 324). In this same study, Hurtado and Carter (1997) found that membership in social fraternal organizations had "significant, but somewhat weaker effects on students' sense of belonging in different years" (p. 338).

Strayhorn (2019) analyzed national survey data from the College Students Experiences Questionnaire and Astin's 1999 online time diary study, as well as his own quantitative and qualitative research; this research identified evidence that student academic and social involvement are positively correlated to students' sense of belonging and that student involvement directly influences college students' sense of belonging. Strayhorn (2019) noted four ways that involvement develops students' sense of belonging in college: community, familiarity, membership, and mattering. These four themes correspond closely to the stated purposes and values promoted by both social and academic Greek-letter organizations.

Academic

"Social fraternities are much different in character, mission, and practice than their early predecessors, although all boast, if not display, a related academic purpose" (Mauk, 2006, p.

239). Social Greek-letter organization membership at highly selective colleges and universities results in higher graduation rates and higher rates of degree persistence (Walker et al., 2015). Fraternity and sorority members are more likely to exert greater academic effort than their independent peers (Pike & Askew, 1990). Students believe their social fraternity or sorority membership experience enhanced their study habits, further developed their critical thinking, improved their commitment to service, and helped them to develop management and career skills (Long, 2012). Conversely, one study of social Greek-letter organizations at a large, Midwestern, public research institution found no evidence that fraternity or sorority membership had an influence on academic performance (Asel et al., 2009).

A perceived benefit of participation and often-used recruitment tactic in social Greek-letter organizations is support for stronger academic performance. Members of social Greek-letter organizations had a slightly lower grade point average than independent students (McClain et al., 2016). Fraternities and sororities provide structured academic support for students "whether in the form of peer tutoring, copies of old test files for practice, required study sign-in sheets, or probation from social functions when grade point averages are below a pre-determined cut-off score" (McClain et al., 2016, p. 17). However, there is conflicting information on membership and academic outcomes. In contrast to Asel et al., Long (2012) notes that fraternity and sorority students tend to under-prepare for class and organizations should encourage their members to focus on study skills through their membership education curriculum.

Pike and Askew (1990) found that in terms of undergraduate academic outcomes, differences between independent students and social Greek-letter organization members were statistically significant, though not substantively meaningful. This was attributed to differences between individual students and the evidence that socially motivated students are more likely to

join a fraternity or sorority. In a multi-institution study of key learning outcomes in the first year of college, Martin, Hevel, Asel, and Pascarella (2012) found that fraternity or sorority membership did not significantly influence students' growth along indicators including moral reasoning, critical thinking, and intercultural effectiveness. While first-year students' fraternity or sorority membership did not have a negative impact on any of the indicators measured, there was also no positive impact on the studied learning outcomes. The research team notes that fraternities and sororities are supported financially through their members, their campuses, and their inter/national organization offices, so an enhanced educational experience is likely expected by prospective and current members (Martin, Hevel, Asel, et al., 2012).

Academic Entitlement. Academic entitlement involves the expectation of success and accomplishment in academic environments without commensurate effort to earn that success (S. S. Boswell, 2012; Ciani et al., 2008). Academic entitlement is especially evident in environments that emphasize success and status, such as social Greek-letter organizations, or competitive professional or honorary Greek-letter organizations. Students within those contexts may elect to not pursue opportunities when a result could be perceived loss of status (Sohr-Preston & Boswell, 2015). In addition, men are significantly more likely to express academic entitlement in college, regardless of the educational context (S. S. Boswell, 2012; Ciani et al., 2008). Academic entitlement perception differences across gender identities may be affected by male university students' socialization across the lifespan (S. S. Boswell, 2012). This also aligns with male students' internalized expectations that they should be successful (S. S. Boswell, 2012).

Expectations of success without the required work permeate across many aspects of the student experience, which leads students to expect better grades and opportunities because of their life circumstances, need (e.g., scholarship requirements), or social class expectations

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(Singleton-Jackson et al., 2010). The cost of higher education is another factor that influences students' desires for academic success, resulting in expectations of high, or at least passing, grades because tuition is not refundable for poor academic performance (Singleton-Jackson et al., 2010).

Academic Dishonesty. Social Greek-letter organizations have a long history of providing test banks, study materials, and other academic aids to their members, and "fraternities/sororities are thought to provide a context in which cheating is more likely" (D. L. McCabe & Trevino, 1997, p. 383). McCabe and Trevino (1997) note that fraternity or sorority membership is an important contextual influence for understanding academic dishonesty because students learn about acceptable and unacceptable social behavior directly from their peers. While fraternity members have higher rates of cheating than independent students, both fraternity member and independent student cheating declines as the proportion of students who belong to a social fraternity rises on campuses (Stannard & Bowers, 1970). A subsequent multi-institution study that analyzed both men and women students found that the frequency of cheating is significantly higher among men than women as well as among fraternity and sorority members than independent students (D. L. McCabe & Bowers, 1996).

Fraternity and sorority members are more likely to self-report higher rates of academic dishonesty and their level of involvement in their social Greek-letter organization was significantly associated with higher rates of academic dishonesty (Storch & Storch, 2002). As the level of involvement in the sorority or fraternity increased, self-reported academic dishonesty also increased (Storch & Storch, 2002). McCabe and Bowers (1996) noted that "although high levels of fraternity and sorority membership may not increase the general level of cheating on

campus, the data…are convincing evidence of the higher prevalence of cheating on tests among fraternity and sorority members" (p. 286).

Substance Use

Social Greek-letter organization members, particularly fraternity members, have long been criticized for the importance of parties and substance use in their Greek-letter experience. Citing Wechsler et al.'s 1994 study on binge drinking in college, Wechsler, Kuh, and Davenport (2009) note that "the single best predictor of binge drinking in college is fraternity membership" (p. 396). Social Greek-letter organization members report that alcohol is more important to their enjoyment of campus life and that alcohol is more likely to be present at social events compared to their independent peers (Walker et al., 2015).

A longitudinal research study examining substance use across multiple cohorts of college students revealed that both selection and socialization effects impact the elevated levels of substance use among social Greek-letter organization members (S. E. McCabe et al., 2005). Selection effects are "the influence of individual characteristics in steering an individual toward certain experiences, organizations, or environments", whereas socialization effects "refer to the influence of experiences, organizations, or environments on the individual" (S.E. McCabe et al., 2005, p. 513). Selection and socialization effects may combine. For example, a student who is a heavy drinker in high school may be more likely to join a fraternity with a reputation for partying; in turn, the student's drinking may increase as an effect of being a member of a fraternity.

For both men and women, an increase in alcohol use was associated with social Greek-letter organization membership (Gibson et al., 2017). In addition, fraternity and sorority members reported higher rates of using cigarettes, marijuana, and other illegal drugs than their

non-member peers in college, trends that remained consistent across multiple cohorts of study participants (McCabe et al., 2005). Living in university-recognized Greek housing does appear to make a difference for fraternity or sorority members' substance use, as unrecognized, off-campus Greek housing has been related to increased alcohol use for both men and women (Gibson et al., 2017).

In the second year of college, before most students have reached the legal drinking age, approximately 33 percent of social Greek-letter organization members reported that alcohol was very or extremely important to their satisfaction with campus life; in comparison, 17 percent of non-affiliated students reported a comparably high level of alcohol importance (Walker et al., 2015).

> After considering high school alcohol use, Asel, Seifert, and Pascarella (2009) found that: Affiliated first-year and senior students were significantly more likely to binge drink in college than their unaffiliated peers…the odds of affiliated first-year students binge drinking one or more times in a typical two-week period were 1.8 times greater than for their unaffiliated peers. For fraternity/sorority seniors…the odds increased to 2.4 times greater than those of unaffiliated seniors. (p. 4)

Substance use is often connected to hazing practices in social Greek-letter organizations, particularly episodic alcohol consumption and binge drinking. It is widely believed that there were no alcohol-related deaths in social Greek-letter organization activity until 1940, when the first hazing death due to alcohol was reported following a binge drinking activity within the University of Missouri's Theta Nu Epsilon chapter (Nuwer, 2018b). Between 2005 and 2011, 79 percent of hazing deaths were caused by alcohol use (Nuwer, 2018b).

Binge drinking is not limited to fraternity men, and the relationship between social

Greek-letter organization membership and binge drinking applies equally to sorority women as well as regardless of the student's relationship to binge drinking in high school (Asel et al., 2009). High levels of alcohol consumption, specifically weekly consumption rates and attendance at social Greek-letter organization events where alcohol is present, also correlate with both attempted and completed sexual assault (Minow & Einolf, 2009).

Hazing

Nuwer (2018b) wrote that "hazing in university fraternal groups in the United States is a pernicious and sometimes even deadly practice that dates back to the founding of the first collegiate fraternities in the nineteenth century" (p. 24). There are laws against hazing in 44 states and higher education institutions nationwide are enforcing anti-hazing policies and swiftly removing social Greek-letter organizations that persist with hazing traditions (Nuwer, 2018b). Despite numerous attempts at federal legislation, there is no federal law against hazing rituals, traditions, or other practices and most states consider hazing a misdemeanor offense (Nuwer, 1999, 2018b). Hazing practices can include sleep deprivation, intoxication, physical violence, calisthenics, uncompensated labor, sustained fear, public humiliation, and other practices designed to manipulate, frighten, or otherwise cause sustained harm to pledges or other new members of a group (Cimino, 2013). Nuwer (1999) defined hazing as:

> An activity that a high-status member orders other members to engage in or suggests that they engage in that in some way humbles a newcomer who lacks the power to resist, because he or she wants to gain admission into a group. Hazing can be noncriminal, but it is nearly always against the rules of an institution, team, or Greek group. It can be criminal, which means that a state statute has been violated. This usually occurs when a pledging-related activity results in gross physical injury or death. (p. xxv)

Similarly, the Fraternity Executives Association defined hazing as "any action taken or situation created intentionally, whether on or off fraternity premises, to produce mental or physical discomfort, embarrassment, harassment, or ridicule" (Nuwer, 1999, p. 31). Cimino defined hazing as "the generation of induction costs (i.e., elements of the experiences necessary to be acknowledged as a 'legitimate' group member) that appear unattributable to group-relevant assessments, preparation, or chance" (Nuwer, 2018b, p. 25). Cimino cites an example of fraternities requiring extreme calisthenics and notes that automatic accrual theory can be used "to explain why higher-status fraternities with more and better benefits for a pledge can demand far more severe tests of hazing than a chapter with less status and fewer benefits can expect" (Nuwer, 2018b, p. 25-26).

Cimino (2013) found that there are four aspects of hazing that are directly observable: 1) hazing is temporary and both parties acknowledge that there is a point where hazing activities end; 2) hazing is unidirectional and completely directed at prospective or new members; 3) hazing is coercive and often inescapable, and 4) hazing is coalitional and the perpetuation of hazing depends upon cooperative alliances that are expected to endure across a collective experience or have engaged in collective experiences in the past. Nuwer (1999) notes that hazing can lead to student harm in four ways:

> One, ritual brings out people's innate propensity for violence. Two, members who act aggressively toward pledges may be using them as scapegoats through which to vent their own frustrations. Three, drinking itself has become ritualistic in universities…Four, rituals may provoke members who have psychological problems to behave violently…Fraternity members' group negligence, together with a failure on the parts of individuals to recognize the severity of a hazing situation because others in their

company whom they trust seem unconcerned, is a hallmark of all hazing deaths. (p. 31-32)

Research on hazing practices focuses on attitudes and reasons for the hazing behavior, but there is a relative lack of empirical research on the topic (Biddix et al., 2014; Nuwer, 2018b). Students recognize hazing in the form of physical violence and forced alcohol consumption, but consistently do not recognize psychological manipulation as a form of hazing (Biddix et al., 2014). Nuwer (2018b) found that undergraduate students think of hazing as "big H" and "little h" hazing, where "many fraternity and sorority members view bottle exchanges, drop-offs of pledges in the country, lineups, and other events as 'little h' offenses" (p. 26). Nuwer goes on to note that even "little h" hazing practices "have at one time or another resulted in serious injury or death as participants cross lines and reject boundaries and civility" (2018).

Hazing practices are used to prove willingness to conform and create a groupthink mindset under the guise of protecting traditions (Nuwer, 2018b). Hazing behavior has been compared to cults and other "addictive organizations" because of the use of manipulation and coercion to influence others both psychologically and socially (Nuwer, 2018b). Addictive organizations rely on dependency so that prospective members spend their time in the company of active full members, further increasing their desire to be part of the group. The group then promises incentives and full membership once a trial period is over (Nuwer, 2018b).

It is also important to note that hazing extends beyond social Greek-letter organizations on college campuses. Hazing practices are rampant in college marching bands, NCAA-recognized sports teams, intramural or club sports teams, and other aspects of undergraduate student life where camaraderie is emphasized and the students spend considerable amounts of time together (Matney, 2018; Nuwer, 2018b). Hazing is present in organizations where insiders

train and prepare future participants, outside best practices are not considered, and there exists

pressure to avoid conflict. Specifically, "questions are discouraged and change of any kind is

considered 'not our way'" (Matney, 2018, p. 91).

Sexual Assault

Sexual assault is a widespread epidemic and not restricted to social Greek-letter

organization members or undergraduate college students. However, approximately 20 percent of

women experience sexual assault in college (Jozkowski & Wiersma-Mosley, 2017; Minow &

Einolf, 2009; Mohler-Kuo et al., 2004). A multi-institution study of college women found that 72

percent of women who reported being sexual assaulted in college were intoxicated during the

assault (Mohler-Kuo et al., 2004). In a study on sexual assault risk and social sorority members,

Minow and Einolf found that:

> 34 percent of respondents reported having experienced nonconsensual sexual contact, 19
>
> percent experienced completed rape, and 10 percent experienced attempted rape. All of
>
> the incidents of attempted rape and 97 percent of the incidents of completed rape were by
>
> people the victims knew personally. (p. 841)

In a single-institution study, social sorority women were more likely to have experienced

attempted rape and much more likely to have experienced completed rape than non-sorority

women (Minow & Einolf, 2009). The presence of alcohol at coed social Greek-letter

organization events, social sorority membership, and alcohol consumption all correlate with

higher rates of sorority member sexual assault victimization. However, this study found no

correlation between associating with fraternity men and sorority member sexual assault

victimization, a common hypothesis for the increase in sexual assault victimization among

sorority members compared to their independent peers (Minow & Einolf, 2009).

Social Greek-letter organizations experience gender inequity in the social scene, as sororities' national organizations prohibit them from hosting parties with alcohol (*National Pan-Hellenic Council*, n.d.). These national policies essentially ensure that all social Greek functions take place in or are sponsored by fraternities, taking place in large homes that are both the party venue and the primary residence for members (DeSantis, 2007; Jozkowski & Wiersma-Mosley, 2017). Fraternity party gender ratios are heavily in favor of the men who occupy the host fraternity house, and this characteristic along with fewer mixed-gender conversations, lack of bathroom cleanliness, louder music, less dancing, less sociable fraternity men, and more alcohol consumption increase risk and danger for women attendees (A. A. Boswell & Spade, 1996). In addition, women who were white, underage, lived in sorority houses, and experienced heavy episodic drinking in high school and college were at higher risk of sexual assault (Mohler-Kuo et al., 2004).

The majority of acquaintance sexual assault goes unreported and sorority women revealed several reasons for this in DeSantis' (2007) study of one campus social Greek-letter organization system. Women reported that victims feel too guilty to report assault, are aware that public exposure comes with a risk of being blamed or repeatedly enduring trauma triggers, and they fear social alienation for reporting assault from someone well-liked or from a popular fraternity house (DeSantis, 2007). One student quoted in the study said that when it comes to an accusation of rape on campus, "it's something you don't even joke about…it is the worst thing that can be said about you" (DeSantis, 2007, p. 103).

Social Fraternal Organizations

In the late nineteenth century, students, particularly young men, were focused as much on their social standing, living environment, athletic accomplishments, and social development as they were on their academic pursuits (Rudolph, 1990). Rudolph (1990) wrote:

The world of business was a world of dealing with people. What better preparation could there be than the collegiate life outside the classroom – the club room, the playing field, where the qualities that showed what stuff a fellow really was made of were bound to be encouraged. As the decades passed, college-going became for many a social habit, a habit which was sustained by an ever-increasing standard of living and which was encouraged by the clear evidence that college men made more money than noncollege men and that money almost everywhere was the instrument of social elevation. In all of this the classroom was not terribly important. (p. 298).

As social fraternities and sororities began to increase in numbers at the start of the twentieth century, fraternity and sorority houses became centers of economic and social power on campus. Chapter houses were built with alumni funds but required significant upkeep, including cooks, housekeepers, and other domestic employees, resulting in higher costs for members (Syrett, 2018). Syrett (2018) wrote that:

Fraternity houses thus allowed men of means to perpetuate exclusivity on campus by self-segregating, especially in an era when many other students lived in town or with their families. With these elaborate and highly visible homes, fraternities were no longer clandestine organizations on campus, but they certainly remained exclusive. (p. 43)

Social Greek-letter organization members' socioeconomic privilege allowed them to focus on extra-curricular activities, intramural sports, and social aspects of college rather than academics

and workforce preparation (Syrett, 2018). Exceptions were often made for football stars or other high-profile athletes, but the emphases on social standing and family wealth were made clear to prospective fraternity members nationwide (Syrett, 2018).

Racially Minoritized Students

DeSantis (2007) notes that:

The social Greek system remains almost as segregated today as it was in 1776. No real interest in or commitment to the idea of integration, whether gender or racial, has been demonstrated. It can be argued, in fact, that the social fraternity/sorority remains the most segregated institution in America. (p. 6)

Within traditionally white social Greek-letter organization systems, students pledge membership and frequently move into organization-owned housing, affiliating with a mostly homogenous group of brothers or sisters for the next four to five years. Membership in a social fraternity or sorority means that students chose to surround themselves with people who tend to look like them, and are overwhelmingly white, heterosexual, Christian, and financially comfortable to wealthy. This contributes to social reproduction because "maintaining sameness is built into the very nature of these selective and secretive organizations" (DeSantis, 2007, p. 21).

While historically white social Greek-letter organizations never explicitly prohibited non-white students from joining their ranks, the passing of the Civil Rights Act in 1965 meant that institutions receiving federal funding could not permit segregation in any affiliated student organizations (Syrett, 2018). Syrett (2018) noted that many fraternities, in spite of existing civil rights and anti-discrimination laws, have remained "de facto white organizations" (p. 56), and

that these organizations' histories and climates have and will continue to motivate students of color to join other identity-affirming organizations.

       Recruitment and Participation. In his case study on social Greek-letter organizations at a large university, DeSantis (2007) noted that exclusion is so readily accepted on most campuses that "Black, Hispanic, Asian, homosexual, non-Christian, and disabled students do not even bother attending rush functions" in order to avoid rejection or humiliation (p. 22). DeSantis (2007) went on to say that Black students "must talk white, dress white, act white, have no black friends, reject black culture and tradition, and be light skinned" (p. 23-24) and even then, university-recognized social Greek-letter organizations may still reject them, particularly within universities in the South.

       Social Greek-letter organizations are not homogenous by rule, but are almost entirely homogenous in practice (DeSantis, 2007; Jozkowski & Wiersma-Mosley, 2017; Torbenson, 2005). The earliest fraternities and sororities excluded both Black and Jewish members under the guise of creating groups with strong values that claimed to emphasize academic advancement for their members. These organizations, particularly sororities, evolved to focus on socializing with the opposite sex, which further fueled the desire to exclude Black and Jewish students from membership (Hevel & Jaeckle, 2018).

       Less privileged college students created their own social Greek-letter organizations in response to being ostracized by existing white fraternities and sororities. Historically Black Greek-letter organizations formed to create opportunities for Black men and women to create community through brother- or sisterhood, connect with alumni who shared similar experience, and demonstrate leadership through service, social activities, and career-driven professional development (Hevel & Jaeckle, 2018; Torbenson, 2005). Jewish fraternities were created

beginning in the 1890s as a social outlet and professional development opportunity for Jewish students, including safe spaces for German Jewish refugees in the first half of the twentieth century (Hevel & Jaeckle, 2018). However, as national levels of anti-Semitism declined after World War II, Jewish students were more likely to be accepted for membership in traditionally white fraternities (Hevel & Jaeckle, 2018).

DeSantis (2007) wrote:

As a rule, however, the more elite, selective and coveted an organization is, the more intolerant it is toward difference, and the less freedom it affords its members in adopting nontraditional gender scripts. The price that students pay for being part of the Greek system, therefore, is a greater loss of autonomy. (p. 219)

Women

By 1860, more than 45 colleges offered undergraduate degrees to women (Thelin, 2011). Institutions varied by curricula (e.g., vocational, finishing school, professional training, liberal arts) and had a distinct identity based on both its curricula and its student body, which was generally determined by the social class of its students (Thelin, 2011). Religious families and families in the southern United States, in particular, resisted their daughters heading to the northeast to attend an established women's college in the North. Colleges were built throughout the southern states to help wealthy families feel comfortable with their daughters' proximity to their hometowns and religiously affiliated institutions began to expand under a similar mindset. Families were more comfortable with a young Catholic woman choosing to attend a Catholic institution near her hometown rather than attending a Protestant institution several states away (Thelin, 2011).

Historically white sororities "used heterosocial interactions to achieve their ideal model for white, middle- to upper-class womanhood" (Freeman, 2018, p. 134). These interactions guided sorority recruitment practices and members' social development, but also "regularly placed them in the potentially dangerous, private spaces controlled by fraternity men" (Freeman, 2018, p. 134). Freeman noted that sorority women were often upheld as the ideal for all women students, and through most of the twentieth century:

Sororities' model of domestically centered womanhood helped assuage public fears over changes in gender norms and the increasingly public activities of white, middle- to upper-class womanhood. At the same time, sororities' enforcement of members' femininity, as well as their willingness to rely on members' physical attractiveness and to operate as subservient partners to men's fraternities as a means to achieve and maintain campus popularity, set up a model of sorority sisterhood that placed relationships between women and men at a higher premium than those between sisters. (p. 134)

Freeman's perspective on social sororities' model for enforcing performative femininity and other problematic gender expectations was shared by other researchers. DeSantis (2007) wrote that:

Fraternities and sororities proudly and fiercely reproduce *many* of the most traditional and harmful ideas about gender through their scripted performances. These are places where men are expected to act like "real" men, not sissies, women are coerced into acting like "real" women, not sluts, and those who are too androgynous or ambivalent in their gendered performances are denied entrance. (p. 27)

Recruitment and Participation. Social sorority recruitment varies by institutional policy and practice, and within institutions, by chapter history and traditions. Institutions generally

require social sorority recruitment consistency across chapters. Students participate in recruitment activities where houses and prospective members slowly eliminate each other until the final night of recruitment, where bids are distributed to prospective members.

In his regularly updated *Manual of American College Fraternities*, Baird (1920) wrote of Phi Beta Kappa that "women are admitted on an equality with men. This was obviously not intended by the founders, but fidelity to the test of scholarship required it" (p. 609-610). From their beginnings, social sororities provided a safe social space for women to receive future training typical of what finishing schools provided at the time, as well as opportunities to meet men who were appropriate potential partners for women from wealthy, educated families (Freeman, 2018; Torbenson, 2005). Today, social sororities can claim U.S. Senators, corporate executives, entrepreneurs, and other global leaders among their alumnae ranks (*National Panhellenic Conference*, n.d.).

Diversity and Inclusion Across Student Demographics

Social fraternities and sororities have a long history of supporting privileged students' academic, professional, and social development (Baird, 1991; Freeman, 2018; Thelin, 2011; Torbenson, 2009). Historically White social fraternities and sororities make up the majority of the social Greek-letter organization experience at predominantly White institutions. However, numerous social fraternities and sororities have been formed in the past century that are oriented toward students with an interest in a particular cultural identity. In addition to the nine historically Black social fraternities and sororities that make up the National Pan-Hellenic Council, there are also Asian-American, Christian, Jewish, Latinx, LGBT, Multicultural, Muslim, Native American, and South Asian social fraternities and sororities operating on college campuses today (*Council for Christian Colleges and Universities*, n.d.; *National Association of*

Latino Fraternal Organizations, 2019; *National Multicultural Greek Council*, 2019; *National Pan-Hellenic Council*, n.d.).

The emphasis on diversity and inclusion among social fraternities and sororities is a relatively recent development and one that has not specifically translated to academic Greek-letter organizations. There are numerous identity-based professional organizations that hold recruitment processes and are highly selective at some institutions, such as ALPFA, the Association of Latino Professionals For America (*Association of Latino Professionals for America*, 2019). However, professional and academic Greek-letter organizations focus more on uniting members through common interests, such as career path, major, or academic achievement, rather than a shared cultural identity (Baird, 1991).

Gender. Phi Beta Kappa, the national honorary society and the first fraternal organization in the United States, admitted its first women members in 1875 at the University of Vermont (Baird, 1991). Historically White sororities existed as local organizations through the 1800s and experienced rapid expansion at the start of the twentieth century. Alpha Delta Pi was founded as the Adelphean Society in 1851 and is recognized as the first secret society for women (*National Panhellenic Conference*, n.d.; Torbenson, 2005). Pi Beta Phi became the first national sorority when it expanded to a second chapter in 1869 (Torbenson, 2005). The first Greek-letter women's fraternity, Kappa Alpha Theta, was founded in 1870 by four women who were among the first women to be admitted to what is now DePauw University in Greencastle, Indiana and were rejected from joining an all-male fraternal organization (Freeman, 2018; *National Panhellenic Conference*, n.d.). In 1874, the term sorority was used for the first time to describe the Syracuse University Gamma Phi Beta chapter (Torbenson, 2005). Within undergraduate business fraternal organizations, all four of the international professional business fraternities are

co-educational and have been open to both men and women since the Education Amendments of the 1972 Title IX law (*Alpha Kappa Psi*, 2019; *Delta Sigma Pi*, 2019; *Phi Chi Theta*, 2019; *Phi Gamma Nu*, 2019).

At this time, there is no literature on the role of gender in academic and professional fraternal organizations. It is reasonable to assume that this is because Title IX has effectively eliminated membership discrimination on the basis of gender; as a result of this legislation, numerous single-sex organizations became coeducational. Future scholarship could examine gender equity and the role of gender in membership selection processes.

Race. Social Greek-letter organizations "continue to express their dominant class origins, and current memberships reflect student bodies of an earlier, less inclusive era. Compared to non-members, Greek members are more likely to be White and to have upper- or upper-middle class backgrounds" (Walker et al., 2015). Social Greek-letter organizations are not homogenous by rule, but are almost entirely homogenous in practice (DeSantis, 2007; Jozkowski & Wiersma-Mosley, 2017; Torbenson, 2005). The earliest fraternities and sororities excluded both Black and Jewish members under the guise of creating groups with strong values that claimed to emphasize academic advancement for their members. These organizations, particularly sororities, evolved to focus on socializing with the opposite sex, which further fueled the desire to exclude Black and Jewish students from membership (Hevel & Jaeckle, 2018). DeSantis (2007) wrote:

> As a rule, however, the more elite, selective and coveted an organization is, the more intolerant it is toward difference, and the less freedom it affords its members in adopting nontraditional gender scripts. The price that students pay for being part of the Greek system, therefore, is a greater loss of autonomy. (p. 219)

Less privileged college students created their own social Greek-letter organizations in response to being ostracized by existing White fraternities and sororities. Historically Black Greek-letter organizations formed to create opportunities for Black men and women to create community through brother- or sisterhood, connect with alumni who shared similar experience, and demonstrate leadership through service, social activities, and career-driven professional development (Hevel & Jaeckle, 2018; Torbenson, 2005). The National Pan-Hellenic Council (NPHC) was formed in 1930 and formally incorporated in 1937. The organization exists to oversee nine international Greek letter sororities and fraternities: Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, Iota Phi Theta Fraternity, Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, Sigma Gamma Rho Sorority, Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity, and Omega Psi Phi Fraternity (*National Pan-Hellenic Council*, n.d.). All nine member organizations are historically Black fraternities and sororities, formed in response to widespread segregation and disenfranchisement of Black citizens. NPHC promotes interaction, cooperation, and engagement among the "Divine Nine" member organizations (Ross, Jr., 2000).

Racialized Campus Climate and Cultural Proficiency. Hurtado, Milem, Clayton-Pedersen, and Allen (1998) introduced a framework of four dimensions of campus climate for diversity, which relies on the assumption that racial contexts of higher education are impacted by external (community, government, historical) forces and internal (institutional) forces. The four dimensions include:

An institution's historical legacy of inclusion or exclusion of various racial/ethnic groups, its structural diversity in terms of numerical representation of various racial/ethnic groups, the psychological climate of perceptions and attitudes between and among groups, and the behavioral climate dimension, characterized by intergroup relations on

campus. We conceive the institutional climate as a product of these various elements. (p.

282)

In addition to Hurtado et al.'s work, Yosso, Smith, Ceja, and Solórzano (2009) define the

campus racial climate as:

The overall racial environment of the university that could potentially foster outstanding

academic outcomes and graduation rates for all students but too often contributes to poor

academic performance and high dropout rates for Students of Color. A positive campus

racial climate features: a) the inclusion of Students, Faculty, and Administrators of Color;

b) a curriculum reflecting the historical and contemporary experiences of People of

Color; c) programs to support the recruitment, retention, and graduation of Students of

Color; and d) a mission that reinforces the institution's commitment to diversity and

pluralism. (p. 664)

These operationalized concepts can serve as a framework for practitioners in setting

institutional strategic priorities as well as for scholars in shaping a research agenda. This is of

particular importance within predominantly White institutions, where the institutions' historical

foundations and lack of transformative change has led to social and structural constructs that

negatively impact students from underrepresented racial or ethnic groups. Gusa (2010)

introduced the concept of White institutional presence as:

Customary ideologies and practices rooted in the institution's design and the organization

of its environment and activities. WIP, as a construct, names the racialized influences on

discourses between and among students, between student and teachers, and between

students and academic resources. Just as an online teacher cannot be seen, but his or her

presence affects the academic discourse, the presence of Whiteness and privilege within

policies and practices may go unseen. Nevertheless, it detrimentally shapes students'

social and academic experiences. (p. 467)

Gusa's White institutional presence framework is centered on White normative practices within higher education that can cause harm to those with non-White identities. Specifically, she notes that "White institutional privilege is the institutionalized fusion of White worldview, White supremacy, and White privilege, and the manifestation of White institutional privilege can be categorized into four intricately linked attributes: White ascendancy, monoculturalism, White blindness, and White estrangement" (Gusa, 2010, p. 472). This framework specifically considers institutional policies and structural practices, which can aid practitioners and researchers in understanding students' experiences as racialized outcomes that are the result of structural oppression and the four attributes Gusa describes (2010). Gusa (2010) notes that "today's PWIs do not have to be explicitly racist to create a hostile environment. Instead, unexamined historically situated White cultural ideology embedded in the language, cultural practices, traditions, and perceptions of knowledge allow these institutions to remain racialized" and "when Whites neglect to identify the ways in which White ideological homogenizing practices sustain the structure of domination and oppression, they allow institutional policies and practices to be seen as unproblematic" (p. 465).

In 2007, Harper and Hurtado conducted a comprehensive review of studies beyond Hurtado's 1992 study "The Campus Racial Climate: Contexts of Conflict", which was based on a longitudinal study of college students in the 1980s. Using this scholarship to frame their research questions, Harper and Hurtado conducted their own national multi-campus research on racial climates, studying five large institutions in three different regions of the country. This work resulted in identification of nine themes in campus racial climates: cross-race consensus

regarding institutional negligence; race as a four-letter word and an avoidable topic; self-reports of racial segregation; gaps in social satisfaction by race; reputational legacies for racism; White student overestimation of minority student satisfaction; pervasiveness of Whiteness in space, curricula, and activities; consciousness-powerlessness paradox among racial/ethnic minority staff; and unexplored qualitative realities of race in institutional assessment (Harper & Hurtado, 2007).

In terms of self-reported racial segregation, Harper and Hurtado (2007) noted that one of their focus group participants referred to the segregated space of fraternity row as "Jim Crow Row" (p. 16). While this student was referring to social fraternity houses where he was denied entrance to social functions, this feeling expressed by a Black student is relevant to the study of fraternal organizations of all types, particularly those with a history of excluding non-White students. Harper and Hurtado (2007) also noted that Black students are less satisfied with racial climates and more frequently experience race-based differential treatment compared to their peers in other racial groups, stating that "these differences are not just in perceptions but also in the way racial/ethnic minority students experience PWIs" (p. 12).

Hurtado (1992) found most White students believe racism is no longer a societal problem and were less likely than Black and Latino students to recognize racial tension on campus. Harper and Hurtado (2007) note that "racial tension is probable in environments where there is little concern for individual students, which is symptomatic of many large PWIs that enroll several thousand undergraduates" (p. 9). Harper and Hurtado (2007) observed that:

Even when cues are readily available (for example, a newspaper with four front-page articles related to racial injustice), the realities of race are typically made transparent only

when there is a highly publicized, racially motivated incident or when embarrassing

findings from an external auditor are made public. (p. 20)

Mwangi, Thelamour, Ezeofor, and Carpenter (2018) studied Black undergraduate

students who attended predominantly White institutions in the United States, and reported that

one participant described the racial climate as "'the black elephant in the room' demonstrates

how critical racial issues are on PWI campuses, but that there is a lack of effective and authentic

engagement or acknowledgement of these issues on these campuses" (p. 462). Yosso et al.,

(2009) also argue that:

Beyond portraying a racially diverse group of students in recruitment brochures,

historically White universities do not necessarily commit to providing equal access and

opportunities for Students of Color, let alone promise an inviting, positive campus racial

climate. Genuine racial diversity or pluralism refers to underrepresented racial and ethnic

groups being physically present *and* treated as equals on the college campus. (p. 664)

Harper and Hurtado (2007) note that "researchers have consistently found that

racial/ethnic minority students and their White peers who attend the same institution often view

the campus racial climate in different ways" (p. 12). These perceptual difference have been

linked to home communities, where White students who grew up in predominantly White areas

and had little to no firsthand exposure to racism prior to their undergraduate experience were

then less likely to recognize racism and racial prejudice within their college environment

(Radloff & Evans, 2003). Harper and Hurtado (2007) state that:

As indicated in the nine themes, racial realities remained undisclosed and unaddressed in

systematic ways on college campuses. As long as administrators espouse commitments to

diversity and multiculturalism without engaging in examinations of campus climates,

racial/ethnic minorities will continue to feel dissatisfied, all students will remain deprived

of the full range of educational benefits accrued through cross-racial engagement, and

certain institutions will sustain longstanding reputations for being racially toxic

environments. (p. 20)

Harper and Hurtado (2007) claim that "intentionality in constructing culturally affirming

environments and experiences that facilities the cultivation of racially diverse friendship groups

must substitute passivity and negligence…these racial climate issues have consequences for

student outcomes" (p. 20).

The literature references microaggressions against students from underrepresented racial

groups as a significant source of student dissatisfaction (Ancis et al., 2000; Gusa, 2010; Smith et

al., 2016; Yosso et al., 2009). Yosso et al., (2009) found three main types of racial

microaggressions for Latinx students on college campuses: interpersonal microaggressions,

racial jokes, and institutional microaggressions. Yosso et al., (2009) note that "Latinas/os

experience the accumulation of racial microaggressions as a rejection of their presence at the

university. In response, they engage in processes of community building and critical navigation

between multiple worlds" (p. 667). Institutional microaggressions are defined "as those racially

marginalizing actions and inertia of the university evidenced in structures, practices, and

discourses that endorse a campus racial climate hostile to People of Color" (Yosso et al., 2009, p.

673). It is critical that practitioners center racially minoritized students' experience in their

campus climate work because "the life experiences of Black and White undergraduates from the

same PWI campuses are not mirror images" (Gusa, 2010, p. 466).

Mwangi et al., (2018) described the racial climate on campus mirroring the societal racial

climate, where Whites could choose not to be engaged in matters that did not directly affect their

experiences in the racial majority. However, the Black students participating in the study viewed the national racial climate as a mirror of their own experiences as undergraduate students. Students described the 2016 presidential election as a turning point for "giving people greater license to engage in racist behavior" (Mwangi et al., 2018, p. 464) and students from rural college towns expressed fear and frustration with town-gown relations. Mwangi et al., (2018) discuss the importance of situating racial climate work on campuses within the campus's local community as well as the larger United States culture.

Harper and Hurtado (2007) conclude that "data gathered through the ongoing assessment of campus racial climates guide conversations and reflective examinations to overcome discomfort with race, plan for deep levels of institutional transformation, and achieve excellence in fostering racially inclusive learning environments" (p. 21). The literature reflects that students from underrepresented groups who attend predominantly White institutions "often experience isolation due to racial prejudice, lack of structural diversity, and discrimination" (Mwangi et al., 2018, p. 470). Mwangi, et al., (2018) went on to say that:

> Systemic racism is reflected in US higher education institutions, and these institutions can act as agents in the social reproduction of inequality as well as act as agents for positive social change. Thus, it is important that institutions are aware of how they reflect, reify, and resist racism in broader society. (p. 457)

In addition, there is an imperative to analyze, understand, and change who has access to social and cultural capital within business schools and workplaces. The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and the murder of George Floyd in 2020 intersected in news cycles and created a renewed focus on diversity and inclusion, which has brought about an equity imperative in American workplaces. Undergraduate business programs must work to dismantle structural and

systemic racism, increase diversity pipelines to their corporate partners, and invest in programs that support students with historically marginalized identities. Business schools must examine their complicity in upholding racist structures and work to recruit, admit, and retain students that are more representative of our population.

The academic literature is rich with studies on historically Black social fraternities and sororities and more recent literature exists on traditionally Latinx and Asian social fraternities and sororities. However, there is no relevant literature on the role of race in academic and professional fraternal organizations. While discrimination on the basis of race undoubtedly was and continues to be a factor in membership selection, the relevant literature focuses far more on the role of race in social fraternity and sorority recruitment and membership. It is reasonable to assume that similar practices were taking place in academic and professional fraternal organizations at the same time.

Socioeconomic Status. In their beginnings, social fraternities and sororities were made up of wealthy students from high-status, powerful families, which led to socioeconomic segregation on campuses (Bowen et al., 2005). Throughout the 1920s and 1930s, a period of "golden age of college life" (Thelin, 2011, p. 219), socioeconomic stratification was evident on predominantly White college campuses, and there were sharp divides between students with and without socioeconomic privilege. This divide typically occurred between students who were members of social fraternities and sororities and students who were independent of this system (Thelin, 2011). However, most college students were still wealthy White Protestant males, and many older fraternities established rules to exclude members of other races or religions (Torbenson, 2005). By the early 1930s, numerous fraternities and sororities had been established that represented non-White ethnicities and non-Protestant religious backgrounds, particularly

Judaism and Catholicism (Torbenson, 2005). The emphasis on social experiences shifted in the early twentieth century and continues today (Freeman, 2018; Torbenson, 2009). During much of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, social fraternity and sorority systems expanded rapidly as membership was offered to wealthy students from high-status, powerful families, creating socioeconomic segregation on campus (Bowen et al., 2005).

Overall, the literature on academic and professional fraternal organizations is scant and there is no literature on the role of socioeconomic status in these organizations. As a result, comparisons are drawn to social fraternities and sororities, where socioeconomic status plays a part in whether or not a student can pursue involvement. However, anecdotal evidence and personal experience points to lower dues, fewer social requirements, and fewer incidental expenses (e.g., date party or philanthropy event t-shirts) for academic and professional fraternal organization members. Future scholarship could examine these practices and other ways to create access and equity for students from lower-income families.

Major and Career Path. A student's chosen academic major and intended career path upon graduation are two indicators that may influence the decision to join an academic or professional fraternal organization. Within the context of professional business fraternities, it is reasonable to assume that major and career path are important influences on decisions to participate in recruitment processes, as well as whether to pursue and eventually accept bids to join these organizations. My proposed study will examine why students choose to participate in professional business fraternal organizations, particularly within a highly selective undergraduate business school environment. I seek to understand the impact that professional fraternal organization involvement has on the undergraduate student experience.

Academic and Professional Fraternal Organizations

Empirical research on academic and professional Greek-letter organizations is nearly non-existent and existing literature is focused on historical foundations of academic fraternal organizations. In a meta-analysis of existing literature on fraternity and sorority involvement, Biddix et al., (2014) found that "core elements characterizing collegiate fraternal organizations traditionally center on social, cultural, professional, service, and academic pursuits" (p. 120). Biddix et al., (2014) go on to note that while the scholarship they analyzed was predominantly focused on traditional social fraternities, many researchers do not distinguish between types of fraternal organizations in their studies. There is considerable opportunity for future scholarship to distinguish between fraternal organizations and use the depth and breadth of those findings to develop a stronger understanding of practice, policy, and perspectives for all types of fraternal organization membership.

Business Fraternities

Business schools face pressure to meet industry and employer demands while also educating students according to the general education and business-specific curricular requirements within institutions. Institutions focus on hard employability skills (e.g., quantitative, analytical, and writing skills) and deliver content knowledge in the classroom, but employers believe that business schools also bear the responsibility for honing and developing graduates' soft skills, such as leadership capacity (Nilsson, 2010). Interpersonal, socio-communication, and leadership skills are among the most valued for entry-level employees, and employers believe that institutions do not focus enough on developing these skills (Nilsson, 2010). Specialized programs, including honors programs, selective student organizations, and

other elite groups within business schools, often fill this gap and do the work to develop students' soft skills (Bachrach et al., 2017).

There are four internationally recognized professional business fraternities: Alpha Kappa Psi, Delta Sigma Pi, Phi Chi Theta, and Phi Gamma Nu (*Alpha Kappa Psi*, 2019; *Delta Sigma Pi*, 2019; *Phi Chi Theta*, 2019; *Phi Gamma Nu*, 2019). Alpha Kappa Psi, the oldest professional business fraternity, was founded in 1904 at New York University as a men's organization, going co-ed in 1976 (*Alpha Kappa Psi*, 2019). It was originally founded as a Schools of Commerce honor society, but evolved into a professional fraternity not long after its founding (Baird, 1920). Alpha Kappa Psi hosts 263 active collegiate chapters (*Alpha Kappa Psi*, 2019).

Delta Sigma Pi was founded at New York University in 1907, became the first co-educational business fraternity in 1975, and has 296 active collegiate chapters (*Delta Sigma Pi*, 2019). Phi Chi Theta and Phi Gamma Nu both began as women's organizations, with Phi Chi Theta founded in 1925 in Chicago when two women's organizations merged together (*Phi Chi Theta*, 2019). Phi Chi Theta oversees 30 collegiate chapters (*Phi Chi Theta*, 2019). Phi Gamma Nu was founded in 1924 at Northwestern University, started accepting male members in 1974, and became fully co-educational in 1981 (*Phi Gamma Nu*, 2019). Currently, Phi Gamma Nu works with 17 collegiate chapters throughout the United States (*Phi Gamma Nu*, 2019). All four of these professional business fraternities became co-educational in the 1970s in response to the Education Amendments of 1972 Title IX law, and all four prohibit membership in any other professional business fraternity in direct competition with their own (*Alpha Kappa Psi*, 2019; *Delta Sigma Pi*, 2019; *Phi Chi Theta*, 2019; *Phi Gamma Nu*, 2019).

In addition to the four professional business fraternities, business students with a strong record of academic achievement may be invited to join Beta Gamma Sigma, an internationally

recognized business honor society (*Beta Gamma Sigma*, 2019). Beta Gamma Sigma was founded in 1913 when student members of business honor societies from the University of California, University of Illinois, and University of Wisconsin became aware of the others' existence and merged into a national organization (*Beta Gamma Sigma*, 2019). This prestigious honor society recognizes the top 5% of juniors and top 10% of seniors and graduate students attending Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB) member schools (*Beta Gamma Sigma*, 2019).

Student Experience

Participation in Greek-letter organizations, particularly social fraternities and sororities, has historically been important for college student engagement. College and universities, facing space issues when post-secondary education enrollments sharply increased, looked to social fraternities and sororities for increased housing opportunities for students. This allowed sororities and fraternities to rapidly expand nationwide and offer even more opportunities for student engagement that influenced every aspect of the student experience, including peer groups, housing, dining, a sense of belonging, and social opportunities (Baird, 1920; Birdseye, 1907; Thelin, 2011; Torbenson, 2005). Empirical evidence indicates that peer interactions with students who are different from themselves are critical for increases in the seven measures of socially responsible leadership (Dugan & Komives, 2010). Dugan and Komives (2010) note that "leadership is inherently a group phenomenon, and much of college is developmentally dedicated to a broadening sense of self in the context of others" (p. 539).

Underrepresented Students in Majority Organizations

Social fraternity and sorority membership "is linked to an enduring dominant class advantage in higher education and reflects the legacy of formal and informal policies of

exclusion at elite universities" (Walker et al., 2015, p. 218). Student engagement in college is connected to students' experience with diversity, and the more a student is exposed to diversity on campus, it is more likely that the student is both engaged in active learning and more satisfied with their undergraduate experience (G. D. Kuh, 2003). Asel, Seifert, and Pascarella (2009) note:

> The close and influential interpersonal relationships that fraternities/sororities encourage may limit the heterogeneity and diversity of a member's social involvement and relationships, however, at least in the first year of college. The lack of contact with different others underscores a complex and perhaps even contradictory pattern of influences connected to fraternity/sorority life. On the one hand, fraternities/sororities appear to facilitate social engagement during college, while on the other hand they may place normative social and racial parameters around that engagement" (p. 6).

First-year students are more likely to come into contact with students from different backgrounds based on factors like campus-owned housing requirements and orientation activities, but by the senior year, students are more likely to live off-campus and reduce their exposure to diverse people and activities on campus (G. D. Kuh, 2003). Membership in a social Greek-letter organization had a significant negative effect on students' openness to diversity and challenge after the first year of college, compared to pre-college measurements (Pascarella et al., 1996; Wechsler et al., 2009). The largest negative impact of fraternity or sorority membership was found for white students, and "any negative effects of Greek membership may be greatest for those very students (both men and women) who will be most directly challenged by a society becoming more racially and culturally diverse" (Pascarella et al., 1996, p. 188).

The literature on non-Black students participating in Black Greek-letter organizations is scant, but indicates that there is potential to deemphasize the importance of Black student life

that Black fraternities and sororities were founded on. A qualitative study of non-Black members of Black Greek-letter organizations found that these fraternities and sororities provide access to high-achieving students of color who are building safe spaces and communities within predominantly white campuses (Laybourn & Goss, 2018). Laybourn and Goss (2018) note that this seems to be creating a larger shift away from "a Black-white racial binary to one dichotomizing whiteness as compared to non-whiteness…Black Greek-letter organizations are able to facilitate members' understanding of their place within this shifting racial hierarchy" (p. 61).

Access and Status

Social class leads to power and status within a society, and college campuses are no exception to this. Colleges and universities are exclusive institutions that grant access to some and deny access to others. Social hierarchies are observable on American campuses through social fraternity and sorority presence within the greater community (Jozkowski & Wiersma-Mosley, 2017). Over time, some students who gained access to a college or university still experienced exclusion from groups and organizations with competitive, hierarchical selection processes (G. Kuh, 2008).

Social fraternities and sororities frequently use gatekeeping tactics to control access to status-based opportunities (Stuber et al., 2011). This plays a role in perpetuating social reproduction on college campuses and "gatekeeping has obvious consequences in that gaining access to valuable positions generates increased material rewards" (Stuber et al., 2011, p. 431). While most college students do not have positions of economic or political power, they do have social power on campus. In organizations where social power creates access and status, the

organizations serve as a source of stratification within the community (Horowitz, 2013; Stuber, 2006).

While nearly 60 percent of working-class women and nearly 70 percent of working-class men join social fraternities and sororities, non-working-class students are 13 to 15 percent more likely to affiliate with a social fraternity or sorority than their working-class peers (Stuber et al., 2011). Women are perceived as more class- and status-conscious than men and their focus on elitism and social reputation is particularly evident (Biddix et al., 2014; Stuber et al., 2011). In addition, students perceive that class plays a bigger role in sorority recruitment than fraternity recruitment, resulting in lower-status sororities recruiting and retaining an overrepresentation of working-class women (Stuber et al., 2011).

Greek-letter organizations, particularly social fraternities and sororities, require students to pay chapter dues, along with social activity fees and other expenses. Greek-letter organizations of all types also tend to have strict rules for event attendance and penalize their members with fines or exclusion if these expectations are not met (DeSantis, 2007). This practice excludes low-SES students and reduces campus opportunities available to those who cannot access funds quickly or who must work while enrolled in classes (Walpole, 2011). When a social fraternity or sorority owns a chapter house, students are often required to live in the house for a minimum number of terms, adding more expenses to the total cost of membership and leading to further stratification within the student body (Jozkowski & Wiersma-Mosley, 2017; Walpole, 2011). Walpole (2011) notes that:

> Providing students the resources to participate is not the solution. Administrators must
> instead create alternate social structures that do not require a significant student financial

investment or need to create mechanisms within current structures that deemphasize the

monetary investment students are required to make. (p. 115)

Conclusion

This chapter examines literature related to the role of fraternal organizations within

higher education institutions. Demographic data indicates that social fraternity and sorority

membership is a significant part of campus life at many institutions, and the historical context of

Greek-letter organizations is as rich in tradition and progress as that of higher education as an

industry. Maisel (1990) encourages institutions to take a stand against social fraternities and

sororities and "step out from behind value-neutrality" so that "upon graduation students may

better cope with the world in which they will soon make the decisions (p. 11). On the opposite

end of the spectrum, Pike and Askew (1990) noted that criticism of social Greek-letter

organizations, specifically regarding their relationship to an institution's mission, is unfounded,

stating that "in fact, to the degree that student involvement in learning is a desirable goal,

universities may do well to promote Greek membership" (p. 18). It is clear that many aspects of

fraternal organizations are problematic, deeply troubled, and cause irreparable harm to students,

particularly those who are underrepresented on college campuses. The role that fraternal

organizations play must evolve quickly in response to shared, but not necessarily practiced,

values of inquiry, inclusion, respect, and meaningful interpersonal relationships.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

This chapter includes an outline of the research methods used for this study. First, the study design is reviewed, including the study purpose and guiding research questions. Next, the descriptive phenomenological methodology used in this dissertation study is discussed, followed by an overview of the site selection and participant recruitment processes. Data sources, instruments, and data analysis are then described, followed by a discussion on the reflexivity of the researcher.

Research Design

Undergraduate students who participate in selective co-curricular organizations within their collegiate academic programs benefit from access to professional mentorship, influential alumni, as well as restricted internship and job shadow opportunities. Additionally, students who participate in these organizations receive intensive professional development, career preparation, and career discernment resources and training opportunities that are not available to the entire student population. Students who do not participate in these specialized programs and do not have access to the same resources may perceive a difference in their student experience at the same institution. It is reasonable to assume that student affairs and academic affairs administrators strive to create consistent undergraduate student experiences that support students' emotional, social, and cognitive development. Through this lens, the purpose of this study is to consider the student perception of differential access and status based on participation within selective organizations.

The following research questions were developed based on a review of existing literature and my goal of furthering research on undergraduate business students' experiences:

RQ1: To what extent do business fraternity students perceive benefits from their status within the business school?

RQ2: How do business fraternity students and students who are not members of business fraternities perceive disparities in access and status within the undergraduate student community?

Creswell (2012) notes that "qualitative research is best suited to address a research problem in which you do not know the variables and need to explore" (p. 16). A review of the relevant literature indicated a significant gap in the area of academic and professional fraternal organizations. In particular, this study will fill a gap in understanding fraternal organization members' and non-members' perceptions of access and status within the undergraduate business student experience. This study was suited to qualitative methodology because understanding study participants' individual lived experiences aided in developing a deeper understanding of the research problem.

Phenomenological Study

I selected a phenomenological approach for the research study design. A phenomenological approach "describes the common meaning for several individuals of their lived experiences of a concept or a phenomenon" (Creswell, 2018, p. 75). The researcher identifies a phenomenon and then "collects data from persons who have experienced the phenomenon and develops a composite description of the essence of the experience for all of the individuals. This description consists of 'what' they experienced and 'how' they experienced it" (Creswell, 2018, p. 75). The phenomenological approach allows for the researcher to bracket herself out of the study, which was particularly important given my professional ties to these students and their experiences. Because I work closely with these students in my administrative

role on campus, bracketing allowed me to reflect on my own experiences and at the same time, intentionally leave myself out of the participants' experiences (Creswell, 2018). While I bracketed my reactions and judgments during my participant interviews, I did share that I was a member of a business fraternal organization and that I had also attended a large state university in order to build rapport. As part of bracketing, my own experiences are described later in this chapter under reflexivity and the role of the researcher.

Creswell (2018) notes that typically, phenomenological studies include: an emphasis on a single concept or idea to be explored; exploration of the phenomenon with a heterogeneous group of individuals who have all experienced the phenomenon; philosophical discussion about the research design; phenomenological reflection (bracketing); interviewing individuals who have experienced the phenomenon; systematic data analysis that evolves from narrow units of analysis to broader units to detailed descriptions that summarize the "what" and the "how" of the individuals' experiences; and an ending that discusses the "essence" of the experience that incorporates what individuals experienced and how they experienced it. Specifically, this study will involve transcendental phenomenology, which emphasizes the essential meaning of individual experiences, and aligns well with the goal of examining participants' experiences and perceptions. Moustakas (as cited in Creswell, 2018) created procedures that consist of:

> Identifying a phenomenon to study, bracketing out one's experiences, and collecting data from several persons who have experienced the phenomenon. The researcher then analyzes the data by reducing the information to significant statements or quotes and combines the statements into themes. Following that, the researcher develops a textural description of the experiences of the persons (what participants experienced), a structural description of their experiences (how they experienced it in terms of the conditions,

situations, or context), and a combination of the textural and structural descriptions to convey an overall essence of the experience. (p. 78)

Data Sources and Instruments

Data collection consisted of semi-structured interviews with consenting students who represented five professional business fraternity organizations recognized by the Council of Presidents and the Gies College of Business, as well as with consenting students who did not have any affiliation with these five organizations. Phenomenological research involves understanding what participants experienced and how they experienced it, which is best obtained through participant interviews (Creswell, 2018). I also collected self-reported demographic data from student participants, including hometown, future graduate school or employment plans, and salary and signing bonus data, where applicable.

Site Selection. The Gies College of Business at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign (UIUC) is a highly selective college within a large research-intensive land-grant university. Ranked in the top 20 undergraduate business schools nationwide (*Best Undergraduate Business Programs Rankings*, n.d.), the College is home to nearly 3,000 undergraduate students (*UIUC Student Enrollment by Curriculum and Student Level Spring 2020*, 2020). Self-reported student data indicates that in the Fall 2019 semester, 46.2 percent of Gies students self-identified as White, 19.4 percent as Asian-American, 3.2 percent as African-American, 9.2 percent as Hispanic, 2.6 percent as multiracial, and 18.2 percent as international; 56 percent self-identified as male and 44 percent self-identified as female (*Enrollment by Curriculum, Race, Sex, Residency*, 2019).

UIUC is a large, selective R1 research university under the Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education, meaning that it is a doctoral-granting university with very high

research activity (*The Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education*, 2019). UIUC is also a member of the Association of American Universities, and the campus is located in the twin cities of Champaign and Urbana in central Illinois. UIUC is the flagship campus of the University of Illinois system and was founded in 1867 as one of the original 37 public land-grant institutions (*About*, 2019). The institution has a strong emphasis on the co-curricular experience and is home to 24 residence halls, 15 private certified housing operations, and 61 social fraternal organization houses (*About*, 2019).

The campus reported a total enrollment of 51,196 students in September 2019, which represented 18 schools, colleges, divisions, and other enrolling units within the campus (*Fall 2019 Statistical Abstract of Ten-Day Enrollment*, 2019). Within the UIUC campus, 54 percent of enrolled students identify as men and 46 percent identify as women; approximately 58 percent of students are in-state residents (*Fall 2019 Statistical Abstract of Ten-Day Enrollment*, 2019). The Gies College of Business reported 591 first-time students, 74 off-campus transfer students, 14 readmitted students, and 2,436 continuing students for a total enrollment of 3,115 (*Fall 2019 Statistical Abstract of Ten-Day Enrollment*, 2019). Fall 2019 enrollment data was used here for comparison purposes because the Gies College of Business does not manage a spring semester admissions process; all students are admitted and begin their education in the fall semester.

This institutional context informed my dissertation research. Large public universities have a substantial pool of students to populate every type of registered student organization, particularly selective fraternal organizations of all types. The UIUC student population demographic statistics indicate that there are low numbers of students of color on campus. As UIUC is a predominantly white institution, it is important to consider the limitations of an all-white participant group and take steps to ensure that the participant group represents the student

body. The institutional culture is a contextual factor that was considered for this study because professional business fraternities are not likely to exist in their same format and with as much social and cultural power within another type of institution. Likewise, these types of organizations are unlikely to exist in their current format within an institution with more restrictions on student organizations.

The College has three departments containing a total of eight majors. The Accountancy department offers a major in Accountancy, the department of Business Administration offers majors in Information Systems, Management, Marketing, Operations Management, Strategic Business Development and Entrepreneurship, and Supply Chain Management, and the Finance department offers a major of the same name. Gies also offers three minors: a Business minor restricted to non-Business majors, an International Business minor restricted to Business majors, and the Hoeft Technology and Management minor in partnership with the Grainger College of Engineering.

Admissions. The Gies College of Business is highly selective in its admission practices as applicants are restricted as to when they may apply for admission. High school seniors (or those who have never enrolled in post-secondary education), may apply as first-year students to Business Unassigned, which is a general program designed to support students in selecting a major. Students must declare a major by March of their sophomore year in order to enroll in required, major-specific junior-level courses. The College hosts an annual major declaration Signing Day event in March that mimics NCAA athlete signing day ceremonies, which is restricted to Gies students. Approximately 575 students are expected to enroll as first-year freshmen with the class eventually gaining approximately 200 intercollegiate on-campus and 75 off-campus transfer students.

Off-campus transfer (OCT) students are those that have never attended the University of Illinois and began their post-secondary education at another institution. OCTs may apply to transfer before earning 90 credit hours or before completing six semesters of full-time coursework (*Off-Campus Transfer*, n.d.). As application to the Gies College of Business requires completion of foundational business and general education courses, most OCTs transfer at the start of their junior year. Inter-collegiate transfer (ICT) students are already enrolled within other UIUC Colleges or Schools, and may apply to transfer in the spring of the first year of study for the fall semester of their second year of study (*Intercollegiate Transfer*, n.d.). The ICT process offers students a single opportunity for transfer to Gies during their UIUC education.

Prestige. Career placement statistics have a significant influence on business school rankings, and as such, are an important outcomes metric for Gies. The Gies College of Business participates in the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) annual First Destination survey, which collects information directly from the graduating student in the semester of their graduation and is focused on their plans six months after graduation. Respondents can indicate that they are pursuing graduate or professional educational opportunities, military service, full-time employment, self-employment, or not seeking employment. NACE standards and protocols indicate colleges should publicly provide these outcome results for their graduates because "helping students achieve post-graduation career success is a critical element of the mission of the entire higher education institution" (National Association of Colleges and Employers, 2014, p. 5). Gies placed 98% of the Class of 2018 (University of Illinois, n.d., p. 4), which far exceeds the national average of 81% of college graduates in their first destination placement six months after graduation (*The NACE First-Destination Survey*, n.d.). In fact, most Gies data collection takes place in the fall semester of

students' senior year and more than 95% of Gies graduates' outcomes are known well in advance of graduation (University of Illinois, n.d.).

Business schools rely on rankings perhaps more heavily than any other field of study. This is evidenced by the numerous outlets that rank business schools – *Poets and Quants, U.S. News and World Report, Forbes, Fortune*, and *Princeton Review* all publish annual business school rankings. In comparison, other disciplines are limited to *U.S. News and World Report* and *Princeton Review*, among mainstream national publications.

Institutions' reliance on rankings is similar to the K-12 concept of "teaching to the test" and standardized testing. Because rankings are heavily influenced by student perceptions, employer perceptions, outcomes data, starting salaries, faculty quality, and national reputation, institutions focus their efforts on those categories at the detriment of other facets of undergraduate education (Bachrach et al., 2017). Institutions compete annually to offer the most resources and services for the highest student and employer satisfaction, all while maintaining or exceeding record-setting placement rates. Particularly in elite business schools, rankings drive spending, staffing, and student recruitment (Bachrach et al., 2017).

Published career placement results taken with national rankings impact enrollment decision-making as prospective students and their families use these metrics to compare undergraduate business programs. Co-curricular program offerings, or programs that shape students' time outside of the classroom, also influence prospective students and their families when making college decisions. In particular, fraternal organizations are important considerations for high-achieving students and their families.

Business Fraternities. The University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign is home to more than 1,800 registered organizations (*Office of Registered Organizations*, 2019). The university's

student code requires that registered student organizations remain separate from the university. Specifically, the code states that:

Registered Organizations and Registered Student Organizations are independent and autonomous from the University and are responsible for managing their own affairs. Registered Organizations and Registered Student Organizations are not affiliated with the university, nor are they units or agents of the University, and they shall not represent themselves as such…Each Registered Organization and Registered Student Organization shall be required to include in its articles of incorporation/association, bylaws, or constitution…a provision clearly stating that the organization is not an official agency or part of the University and that the University is not liable or otherwise responsible for any acts, omissions, or liabilities of the organization.

Additionally, the code requires that "the purpose of the organization does not violate any laws or University policies or regulations." (*Registered Organizations and Organization Fund*, 2019). This approach to student organization governance means that there is little formal oversight and considerable power in the hands of the organizations. The university has no control or influence over these organizations' events, recruitment, or other decisions, particularly when the organizations are large and well-funded through external sources.

Within the Gies College of Business, registered student organizations are similarly not affiliated with the College. However, Gies has established the Council of Presidents, an umbrella organization made up of the presidents of more than 30 business-related organizations. The Council of Presidents is designed to unite the College's organizations and establish a common set of expectations for organization operations, including disciplinary action and event management (*Council of Presidents*, n.d.). The College requires all affiliated organizations to

have a faculty or staff advisor and does permit organizations to seek funding from the Council of Presidents for specific events and activities. However, the College still has no influence over fundraising or decision-making, though it is relevant to note that the largest and most selective organizations receive significant funding from the College's corporate partners.

The Gies College of Business and the Council of Presidents recognize five professional business organizations, including four local chapters of international fraternal organizations and Business Council. The Gies College of Business recognizes local chapters of four international professional business fraternities: Alpha Kappa Psi, Delta Sigma Pi, Phi Chi Theta, and Phi Gamma Nu (*Alpha Kappa Psi*, 2019; *Delta Sigma Pi*, 2019; *Phi Chi Theta*, 2019; *Phi Gamma Nu*, 2019). Within the Gies College of Business, Business Council is a local organization that does not have an affiliation with a national fraternal organization. In addition, its new members do not participate in a pledge or prospective new member period and enjoy the benefits of full membership upon invitation. The purpose of Business Council is to provide social and professional opportunities for leaders with high potential and to provide service to the Gies College of Business.

All five organizations prohibit involvement in any other professional business organization in direct competition with their own. As Business Council and the four professional business fraternities recruit the same students, use the same recruitment timeline, select prospective members using a collaborative bid process, and require prospective members to limit their membership to only one of the aforementioned five organizations, invite selected members to join the organization, and hold new member rituals, I am including Business Council as a professional business fraternity for the purposes of this study.

Gies business fraternity chapters reported a 100% first destination placement rate for the Class of 2019. The overall first destination placement rate for the Gies College of Business Class of 2018 was approximately 97% (University of Illinois, n.d.). It is reasonable to assume that this placement rate was supported through organization-specific access to fraternity alumni, high-profile Gies individual and corporate donors, corporate recruiters, and Gies faculty and administrators.

Participants. For the purposes of this study, I defined all five of the highly selective professional business organizations recognized by the Gies College of Business as "business fraternities." These organizations are: Alpha Kappa Psi, Business Council, Delta Sigma Pi, Phi Chi Theta, and Phi Gamma Nu. These organizations hold a concurrent and collaborative selective recruitment, bid, and selection process.

In order to learn more about the student perception of their status within the Gies College of Business at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, I identified students aged 18 years of age or older and students who are currently involved in the five professional business fraternities. I further delimited the prospective participants to those with senior standing (or at least 90 credit hours of completed coursework). I established this delimitation because I was most interested in learning from students who were selected to join the organization or who participated in recruitment activities and were not selected. Limiting the sample based on credit hours also provided a more cumulative review of participant experiences within the organizations as well as the overall undergraduate student experience.

I had planned to recruit students on-campus, using newsletter announcements, electronic board displays, class announcements, and other in-person recruitment strategies. However, the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in Illinois just two weeks before my dissertation proposal

defense disrupted my participant recruitment plans and I had to pivot to online recruiting and data collection. I created an e-mail that was sent to directors of Gies programs using contact information available on the public website (Appendix A). This e-mail was sent to the directors of the Investment Banking Academy, Investment Management Academy, Finance Academy, and the Enrichment Academy. In addition, the message was shared with staff who oversee Admissions, the Hoeft Technology and Management minor, Experiential Learning, and Business Career Services, and was published in newsletters and shared broadly with classes and other distribution lists. Finally, the message was distributed to the Gies Council of Presidents so that all organizations recognized by Gies could share the message with their members. Students' eligibility for the study was verified using the student data portal.

Interested students e-mailed me directly to indicate their interest in the study and I received 71 e-mails within one week of distributing my recruitment message. Each student received an e-mail response (Appendix B) asking them to complete a questionnaire (Appendix C) outlining demographic information and their availability over a two-week period in May. Creswell (2018) recommends three to fifteen individuals as an appropriate size for a phenomenological study. Following questionnaire completion, I identified 12 students who represented the Gies student body and confirmed their eligibility using the undergraduate student records portal. I then contacted them by e-mail (Appendix D) to confirm their interview time. All other students who completed the demographic questionnaire were notified that the study had been filled. I scheduled Zoom meetings for all 12 participants and sent them reminder e-mails with their individual Zoom link two to three days prior to their interview with me. This study also received a waiver of documentation of informed consent from the Illinois Office for the Protection of Research Subjects. However, with the understanding that participants should be

aware of their rights during the interview process, all 12 received and signed an electronic informed consent form (Appendix E).

Interview participants received a $25 gift card to Amazon.com. All 12 participants consented and participated in a single individual interview. Interviews were conducted in private, password-protected Zoom meeting rooms and both audio and video were recorded. Interview participant student-reported demographic information is summarized in Table 3.1 under pseudonyms to maintain the confidentiality of the participants.

The interviews were guided by a protocol informed by Astin's Theory of Student Involvement and Bourdieu's concept of social reproduction (Appendix F) and were conversational in nature. Each interview focused on participants' decision-making regarding their extra-curricular involvement within the Gies College of Business and within the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. A saturation point was reached early in the data collection process given the level of student involvement and consistent descriptions of Gies student experiences.

Table 3.1 Interview Participant Demographic Information and Major/Minor

Name	Gender	Race	Business Fraternity	Primary Major	Secondary Major	Minor
Adam	M	White	Yes	Supply Chain Management	Marketing	
Caroline	F	White	Yes	Information Systems & Information Technology	Marketing	Technology & Management
Daniel	M	White	No	Finance	Supply Chain Management	
David	M	White	Yes	Finance		Technology & Management
Jada	F	Black	No	Marketing	ISIT	Spanish
Jamie	F	Asian	No	Marketing	Supply Chain Management	Psychology
Kelly	F	White	Yes	Finance	ISIT	
Leo	M	White	No	Accountancy	ISIT	
Matthew	M	White	No	Finance	Accountancy	
Megan	F	White	Yes	Finance	Accountancy	
Monica	F	Asian	No	Accountancy		
William	M	Asian	Yes	Accountancy	Finance	

Data Analysis

Using Astin and Bourdieu as frameworks and the research questions as a guide, the interview transcripts were analyzed following the data analysis steps as outlined in Krathwohl (2009). Each interview opened with an introduction from me as the researcher, including a delineation between my professional capacity within the Gies College of Business and my role as an educational researcher. However, it is reasonable to assume that the conflation of these two roles influenced participant responses, so this was a significant consideration during all stages of transcript analysis.

Each interview was recorded, and I hired a transcriptionist to transcribe all 12 interviews for analysis. Participants had an opportunity to select their own pseudonym; otherwise, pseudonyms were assigned to all participants and used in the transcripts. Once transcription was

complete, I reviewed transcripts for accuracy by listening to each interview while reading the transcription. Each interview was summarized, and notes were sent to the individual participant as part of the member checking process. These summaries were later recorded as memos on individual transcripts and aided with data analysis.

Transcripts were reviewed by hand, line by line, and themes were identified. I then uploaded transcripts into the software Taguette, a password protected cloud platform designed to support qualitative research data analysis, and re-coded electronically using the themes identified from hand coding. The themes were reviewed and further refined after analyzing prominence in the data, relevance to the research questions, and overlap between participants.

Member Checking

Each participant received a summary of their transcribed interview for member checking purposes. Krathwohl (2009) indicates that member checking is useful to confirm data, but also provides study participants an opportunity to reflect on the interview in its entirety. To this end, participants were asked to review their interview summaries to verify the accuracy of their statements and ensure that their statements were not misinterpreted. Participants notified me in writing of any issues and corrections were made on two transcripts where participants asked to further clarify their comments or include something previously omitted.

Reflexivity and the Role of the Researcher

Guba and Lincoln define reflexivity as "the process of reflecting critically on the self as researcher, the 'human as instrument'" (as cited in Lincoln, Lynham, & Guba, 2018, p. 143). Creswell (2012) notes that many types of qualitative research design require the researcher to develop a strong sense of self-awareness regarding their role in the study and to be open about this "in a way that honors and respects the site and participants" (p. 474). Researchers must come

to terms with their multiple identities and how they may influence the choice of research problem, research design, and the overall research process (Lincoln et al., 2018).

It is important to note that my interest in studying undergraduate business students holds particular significance for me because of my own experiences as an undergraduate business student. I graduated from the Trulaske College of Business at the University of Missouri, where I majored in Management and was a member of a professional business fraternal organization. My professional business organization experience was transformative for my undergraduate education. Through my invitation to join the organization, I gained access to professional development opportunities, recruitment activities with prestigious employers, and career preparation training, including resume reviews, cover letter assistance, practice interviews, and workplace readiness (e.g., professional etiquette, white collar workplace norms).

Similar to what my participants experienced with the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic during their senior year, it is also relevant to note that I was a college senior in the fall of 2001. I was participating in first destination recruitment activities immediately post-9/11, as the economy began to collapse and major firms disappeared, including Arthur Andersen and Enron, both of which recruited at the University of Missouri campus. I observed friends and classmates pursue and then accept offers of employment that quickly disappeared once the depth and breadth of the 2001 financial crisis became apparent. Although I had an offer of employment from my internship experience the previous summer, I could rely upon my organization for access to special recruitment activities before, during, and after the College of Business fall career fair. In addition, I had opportunities to connect with alumni who knew about and were subtly recruiting for open entry-level positions that would remain hidden from the general

undergraduate student population (e.g., shared through private listserv instead of posted on the undergraduate business student virtual job board).

My first professional employment experience was as a financial analyst with the Federal Reserve Bank of Kansas City. The Federal Reserve System has twelve districts within the United States and operates as a quasi-governmental organization, retaining the stability and structure of a governmental organization but the flexibility and benefits of a private sector employer. Because of this, I was able to secure a stable job that did not disappear in the midst of a financial crisis, as eliminating our nation's central bank has never been a serious topic of conversation within national politics. In addition, I was offered stable employment at a salary that was above the average starting salary for my graduating class. The access and status that my co-curricular involvement offered me as a college senior and incoming entry-level employee has been at the forefront of my mind and has undoubtedly shaped my thought process as I studied this topic.

Within the literature on student involvement, fraternal organizations, and the undergraduate student experience, I saw many elements of my own story. My co-curricular involvement was critical for my own career exploration, career and major decision-making, and professional preparation. In addition, my co-curricular involvement, particularly in a professional business fraternal organization, gave me access to opportunities that were not available to the student body at large. I participated in resume reviews, networking events, and practice interviews that gave me exposure to recruiters and positioned me for success in my own recruiting pursuits. Had I not been a member of this organization, I would have never known these opportunities even existed.

As a higher education administrator, the bulk of my career has been spent advising, coaching, teaching, mentoring, and otherwise working directly with undergraduate business

students. I currently serve as the Assistant Dean of Academic Affairs and Honors Programs within the Gies College of Business and believe that undergraduate business education is as much a part of my future as it has been a part of my past. I have spent my career committed to and actively working to improve access to higher education, including selective programs and co-curricular opportunities. I strive to understand students' perceptions of access and status and will use what I learn from my study participants. As an active practitioner with multiple business degrees and an influential role in undergraduate business education, I am uniquely positioned to implement recommendations for practice as a result of this study.

Conclusion

This chapter outlined the research methods used in this dissertation study, including the study purpose, guiding research questions, and a discussion of the phenomenological methodological approach. Following this, I described the site selection process, participant recruitment, and data sources, instrumentation, and data analysis. Finally, reliability and validity of the study were discussed, including addressing the reflexivity and role of the researcher. The next chapter details study findings.

CHAPTER FOUR: RESEARCH FINDINGS

The findings from interviews are described in this chapter and address the following research questions:

RQ1: To what extent do business fraternity students perceive benefits from their status within the business school?

RQ2: How do business fraternity students and students who are not members of business fraternities perceive disparities in access and status within the undergraduate student community?

A thematic analysis of data using the framework of Astin's theory of student involvement (1984) identified that the student experience was perceived through the lenses of business fraternity culture, involvement within and outside of the Gies College of Business, opportunities for professional development, academics, and status. Aligned with Bourdieu's (1977) concept of habitus, the habitus associated with an elite undergraduate business program affected students' perceptions of access and status within that program. This habitus was influenced both by access to opportunity and spaces, as well as support, both from chosen support systems and from an overall sense of belonging.

Perceptions of the Student Experience

All twelve participants identified the Gies student experience as a critical aspect of their undergraduate education. As Adam said, "Gies has just been kind of my whole college life." Caroline agreed, saying "anytime I was able to be involved in Gies, it's definitely been a positive impact on my experience…some of the more shaping experiences have been within Gies." Jada shared,

Oh, I tell people all the time, I wouldn't trade Gies for anything in the world, I think, because it really allowed me to transform my way of thinking about just everything that I want to be and who I wanted to grow to be. From freshman year to now, I definitely see how I've changed -- and I'm still that very loud, bubbly, outgoing person, but I've been able to hone it in onto my passions.

Of the twelve students interviewed for this study, eleven participated in professional business fraternity recruitment activities at least once. Jada is the only student interviewed who did not participate in business fraternity rush and, as she explained, "it just never was anything that interested me, to be honest." All twelve students were asked if, knowing what they know now, they would go through business fraternity recruitment again as freshmen. All six business fraternity members agreed that they would participate again, and all six non-members agreed that they would not participate in recruitment activities. In response to this question, Jada, a non-member, said she would not and added, "I think the path that I ended on is the exact path that I wanted for myself." David, a member, said, "Yes, I would, definitely, because of the experience it gave me, the professional development, the social network, the opportunities to provide service to the college and the greater Champaign-Urbana community."

Business Fraternity Culture

Ten of the twelve participants described "business fraternity culture" and the remaining participants described the concept, as defined by the participants, without using this terminology. All six non-members and four of the members used the term "business fraternity culture" without prompting during the interview. The below participants described the concept as,

You're surrounded by a lot of people who really want to achieve the most. So, this kind of drives you to do the same. It's this being in a community and group that is just that

type of experience. I'm not doing the best job explaining it, but I guess it's just the passion and the how you want to push yourself forward because of the group you're with. – Adam

I feel like kind of the culture built around the College of Business and biz frat culture, as people call it, is pretty pervasive throughout the College. So, whether it's a whole table in the BIF covered with, like, this — frat people when they have, like, their posters up, or just kind of hanging out and studying on a night. You know that they're in, like, say [professional business fraternity] or something, because you'll probably know somebody in it, that their friend, they're all friends with each other, which is pretty evident within other organizations too. But I feel like since you're in the College of Business and there are business fraternities, you can see it there. – Daniel

I can't tell if a person walking down the street is in a business fraternity, but within the walls of BIF Atrium, it's pretty clear just because of the groups people hang out in and the little bubbles people are within, in terms of mainly talking to the same people each time they're in BIF, sitting at the same table, having their fraternity sign up. That might give it away sometimes, but usually it's pretty easy to discern. – Monica

I would say there's a college culture with drinking and gathering, as well as a competitive culture, because they are very business focused, it's competitive to get in, and is very network focused as well. I think there are positive and negatives to all of those aspects. – Jamie

David reflected upon his experiences as a business fraternity member who also held a separate high-profile leadership position within the Gies College of Business. He described how

his maturity and growth over his college experience has helped him to see that business

fraternities are not for everyone, saying,

> I was pitching [professional business fraternity] to students and my [colleague] was in [a
>
> selective co-curricular organization] and said, 'you don't have to join a business
>
> fraternity.' And being more mature, I definitely understand that now. But as an
>
> underclassman, there's a sense of competition of who got into what, who's having more
>
> fun, which one's a better experience.

Professional Development

Business fraternities often emphasize member professional development in their

recruitment and build it into their new member development processes and expectations (*Alpha*

Kappa Psi, 2019; *Delta Sigma Pi*, 2019; *Illinois Business Council*, 2019; *Phi Chi Theta*, 2019;

Phi Gamma Nu, 2019). All business fraternity members are expected to develop a high-caliber

resume upon joining the organization, participate in mock interviews, and after sufficiently

building these skills, start coaching new members on their own professional skill development.

Non-member Jada was skeptical of this approach, saying "I think I'm capable of doing that on

my own without having to be committed to another thing."

Business fraternity members clearly described their recruitment and new member

processes, specifically detailing the work they were required to do to build their professional

skills. Megan, a business fraternity member, said,

> Pledges, who are usually freshmen and sophomores, are always paired with a senior
>
> mentor. A senior mentor will help go through your schedule, give class
>
> recommendations. And usually that person is in the same major as you so they can really
>
> be honest and help you make sure that you have a good schedule and figure out what it is

that you want to do in your career, what other organizations you want to go into that would help you get there. There's a huge mentorship aspect. You schedule mock interviews with juniors and seniors which helps to give a lot more perspectives. Everyone is very involved; people are excited to help younger members. Because when you were that age, everyone was excited to help you and you want to give back.

Adam, a business fraternity member, shared that business fraternities teach things in depth that the Gies College of Business does not explicitly teach to all students, including interview preparation, resume writing, and other professional development skills. "That prompted me to get more involved because I knew that would help me in the long run within my college career and my business career," he added. Kelly echoed this desire, commenting that she believed the first semester in any business fraternity required intensive commitment and learning. Several members spoke about this below,

You're expected to do a lot, and you get groomed or molded, you get help. You learn how to juggle different things. Having gone through that, I feel like everything else is a piece of cake. It's super fun, too. It's not work that you don't enjoy, you're with a group of people that you get along with really well. – Kelly

I definitely wouldn't be who I am without them. I found a lot of my really close friends as well as being able to develop professionally as well. They helped me with my professional development and led me to [career path], getting you out there in the job you want, that is really cool. – Megan

Participants who are not members of professional business fraternities spoke about

having to seek professional development resources on their own. Matthew shared his experiences participating in a selective co-curricular program where he taught himself the professional development skills needed to be a strong candidate. He went on to explain,

> I feel like the college could probably be divided into two big groups. And one of those would be students who are very in the know, in terms of... it's hard to even put a finger on it, but career prospects, what's out there, how to get on a track to get to where they want to be. And then those who, I would say, are outside of the know and are just — I don't want to say drifting in the wind — but less aware of what it's going to take to kind of get on, on the track to where they're trying to go. So when I first came in, I wasn't very aware of how things would work. I wasn't in that in-the-know group, I would say. It isn't necessarily difficult to break in, but it helps if you know somebody who can sit you down and just tell you how it works. So that's where the social fraternity can help. I actually had a good friend of mine, who was in my social fraternity with me, who literally did sit me down at one point. He was in Gies already and he explained to me the route I eventually took.

Student Involvement

All twelve students described their co-curricular involvement in similar ways, sharing that their experiences were transformative in their personal and professional development. William, a business fraternity member remarked,

> I think the classes themselves are helpful, but I would argue that I learned almost everything relevant or important to me over the past four years through clubs and involvement. The classes are good, I think, but I just don't think you get that much out of college if you just go for class. I learned so much by just communicating, being in

groups, meeting new people. All my job-specific knowledge came from [selective co-curricular organization] and my campus involvement. If I didn't take a single college class and all I did was go to these clubs, I would probably come out with approximately the same amount of knowledge.

David, a business fraternity member, echoed William's comments and said,

I think my involvement has made my entire experience at U of I. I think that it made this large university a very small community for me and introduced me to some of my best friends. I think joining [professional business fraternity] at the very beginning provided me – I was very much a homesick freshman – with events every day that I could go to, which kept me busy and made me feel comfortable on campus. And I carried that involvement through all four years. My involvement taught me to sometimes just stay busy and work hard. Being involved helped me grow as a person, as a student, as a professional, in so many different ways.

Monica, a non-member, agreed with this perspective and shared,

My extensive involvement with Gies RSOs has definitely helped me build better connections with people within the Gies College of Business, as well as even faculty sometimes. And this involvement has also helped me network outside of the Gies College of Business, like external firms at recruiting events.

However, she went on to say that not all aspects of her intensive involvement within Gies were positive, noting that she didn't get much of a chance to get involved in RSOs outside of Gies College of Business and didn't "really get the full campus experience. That's something I realized at the end of my senior year, that I could have been more involved on campus and less hyper-focused on the Gies College of Business."

Status

All six non-members described the status that comes with business fraternity membership using similar language, illustrating an area where there is a divide between members and non-members. In contrast, all six business fraternity members mentioned the prestige of their membership and how valuable this was for both internship and full-time position recruiting. For example, Adam said, "when I was applying for roles, like my internships or my full-time job – I think getting in [professional business fraternity] and having them on my resume really helped."

Several participants touched on the selectivity of competitive RSOs, including business fraternities, and remarked directly on the status that business fraternity membership awarded to students, including,

> There definitely is an appeal with RSOs that are more selective. I think that it provides more of like, you earned this. And I think that because of that, it spurs people to be more involved. And I think that the open-admission organizations are the ones that tend to see a lot of turnover of members, people who are less involved, because they didn't have to go through a rigorous application process for it, didn't really have to learn what it was about, they can kind of just walk in and go to some meetings if they want rather than committing to a rigorous new member semester. I think that having to work a lot harder for those things definitely brings more of a reward and motivates people more to stay involved or make that a larger part of their college experience. – David

> I think there's prestige for the RSOs that are competitive, for the business frats, for the consulting organizations, for some of the programs like Finance Academy. If someone identifies as participating in an entrepreneurship group or a diversity-based RSO, there's

just a different idea there. People aren't necessarily as competitive, but it seems more like people actually care about finding a group that they can put their time into. – Jamie

They are very desirable organizations to be a part of and provide you outlets to friends, to other organizations that you can potentially join, and just meet people, all different types of people. – David

Members of business fraternities generally have their own tables in the BIF atrium, or usually have exclusive events that only the business fraternities are invited to and post. And that's understandable because obviously, they're not officially overseen by the Gies College of Business, so they have their own discretion on how they run events. But that's a clear difference from other RSOs. They don't have as many collaborative or inclusive events. And you can see clear differences in terms of the social contacts people have within class. – Monica

Both members and non-members described flaws with business fraternity recruitment and selection processes, acknowledging that these prestigious organizations award privilege to their members. Participants acknowledged that there is a need for a selection process and that the selection processes themselves were justifiable. Monica went on to say,

I do believe it's very, very subjective and there's not set criteria for the kinds of people that are admitted or aren't admitted. I do think a lot of it just comes down to, is one person really advocating for someone to be admitted into the business fraternity or not, or did one person have a bad experience with someone, compared to the other 200 people in the organization? I feel like it's very selective based on initial impressions, which is understandable because a lot of things in life are, like job interviews, things like that. But

I do think they could stand to have a bit wider criteria for letting people in, or more

inclusive criteria for letting people in.

Monica also noted that representation in Gies College of Business was problematic

and shared her desire for this to improve both within RSOs and within the Gies community. She

stated,

I know I personally didn't see a lot of South Asians in my classes. So that's very rare.

And I know I have friends in finance classes that only see, like, Caucasian males, or

majority Caucasian males, in their classes. So that's just something I think that the Gies

College of Business overall can work towards improving. But yeah, I think obviously,

this systemic problem is reflected in the College of Business RSOs as well.

David shared that, from his perspective, having an immersive Gies experience, including

joining different organizations, volunteering for events, participating in study abroad programs,

and doing well academically, was within each student's control "if you seek out the right

resources and stay informed." He went on to acknowledge the privilege he had in taking this

position and stated that "it's really an intrinsic motivation for students to want to be involved in

Gies."

The interview protocol did not directly address socioeconomic privilege, but this was

indirectly described in multiple interviews. Out of twelve participants, seven had part-time jobs

while they were senior level full-time students in the Gies College of Business and several of

those students described their jobs as something to do to occupy time rather than an economic

necessity. Two participants specifically addressed the economic necessity of their part-time

employment.

Socioeconomic privilege was also indirectly addressed when discussing the participants' first destinations and their compensation, including base salary and signing or starting bonuses. First destinations and associated compensation are described in detail later on in this chapter. Adam described the full-time job he accepted in industry as paying less than his friends who were headed to professional services firms, saying "it's not worth being paid that extra little bit. I know people [at my internship] who had very high-paying jobs and they took a decrease just so they could have that culture." Other students were embarrassed to share their salaries and bonus amount but did so because of their anonymity in this study. One participant commented on their starting salary relative to their friends outside of Gies College of Business and indicated that this was also a source of mild embarrassment.

Academics

The focus on co-curricular involvement provided limited opportunities for participants to discuss their studies. All participants responded to questions regarding their major and minor choices and why they decided to attend the Gies College of Business. Several participants mentioned that their academic choices impacted their co-curricular experiences as well. Adam said, "that's where you meet a lot of your friends, in classes. You get to choose your major and that's really in your control, how you go about experiencing that." Other participants agreed and Leo described his academic experience as empowering, saying,

> I felt incredibly empowered to find the classes that interest me, to take the time to look
> through the course catalog and understand the different majors and get an idea of what
> they were. And I just took a leap of faith and took those classes very early to get a sense
> of what I liked and what I didn't like. I felt, all around, very empowered to seize those
> extra opportunities.

Kelly's comments aligned with Leo's experiences, sharing,

> I've loved being a Finance major because obviously you can't teach me everything I need to know, you can't teach anyone everything they need to know for whatever job, but I think the Finance major's great in showing me a lot of different things. I've taken real estate classes, personal wealth management, investment banking classes, you know, there's a lot of different ones. And I think that that's something that's, that's really good that kids need because they don't know what they're doing.

Several students reflected on the impact their academic experience had on their career choices. Multiple participants reflected on their major and minor choices and how these academic programs directly or indirectly impacted their first destination career choice. However, others added that their co-curricular experiences shaped their experiences and prepared them for the world of work far beyond what they learned in the classroom. Matthew said,

> I read the Wall Street Journal every day now, and I pick up the paper, and there isn't anything that doesn't make sense to me. And classes certainly would have helped with that. Knowing accounting, knowing some of those more detailed finance topics, but I do feel like it's the RSOs that kind of teach that real world, what's going on right now. In [selective co-curricular organization] we build pretty detailed financial models. We have financial modeling tests that we do. And that's a very specific skill that's important in a lot of finance careers, and that wasn't covered enough in my classes. You need to get a lot of reps. When I got to my internship last summer, that definitely helped because the work was not that much different from what we were simulating in [selective co-curricular organization].

Some students described major and minor selection within the Gies College of Business

as a source of tension, specifically students choosing majors within the Department of Business

Administration (all majors except Accounting and Finance). Jada said,

> All my Accounting and Finance friends were trying to get me to convert to Finance up
>
> until senior year, and I'm like, no, no no. That's not gonna happen. But I think the
>
> differences in their perception regarding what it means to be in Business Administration
>
> versus what it means to be in Accounting comes down to the rankings and what people
>
> perceive you can do with a Business Administration degree.

A central theme when discussing academics was the sense of "cooperation, not

competition in class", as described by Leo. This spirit of cooperation throughout Gies was

described throughout interviews as a point of pride for the college and its students. Multiple

students described comfort when asking others for help and recognized that there was space for

everyone to do their best in each and every class. Leo went on to say,

> I never felt that there was any cutthroat competition, there wasn't a need to prove you're
>
> the best. These students are naturally competitive, but I never felt there was competition
>
> that compromised working with people. That's something I came across because there is
>
> a drive to want to do really well and I found that in a lot of my courses, but it never came
>
> at the expense of trying to slight others.

Perceptions of Access

Each of the twelve participants described their perceptions of access to networks,

opportunities, or other benefits, resources, or services that are not available to the entire Gies

student body. All six business fraternity members described access to networks, resources,

professional development, and career opportunities as major reasons for their decisions to join

and remain active in their respective organizations.

Conversely, all six non-members pointed out their lack of access to these opportunities and resources. This topic was of interest to all six non-member students and Matthew commented,

I think that's probably the main advantage of business fraternities, according to a lot of the people I know that are in them, is just getting to know more people in the college. And they do a good job of, I think, helping out with a lot of the little things as well. For instance, what to wear, how to network, how to interview. So these things that, as I've been alluding to, helps you just get in the know and teaches you what you have to do.

Monica also shared her perspective of access to organizations and connected her feelings about access to the College's and RSOs' issues of inclusion and exclusion, which are detailed later on in this section. She shared that business fraternity members tended to be similar, and when asked a follow-up question about this, elaborated,

A lot of the people that are in business fraternities tend to have the same or very similar personalities. In terms of, like, you can tell, oh, this person's in a business fraternity. Which makes sense because they want to let in a certain brand of people or certain type of people that would mesh well together. I understand why that would be. And they're all obviously very ambitious, good at networking, things like that. But I feel like just representation, in the literal sense, of, like, you know, more minorities, more people from disadvantaged backgrounds, things like that, would help. I know some business fraternities are exclusive to business majors, and some are open to other majors, and I think that also makes a difference, in terms of the inclusivity of these organizations and just the general spread of characteristics or diversity of the organization.

The six members of professional business fraternities indicated that they worked hard to

earn the access that they had through their organizations. Adam specifically noted that "business perks" were one of the best things about joining a business fraternity. When asked a follow-up question about this, he remarked,

> I guess I meant more of the overall knowledge that's there as well as the network after you're gone. I have a ton of friends who graduated, some alumni friends who are in the workplace right now in pretty, pretty solid positions. So being able just to have that network available for me is really valuable, in my eyes.

William also indicated that getting into a business fraternity in the freshman year made a critical difference for college success, in his opinion. He said that it was common for freshmen to feel behind within Gies, "even though if you stepped back and compared yourself to 19-year-olds across the United States, you might not feel the same way." William elaborated that there is pressure to keep up and push yourself harder because Gies students are surrounded by successful people who go on to do great things. He noted,

> In my first week in [professional business fraternity], I was introduced to things like hey, you should do [selective co-curricular organization], you should do [selective co-curricular organization], you should do all these things that you don't have time for. And you write them down and you say, okay, when can I participate, which do I prioritize. And then you get so much help, too. It's not just identifying certain clubs to join it's "hey, this person in [professional business fraternity] is a student director of Illinois Business Consulting. So you get to have a conversation with people who run these clubs. And then once you decide what to do, you get direct preparation help from people. It just makes getting involved a lot easier.

Career

At the time that interviews were scheduled, eleven of the twelve participants had committed to a first destination plan upon their graduation from Gies College of Business. The twelfth participant had accepted a company's offer, which was later rescinded due to uncertainty from the COVID-19 pandemic. This same student had a final job interview the same week as their interview for this study. By the time that member checking was completed, the student had accepted another full-time offer. One student planned to enter the Gies College of Business Master in Accounting Science one-year master's degree program and another planned to pursue graduate studies in a non-business field at a prestigious urban university located on the East Coast.

Ten of the twelve participants had accepted offers at for-profit organizations in three different sectors: banking (including commercial and investment banking), industry, and professional services (including public accounting and consulting). Of the ten participants who were entering the full-time workforce, their average starting salary was $75,000. Nine participants were offered a signing bonus, and the average signing bonus offered to those nine students was $8,444.

Table 4.1 Interview Participant Demographic Information and First Destination Plans

Name	Gender	Race	Business Fraternity	First Destination	Salary	Bonus
Adam	M	White	Yes	Industry	$60,000	$2,000
Caroline	F	White	Yes	Industry	$72,000	$7,000
Daniel	M	White	No	Industry	$69,000	$6,000
David	M	White	Yes	Professional Services	$75,000	$10,000
Jada	F	Black	No	Graduate Program	N/A	N/A
Jamie	F	Asian	No	Industry	$55,000	N/A
Kelly	F	White	Yes	Banking	$85,000	$7,500
Leo	M	White	No	Professional Services	$69,000	$3,500
Matthew	M	White	No	Professional Services	$85,000	$10,000
Megan	F	White	Yes	Banking	$95,000	$15,000
Monica	F	Asian	No	Graduate Program	N/A	N/A
William	M	Asian	Yes	Banking	$85,000	$15,000

Career path was one distinguishing factor between groups of students within Gies College of Business. William shared, "I think of groups of students as what kind of career paths. So there's the accountants, there's the consultants, there's banking, and then there's everything else." This aligned with the perspective shared by several students regarding academics and their college involvement, where some fields and majors were prized above others. Kelly elaborated further on this sentiment, sharing,

> I think, the one thing I did say earlier was that there's a big focus on the three big career paths in business, which is accounting, doing tax or audit; finance, specifically banking; and consulting. And I think that those are all great and the majority of people I know are doing that. But I know that there's other people too that wish there were some resources for some more niche paths. I don't know how that would be done. I mean, I'm not one of those people. I would long-term like to work in the entertainment industry in a financial role, possibly, if not more creative role. We'll see about that. I'm no Quentin Tarantino. So, we'll see.

Several participants below remarked on the autonomy they felt over their career paths, sharing,

I think that Gies gives a lot of the tools that you need to do a lot of different career paths. Obviously, there's a lot of the bigger ones. We're obviously really, really big on accounting, consulting, banking. And so you know, maybe there's a need for certain focuses on other career paths, but I mean also those are — you need focuses on those because those are the most common and most popular ones, entry-level right out of college, but I think Gies gives you the tools to do that. And the classes and curriculum are amazing and helping you discover all these different career paths. – Kelly

The purpose of the business fraternities is to build up the underclassmen. So I think you can discover career paths that you didn't know existed. You discover that you can keep up with kids who you may be, if you just saw their resume, you would think, wow, I could never be this person at all. But I guess from a confidence perspective, the business fraternity community just helps so much and I don't think I would have still pursued [career path] and tried it. I wouldn't have been president of [selective co-curricular organization] or be a TA. I don't think I would have as many opportunities without that start. – William

Physical Spaces

Participants frequently commented on the physical spaces occupied by the Gies College of Business and the impact that physical spaces had on their student experiences. As a reference point, Gies undergraduate students frequently access two buildings: Wohlers Hall, a traditional Georgian-style classroom and office building built in 1964, and the Business Instructional Facility (BIF), a contemporary LEED certified building that opened in 2008. The BIF is

primarily occupied by program offices and classrooms, and includes a bright, spacious atrium

filled with tables and chairs. Classrooms and offices fill three sides of the building around the

atrium on four floors and the fourth wall is four stories of glass with a view to a small courtyard.

The atrium has a locally owned chain coffee shop at the west end and leads to exterior doors on

the north and east sides.

All twelve participants referenced the College's physical spaces, specifically the BIF

atrium. Prior to the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, the atrium was a gathering place for

students and served as study space, informal meeting place, and space for students to build

community with each other through formal programming and impromptu gatherings. Tables and

chairs in the atrium are not reservable by students through any formal processes. This is relevant

to the study because professional business fraternities use the atrium space and furniture for

recruiting prospective members. Banners representing each business fraternity are displayed

during the first two weeks of classes, or until new member recruitment is under way. Atrium

tables are used for informal coffee chats as part of new member education processes. In addition,

organizations occupy tables as spaces for their members to stop by and take breaks between

classes. Many participants made specific comments about access to physical spaces and the

differences between business fraternity members and non-members when it came to using the

BIF, as detailed below,

> You walk into the atrium and one of the first things you see is they occupy the tables in
>
> the middle of the atrium. And you see, all right, I know that's whatever organization
>
> there, and it's very consistent. And I think there's an allure to that. – Leo, non-member
>
> You can clearly see in BIF, the tables. Like, oh, this is the [professional business
>
> fraternity] table, this is [professional business fraternity], this is the [professional business

fraternity] table, stuff like that. Rarely did I see someone not in a biz frat within a biz frat table, or people in biz frats hanging out with people who weren't really in a biz frat. – Adam, business fraternity member

I think that's a popular topic of conversation among business students. There always seems to be that kind of lunchroom cafeteria aspect in the BIF. So you have the more sorority and fraternity type of people, whether that's, like, business fraternity or whatever. They kind of all congregate in one area. You have other types of people, I feel like there's a strong divide between international students and everybody else. So you have the frat people, international students, and then kind of the rest. – Daniel, non-member

I think that Gies is so unique from some of my other friends' experiences who go to Big Ten universities. I think there's so much more sense of community within Gies from what I've heard of other schools. I think you walk into the BIF atrium and your friends are sitting at different tables. There are people studying, people helping each other. I think it's really a sense of community and helping, whereas I think some other schools can be a little bit more cutthroat. – David, business fraternity member

And recently, I learned that, just, people feel intimidated when they first walk into the BIF. And I was like, I don't remember really feeling that way. There are different tables at the back of BIF by the Espresso (coffee shop), that are oh, this is where so-and-so can sit. So, that can be a little bit disheartening for some, I think, and uncomfortable. – Jada, non-member

One group that has a large presence within the Gies College of Business is the business fraternities. They generally have their own tables in the BIF atrium or have exclusive events that only their members are invited to. – Monica, non-member

Even just going into BIF, there's tables everywhere, everyone is just being social, getting

to know everyone. I feel like by the time you're a senior, you know a good among of

people in the college and not even just your graduating class. Organizations help a lot

with that integration. – Megan, business fraternity member

One non-member indicated that he had heard comments from business fraternity

members when he approached business fraternity tables to talk to or sit with his friends from

other aspects of his life. Leo shared an example,

You know, I could walk up and be like, hey, you know, I'm talking to you as my friend,

not as this person in this organization. But I also had friends that weren't in that

comfortable situation. So we'd be walking up to the table. They'd peel off and be like, oh,

hey, I'll see you later because I don't know people in that group. And it's kind of that, I

don't want to awkwardly stand around. So I guess I'm a bit of that exception to that kind

of *Mean Girls* rule, where it didn't really faze me. Because even if there was the allure of

who can sit here, I was talking to my friends, and it never really fazed me what they

thought. Or if that's odd. I'm just doing my thing.

Inclusion/Exclusion

Each interview addressed inclusion and exclusion, both directly and indirectly, as an

aspect of the Gies student experience. Business fraternity members described groups of students

in Gies with sharp divides between members and non-members. William, a business fraternity

member shared, "there's kids who are in business fraternities and there are kids who aren't. I

think we just tend to mix circles within the different fraternities."

Business fraternity members discussed how important it was to them to feel included in

their organization. All six of the members interviewed for this study reflected on the experiences

they had while participating in recruitment activities. Intense interviews, high-pressure social events, and scrutiny from their peers led to feelings of having experienced something significant together with their pledge class or new member group.

Conversely, non-members described situations where they specifically felt excluded from spaces, experiences, or opportunities within these selective organizations. Leo recalled,

It did come up a few times where I was like, my friend, I heard from a friend of a friend That people were like, oh why is he here? And I'm like, because I played soccer with this person for six years. I don't really care what you think and I don't even know who you are.

Business fraternity members also shared reflections on the sense of community they developed as part of an exclusive organization. David said,

I think that as an underclassman, there definitely is a sense of 'I have to be in one to have fun in BIF, as a student of Gies, I have to get into one. And I know seniors who still, that aren't in them, who still say that they wish that they would have been in one. And I would say if I weren't I probably would, too. But being in one, I think that once you get to be an upperclassman that kind of sense of competing of who's having more fun or who's in a better organization goes away and you are more focused on your relationships within the organizations.

Both members and non-members described issues with diversity and inclusion in professional business fraternities. Members described recruitment processes that relied heavily upon members' evaluation of candidates for "social fit, seeing if you could see that person in your organization," as David said. He discussed selection biases that affected recruitment processes and acknowledged that it was impossible to fully remove bias from anything, offering

that "I think a lot of these organizations are taking steps towards removing bias and becoming more inclusive." He went on to say that the emphasis on social fit had changed significantly for his organization, specifically,

> I think social fit, from my experience, it's changed, taken a 180, I would say, from my freshman year. I think that diversity and inclusion within organizations, specifically for [professional business fraternity] has been something we've been much more conscious of in the recruitment process. One thing I know we tried to do was take some of our postcards to cultural houses. And as well as postcard and do table talks, which are just setting up a booth and meeting people. Typically, we only did that at BIF, but to attract a broader horizon, different students, we then started going to the Ike (residential complex), which is a way to reach more freshmen. But then we also started, my first semester on the executive board, doing this at PAR (residential complex), which houses a much more diverse population of students at U of I. So I think it's changed a lot, but I think social fit, for some people, is definitely trying to recruit people that are like you, which I think, for the better, transitioned more into it should be about finding people who aren't like you to make your organization more diverse. But I do think there are organizations that are still focused primarily on recruiting students that they think are exactly like them and would fit directly into their organization.

Several students who are not business fraternity members had a shared perspective on their desire to be included in these organizations as freshmen. Leo specifically said,

> They do a great job at marketing and making themselves present on those first couple of weeks that you're on campus. It's very attractive as a freshman looking to find a solid kind of community and involvement, and it's got a lot of allure because you start right

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away. You want to be part of that kind of prestigious group where you see a lot of involvement socially and professionally.

In addition to Leo's participation in business fraternity recruitment, Monica, Daniel, Matthew, and Jamie all shared that they participated in business fraternity recruitment in their first semester as Gies College of Business students (which was sophomore year for Daniel, an inter-college transfer student from the Grainer College of Engineering). Some students participated in business fraternity recruitment unsuccessfully for two consecutive semesters. While also seeking the access and status that came with business fraternity membership, each of these five non-member students expressed a desire to find community, build relationships, and participate in service activities with other Gies College of Business students.

As the only study participant who did not participate in business fraternity recruitment, Jada shared a different perspective than the other non-members. She shared, "when I realized who were in the fraternities, they were also my friends already. So I was like, yeah, we're fine. I don't need another thing to tell me that I'm part of a group."

Support

Each participant described feelings of stress, anxiety, or pressure that affected their undergraduate student experience. All twelve of the students identified support systems that they chose as a community where they could share their vulnerabilities, ask for help, or seek support for decision-making. While every participant noted that friends within Gies and outside of Gies were part of their support systems, ten of the twelve students named their families of origin when describing their support systems.

When family of origin was not mentioned, these participants cited difficult relationships, cultural pressure to withhold or suppress emotions, or in one case, disappointment that the

student chose business instead of a science or engineering major for undergraduate study. Jamie indicated reliance on her peer group because she believed that her family was "more of an emotional support system, but not as much of an expert in what college life may entail or what curriculum may entail."

Sense of Belonging

Business fraternity members identified their positive feelings regarding their sense of belonging to their organization multiple times in each interview. The sense of belonging to a community that was invested in their success was identified by the below participants,

I had never heard about business fraternities before coming to college and I think I barely understood what they were when I was already in one. I was definitely kind of flying blind but just doing it because the crowd was doing it, my friends were doing it. It was highly talked about. – Caroline

I think [professional business fraternity] has had the biggest impact on my student experience. I think that my involvement, whether it be a more technical organization or something that's more social, like a business frat, I think that's how you find your circle. That's how you find your people. And not just within those organizations, but they help you connect with other people. And so by being in [professional business fraternity], it's helped me meet other people in [named other four business fraternities], I mean, purely just through networking. So I think it's had the biggest impact. These are the people I'm going to live with after graduation, the people whose weddings that I'm going to attend, hopefully they'll attend my wedding. – Kelly

"I think the business fraternities at Gies make a huge difference in student experience. I'm sure people have fantastic experiences at the University of Illinois without being in

any type of fraternity, business or social, but, I think you get automatically accepted in

this little community of 100-plus people and you just get a chance to fully immerse

yourself right away. And so I think I'm a pretty shy person, or was when I got to college,

and through [professional business fraternity], built my confidence each semester. –

William

Non-members also reflected upon the focus on Gies College of Business RSOs,

specifically business fraternities, and the impact on their own sense of belonging. Jamie said,

That's something that's made really clear freshman year from the Business 101 classes,

from professors, from any mentors you talk to, they'll talk about the RSOs. I think there's

definitely a competitive air around it. So business fraternities, business consulting, or

anything that did require an application, it definitely felt like that was the main sort of

business organization people could join. I did apply and rush business fraternities, but I

ended up doing [non-fraternity organization] as my main RSO. In that one, I found

enough fulfillment with experiences and community that that's what I stuck with, as well

as the community aspect and networking aspect from another type of organization.

Several of the business fraternity members opted to deactivate their membership in social

Greek organizations specifically because of their involvement in professional business

fraternities. Of the six business fraternity members interviewed, four were also involved in

social fraternities or sororities and three of the four deactivated from their social Greek

organizations prior to their senior year in favor of their involvement with their professional

business fraternity. This was explained by the below participants,

Joining [social fraternity] first, I kind of found my niche there and it was a lot more like-

minded people as me. My fraternity was a lot of people that I'm still friends with, but I

think I just meshed a little bit more within [professional business fraternity] and felt more comfortable. – David

I was in a sorority and I dropped it junior year. I feel like people who rush business fraternities in the fall normally tend to be closer to their business fraternity friends than their social sororities. I think that's why I ended up dropping the sorority. It's a lot of people to narrow down into one friend group. – Caroline

I was involved in a sorority, but I ended up dropping for my senior year just because I feel like I was more involved in my College of Business activities and I didn't really have time for it. – Megan

Support Systems

The six business fraternity members all mentioned their business fraternity friends first in response to my question about their sources of support. Megan commented, "honestly, throughout the four years, having people who are my age and also older who can kind of look after you has been a really cool support system."

All six of the non-members shared a variety of on-campus sources of support, including friends within Gies and outside of Gies, friends through RSOs in other areas of campus, friends they originally met in high school or in their freshman year housing, advisors, and faculty. Non-white students also referenced racial identity based RSOs that aided them in making connections and building relationships on campus.

Two non-members specifically shared how important their childhood friendships were to them for support in college. Both acknowledged that the proximity of this support was possible because their suburban Chicago high schools send large numbers of students to UIUC each year. Matthew remarked,

I have one friend of mine in particular who I've known since middle school, maybe grade school. I probably confide in him the most, along with some of my other high school friends. Now that I'm thinking about it, it's probably just because I've known him the longest.

Leo, another non-member participant, stated this his strong support system both on-campus and off-campus "put me in a position to help my friends that might not have had that." He described his friendships with international students and would regularly offer to drive them to the grocery store, as well as his efforts to care for his friends by bringing food to BIF for late-night study sessions, saying "I could be that support, which was really nice to be able to do in turn." Leo acknowledged his immense privilege in his support systems, saying that "having those strong support systems really made – I never felt super overwhelmed. I never had like, I'm freaking out at one in the morning kind of crisis because I always had people around me that were able to help."

Conclusion

This chapter described study findings organized by theme. The next chapter includes a summary of findings that describe the phenomenon of access and status within an undergraduate business school. Following this summary, key findings and associated implications for theory, research, and practice are identified.

CHAPTER FIVE: RESEARCH DISCUSSION

The purpose of this dissertation was to explore student perceptions of differential access and status based on participation within professional business fraternities. This chapter provides a summary of overall findings. The chapter begins with a description of research findings, which are discussed within salient components of the theoretical frameworks followed by the identification of key contributions of the study. Finally, implications for future research, policy, and practice are presented. This section concludes with an overall summary of the dissertation.

Discussion

This study finds evidence of student involvement directly influencing the student experience, and more specifically, the quality of student involvement leading to the quality of outcomes at the conclusion of the undergraduate experience. All twelve participants in the study had achieved a placement outcome, meaning that they had accepted a full-time job offer or an offer of graduate program admission. Even for high-achieving students in a highly ranked and competitive business school environment, it was surprising to find a group of students who had all secured a first destination in the midst of a global pandemic.

In addition, it is important to reiterate the context of this study before discussing the findings. The study sought to understand student perceptions of differential access and status based on participation within selective co-curricular organizations. Because of unforeseen circumstances, the study was conducted during a global pandemic. Students were under extreme stress to complete their coursework, perform well on their final exams, and maintain their previously secured first destination employment or graduate school decisions in the midst of uncertainty and an abrupt shift to online learning. While the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic

was not the focus of this study, it is important to recognize that the context of the ongoing

pandemic undoubtedly shaped the study findings.

Student Experience

A thematic analysis of data using Astin's student involvement theory (1984) as a

framework identified five sub-themes that contributed to the undergraduate busines student

experience: business fraternity culture, professional development, student involvement decision-

making, status, and academics.

Business Fraternity Culture. Ten participants specifically used the phrase "business

fraternity culture" to describe a phenomenon within the Gies student experience and the

remaining two participants described the phenomenon without using this terminology and

without prompting during the interviews. The pervasiveness of business fraternity culture is a

finding where both of the theoretical frameworks used to analyze this research are quite

applicable. Astin's theory of student involvement (1984) connects desired higher education

outcomes to the growth and development experienced by college students as a result of their co-

curricular involvement. Business fraternity members indicated that their growth and

development as college students was driven by their fraternity involvement, from choosing a

major, deciding on additional campus involvement, and eventually choosing a first destination

after graduation.

Bourdieu's concept of habitus (1977), a system of common perceptions and experiences

held by members of the same group that define an individual's expectations, goals, attitudes, and

futuristic thinking, applies directly to business fraternity culture. Business fraternity members

indicated that common experiences defined their undergraduate experience and that their own

thinking, attitudes, and goals were directly shaped by their fraternity involvement. This habitus

was influenced by access to opportunities and resources, as well as support from their fraternity affiliation and overall sense of belonging, also shaped by their fraternity membership. Non-members occasionally shared similar insights about their own involvement on campus, but the depth and breadth of the business fraternity habitus simply did not apply to their self-reported experiences.

Professional Development. Consistent with the findings of Bachrach et al. (2017), professional business fraternities were perceived as the primary source for professional development education in the Gies College of Business. As Nilsson noted (2010), employers believe that business schools bear the responsibility of hard employability skill development, industry content knowledge, as well as soft skill capacity-building This study identified clear gaps for the Gies College of Business to address professional development for students who are not affiliated with professional business fraternities or other selective co-curricular organizations, which is most Gies students.

Student Involvement. Participants suggested that their co-curricular involvement was more valuable than their academic coursework, with multiple participants directly stating that they benefited more from out-of-classroom learning than their classes. This aligns with study findings that indicate that student involvement, engagement, and development are all linked with academic outcomes (A. W. Astin, 1993; Biddix et al., 2014; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). Additionally, student learning is deepened when students are engaged in "a variety of educationally purposeful activities" (G. D. Kuh, 2003, p. 25). Additionally, Astin's (1984) theory of student involvement argues that the quality and quantity of involvement are correlated with student learning and development, which aligns with both business fraternity member and non-member descriptions of their own experiences.

Status. Business fraternities were identified as the primary source of status within the Gies College of Business by non-members and fraternity members acknowledged their status through discussions about opportunities, resources, and career development. This corresponds with Bourdieu's (1977) theory of social reproduction, which describes how the status quo is upheld and how inequality is reproduced over subsequent generations. Participants acknowledged that business fraternities shape the values and norms of the Gies student body and members described actions taken to ensure that each new member or pledge class was specifically developed in the [organization] way. These practices, combined with other gatekeeping tactics, ensure that only select students have access to status-based opportunities or rewards, which aligns with several studies on the impact of social class on the college experience (Horowitz, 2013; Stuber, 2006; Stuber et al., 2011).

Business fraternity members and non-members who were first-generation college students described a lack of awareness upon arrival to campus. Members mentioned relying on their business fraternities for guidance on assimilation and decision-making, whereas non-members depended on roommates, friends, and other connections to guide them. Three first-generation participants mentioned family members who did not understand their college experiences, which aligns closely with research indicating that upper-middle-class students are oriented toward sociality and first-generation students are oriented toward academic obligations (Bergerson, 2007; Stuber, 2006). This also corresponds with a study that found that students from affluent families dominate access to selective co-curricular opportunities on college campuses (Plominski & Burns, 2018).

In a study of the history of fraternity membership, Syrett (2018) found that fraternal organizations faced increases in membership and in number of organizations beginning in the

1920s, which resulted in less exclusivity and the admission of non-white, Jewish, and Catholic students into fraternities willing to welcome them. Syrett (2018) also notes that this led to new hierarchies in the status of social Greek-letter organizations on college campuses and that fraternity members believed that their talent and popularity resulted in the right to dominate campus life. While study participants did not make overt comparisons to this phenomenon, their comments on business fraternity status within Gies student life align closely with Syrett's research. Business fraternity members and non-members made comments about registered student organization hierarchies and agreed that business fraternities were by far the most prestigious organizations within Gies.

Academics. This study focused on co-curricular involvement, but academics were discussed as an important component of the undergraduate student experience. All twelve participants commented on how seriously they took their studies and how hard they worked to maintain high grades and remain competitive for the most selective employment opportunities. One participant, a business fraternity member, was eligible for the university's Bronze Tablet honor, which recognizes students in the top 3% of the graduating class, and he spoke of this with humility. This focus on academic success does not align with studies that describe how socializing is prioritized over academics in fraternal organizations (Brubacher & Rudy, 1976; Maisel, 1990).

Perceptions of Access

The habitus associated with a highly selective undergraduate business program was influenced by access to opportunities, physical spaces, and resources, and this affected students' perceptions of access (Bourdieu, 1977). All twelve participants described their perceptions of access to opportunities, networks, resources, services, and other benefits that were not accessible

to the entire Gies undergraduate student population. Additionally, the six business fraternity

members cited this access as primary reasons for joining their respective organizations and the

five non-members who participated in business fraternity recruitment

Career. Students affiliated with many types of fraternal organizations expect career

preparation as a benefit of group membership, including access to private alumni networks that

can support career decision-making (Bureau & Koepsell, 2017; Long, 2012). Consistent with

findings that student involvement has an impact on early earnings and employability skills that

are enhanced through fraternal organization membership, all twelve participants reported first

destination placement with salaries in excess of national averages (Hu & Wolniak, 2010; Long,

2012; Pike & Askew, 1990; *The NACE First-Destination Survey*, n.d.).

Physical Spaces. Participants discussed the College's physical spaces, particularly the

Business Instructional Facility atrium, as a visible divide between business fraternity members

and non-members. The business fraternity members described the atrium as a space to

congregate with friends, collaborate on projects or assist students who need help, study for

exams, or otherwise socialize between classes or in the evenings. Non-members painted a very

different picture of this space and described it as visibly divided: tables "belonging" to business

fraternities and stratification between organizations' members and the rest of the student body.

Inclusion/Exclusion. Social fraternities and sororities control access to status-based

opportunities, perpetuating social reproduction on campus and increasing material rewards for

access to valuable positions (Stuber et al., 2011). In addition, organizations serve as a source of

community stratification when their social power creates access and status (Horowitz, 2013;

Stuber, 2006). This study highlighted perceptions of the access and status obtained through

business fraternity membership, particularly the rewards of inclusion and the barriers of exclusion.

Support

       All twelve participants described their support systems on-campus and off-campus, and indicated how critical support was for their emotional well-being and their academic success. In particular, participants described their academic-social integration and named specific support systems that impacted their undergraduate experiences.

       Sense of Belonging. Business fraternity members identified their satisfaction with academic-social integration and their sense of belonging as positive feelings in each interview, consistent with existing literature (Davis et al., 2019; Farrell et al., 2018; Hoffman et al., 2002; Yosso et al., 2009). While non-members identified other experiences at UIUC as formative for their college experience, all six business fraternity members identified their fraternity membership as transformative experiences specifically because of the integration of involvement, engagement, and affiliation, which corresponds with Hurtado and Carter's (1997) findings from several major studies in higher education.

       Support Systems. When asked about support systems, the six business fraternity members all named their business fraternity as their primary source of support on campus. Conversely, non-members named roommates, friends from classes, or friends from other organizations as their primary sources of on-campus support. This finding from business fraternity members closely aligns with UIUC's five business fraternities' shared value of brotherhood or social relationships (*Alpha Kappa Psi*, 2019; *Delta Sigma Pi*, 2019; *Illinois Business Council*, 2019; *Phi Chi Theta*, 2019; *Phi Gamma Nu*, 2019). Additionally, this ties to

the concept that "much of college is developmentally dedicated to a broadening sense of self in the context of others" (Dugan & Komives, 2010, p. 539).

Key Contributions

Students expressed a range of perspectives regarding access, status, and the undergraduate business student experience through the lens of professional business fraternity member or non-member status. Participants described their undergraduate student experiences as transformative, essential, or critical for their personal and professional development; those who are members of professional business fraternities attributed that growth to their fraternal organization membership.

This study contributes to the literature on the undergraduate business student experience in three important ways. First, this study analyzed the student experience at a highly ranked large public university business school through the lens of professional business fraternity membership or non-membership status. At this time, there are large gaps in the literature on academic or professional fraternal organizations and students' experiences while being included or excluded from those organizations.

Second, this study identified the importance of support systems and the emphasis on a sense of belonging for this population. It is critical to note that the context of the study taking place in the midst of a global pandemic may have influenced the reliance on and importance of support systems for the participants. However, all twelve participants described instances of relying on their support systems before the pandemic impacted them directly.

Finally, this study identified the influence of business fraternity membership on student experiences at a highly ranked large public university business school. Student leadership development is most significantly impacted by peer interaction and group affiliation has emerged

as a particularly important context for college student leadership development (A. W. Astin, 1993; Dugan, 2008; G. D. Kuh, 2003). This study specifically identifies the important role that business fraternities play and the influence on student life within highly selective undergraduate business schools.

Implications for Theory

Eleven of the twelve students interviewed participated in recruitment processes for the College's professional business fraternities; six were invited to join a fraternity and the remaining five were unsuccessful. Astin's (1984) theory of student involvement argues that involvement requires an investment of both psychosocial and physical energy and that involvement is continuous, while also varying from student to student. Each of the non-member participants described how they redirected their energy and involvement away from their business fraternity aspirations once they experienced their final rejections from the recruitment process.

All twelve participants described their co-curricular involvement as a critical element of their student experience and believed that the Gies College of Business actively encouraged involvement within and outside of College-recognized student organizations. Participants indicated that access and status achieved through co-curricular involvement (e.g., business fraternities, selective co-curricular organizations) was more meaningful to them than that of selective cohort programs (e.g., Gies Honors Programs, Hoeft Technology and Management Minor, or the Golder Finance Academies) or non-selective opportunities.

Several participants mentioned "fit" as an important characteristic for organization selection and membership in Gies. These comments can be connected directly to the literature on social reproduction and social capital. Students are eager to befriend, mentor, and develop

students who are like them. Within selective programs and organizations where students have a say in admissions decisions, it is important to analyze these decisions through a Bourdieuian lens (1977). Higher education should promote social mobility and provide opportunities for each subsequent generation to outperform that of their parents. Instead, patterns of social reproduction are evident here instead, which can be harmful to students from underrepresented groups, particularly those from lower socioeconomic classes.

Implications for Research

The study findings identified three main themes, and areas of future research emerged from each theme. Given the dearth of literature on academic or professional fraternal organizations, this is an important area of research for exploration. Astin's (1984) student involvement theory continues to be particularly relevant for research that seeks to further understand the impact of student involvement decision-making on the undergraduate student experience across institutional contexts.

In addition, there are gaps in the literature on career readiness, specifically *who* is preparing students for their first destination upon graduation. While career development scholarship is robust, the role of students informally preparing each other for their first destinations is another important area of research for exploration. This topic should be explored in the context of informal preparation through individual relationships and student organizations, rather than through the lens of organized programs such as peer career advising.

Another area of future research to explore is student retention within highly selective institutions or academic programs when the student does not develop a sense of belonging right away. Existing scholarship on students' sense of belonging shaped this study; this scholarship has evolved over time and specifically addresses issues of race and class (Bollen,

K. & Hoyle, 1990; Davis et al., 2019; Hurtado & Carter, 1997; Tinto, 1987). However, there is a gap when it comes to understanding the experiences and trajectories of high-performing students at highly selective institutions who are then denied opportunities (perhaps for the first time in their lives) that come with a significant amount of access and status. Future studies could examine the role of race, including the historical foundations of relevant organizations, and the perspectives of members and non-members who identify as part of an underrepresented racial minority group.

Finally, there are gaps in the literature regarding college students' self-selected support systems. Current literature has focused on campus support for students engaged in distance learning, support services for college students, and self-selected team dynamics. However, there is an opportunity to engage in research on how and why students choose their support systems and the implications of support systems that result from selective recruitment processes or that limit access, such as social or professional fraternal organizations.

Implications for Policy and Practice

Study participants defined access and status within the Gies College of Business differently from administrators, which has numerous implications for practice. Gies administrators frequently create programs and services based on what they believe students need or want from College-level offices. However, participants made it clear that they view access and status through the College's business fraternities rather than through College-managed co-curricular programs or other co-curricular opportunities.

Student Services

One implication for professional practice is the need for undergraduate business school student services offices to serve the professional and personal development needs of students

whose needs are not being met through their co-curricular involvement. The Gies College of Business depends on its business fraternity organizations to develop student leaders and has significant investments in programs and outreach for students at-risk. However, the remaining student population is not served by specific at-risk intervention or programs for the most traditionally successful students, including co-curricular organizations or specific staff or faculty resources. As Astin noted,

> College administrators are constantly preoccupied with the accumulation and allocation of fiscal resources; the theory of student involvement, however, suggests that the most precious institutional resource may be student time…the extent to which students can achieve particular developmental goals is a direct function of the time and effort they devote to activities designed to produce these gains. (A. W. Astin, 1984, p. 522)

In addition, participants commented on the physical spaces occupied by the College, particularly the Business Instructional Facility and its atrium. Business fraternity members believed it was an important gathering place, while non-members reported feelings of intimidation and unwelcome, particularly as freshmen and sophomores, based on how the atrium tables were commandeered by student groups. The College should keep this feedback in mind when designing future construction or enacting policies for space usage. In addition, current space usage policies should be evaluated to ensure that the College's public spaces are as accessible as possible to all Gies students.

Diversity and Inclusion

Diversity and inclusion is a systemic University-wide and College-wide issue. In the Fall 2019 semester, self-reported student data indicated that 3.2% of Gies students identified as African-American and 9.2% as Hispanic (*Enrollment by Curriculum, Race, Sex, Residency*,

2019). Student organizations across Gies remain woefully underpopulated by historically minoritized students and should intentionally examine their processes through a diversity, equity, and inclusion lens.

One challenge with student organizations where students design the selection process, recruit and select new members, and intentionally develop accepted members to meet organizational standards is homogeneity, which can be connected to Bourdieu's concept of social reproduction (1977). However, access to a diverse student body that represents the people of Illinois will also have an impact on selective student organization practices. Within Gies, diversity and inclusion need to improve across all registered student organizations and across the college's population, starting with student admissions and recruitment practices and outcomes.

There is also an opportunity to focus on students' sense of belonging. Student services staff could invite students who were excluded from the business fraternities but desire significant involvement experiences to become involved in other robust organizations. All six non-member participants discovered involvement opportunities outside of Gies after being rejected by (or choosing not to participate in the selection process for) the organizations with the most status; social reproduction must be addressed, and access and inclusion must be improved within these selective organizations. This aligns with Hoffman, Richmond, and Morrow's finding that students' sense of belonging is derived from perceptions of valued involvement in college, which specifically includes establishing "functionally supportive peer relationships" (2002, p. 251). Hoffman et al. found that when students developed relationships upon which they could rely to provide mentorship, guidance, feedback, and a network of mutual obligation, their resilience increased and their comfort in the campus environment improved (2002).

Oversight

UIUC manages all registered student organizations through a central office, but maintains no formal affiliation with any student organization. The same is true within Gies College of Business; while all five business fraternities and numerous other organizations are recognized by and affiliated with the College, the affiliation is loose and does not come with any formal oversight. The business fraternity chapters on campus would benefit from stronger local advising, a deeper affiliation with and accountability to the Gies College of Business and UIUC, and stronger oversight from national offices, where applicable. This should include risk management, financial compliance, corporate sponsorship disclosure, and support for diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives.

Collaborative Practices

Within Gies College of Business, the five business fraternities operated within strict siloes for many years, a nod to their sense of competition over the college's top students. As some of the organizations have expanded to included non-business students and as new member recruitment continues to grow more competitive, the fraternities have worked together to establish common recruiting timelines, non-competing information sessions, and a shared bid process. The organizations also host a shared barn dance each semester that is typically the most attended occasion on the Gies social calendar.

In response to some of these issues, Gies created and supports the Council of Presidents, a college-wide effort to encourage collaboration and support between Gies-affiliated student organizations. However, Gies could encourage further collaboration and resource sharing between the business fraternities, including regular meetings with chapter presidents and advisors or support for collaborative programming opportunities between two or more business

fraternities. In addition, Gies could provide additional supports for registered student organization advisors with particular attention to the business fraternity advisors for risk management purposes.

The experiences of students within the study highlight the need to provide social, academic, and professional development support for the entire student body and not just the academically gifted and strong leaders, or students at risk of academic probation or stopping out. Students who are involved outside of the College or who spend their time working or pursuing other interests can appear forgotten in the current program and staffing models. The College's academic advising team serves all students; however, there is room to improve advising services, comprehensive and targeted student programming, accessibility of study abroad programs, and career development education for students whose co-curricular involvement is not providing those resources.

Summary of the Dissertation

The purpose of this dissertation study was to explore student perceptions of differential access and status based on participation within selective co-curricular organizations. The findings identified three key themes: perceptions of the undergraduate student experience, perceptions of access, and student support. Participants perceived "business fraternity culture" as a commonly understood and predominant concept that shaped the Gies undergraduate business student experience, and noted professional development, student involvement, and perceptions of status as other factors influencing the student experience.

Participants also shared perceptions of access to networks, resources, and opportunities as a primary factor in their student involvement decision-making, while feelings of inclusion or exclusion shaped how they felt about their experience. In addition, students graduating in the

midst of a global pandemic described their support systems both within and outside of their families of origin, relying heavily on peers for support in navigating college experiences and career decision-making. Primary implications from the study include the critical need to expand diversity and inclusion within highly selective student programs and organizations and the need for further study on academic or professional fraternal organizations.

Conclusion

"Whenever bodies of young men have been gathered together, more or less permanently, they have tended to separate into groups based upon kindred tastes, aims, interests or other causes" (Birdseye, 1907, p. 208). Fraternal organizations have been a substantive part of undergraduate student life since their inception more than two centuries ago. Despite existing for more than two centuries in an ever-evolving landscape of higher education, fraternal organizations of all types continue to attract and advance students who are predominantly white and from middle- and upper-class backgrounds. Fraternal organization membership is rich in tradition and progress but must continue to evolve in order to promote cultural proficiency and create diverse and culturally responsive spaces within a racialized campus climate. Business fraternities, in particular, are critical partners in shaping the undergraduate business student experience and must address perceptions of access and status throughout the student population.

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APPENDIX A: RECRUITMENT EMAIL

Seniors Needed for a Research Study!

Are you a senior and a Gies Business student expecting to graduate in May 2020 or August 2020? Are you willing to participate in a single one-hour interview via Zoom about your experiences as a Gies College of Business student? If yes, please e-mail Jana Lithgow at jlithgow@illinois.edu and indicate your interest in an interview. Interviews with selected participants will take place on Zoom at a time that is convenient for you. Volunteers who complete interviews will receive a $25 Amazon.com gift card.

APPENDIX B: INTEREST EMAIL

Good afternoon,

Thank you for your interest in participating in an interview for my doctoral dissertation study. My study is restricted to Gies College of Business seniors who are graduating in May 2020 or August 2020. If you fit these parameters and are still interested in being considered for participation, please complete this survey at the link below as soon as possible to indicate your availability and some demographic data. Please keep in mind that this survey is completely voluntary, and you are under no obligation to complete it.

If you are selected, I will contact you to schedule an interview. If you are not selected, I will contact you and let you know. I appreciate your interest in my study and wish you all the best on your final exams!

Survey: https://forms.gle/GxNTZSvMzcQ76Lsa8

Thank you in advance for your assistance.

All the best,
Jana

APPENDIX C: INTEREST SURVEY

Dissertation Study Interest

Thank you for your interest in participating in my doctoral dissertation study. Please complete the survey below to indicate your availability and some demographic data. If you are selected, I will contact you to schedule an interview. If you are not selected, I will contact you and let you know.

If selected, you will be asked to consent to a recorded video interview and will be compensated with a $25.00 Amazon.com gift card.

Please keep in mind that this survey is completely voluntary and you are under no obligation to complete it. Contact me at jlithgow@illinois.edu if you have any questions or concerns.

I appreciate your interest in my study and wish you all the best on your final exams!

1. What is your name?
2. What is your Illinois.edu e-mail address?
3. What is your preferred e-mail address?
4. What is your preferred phone number?
5. What is your gender identity? (optional)
6. What is your racial identity? (optional)
7. Are you a senior in the Gies College of Business? Yes/No
8. When do you expect to graduate? May 2020/August 2020
9. Please indicate your availability for a one-hour interview on Zoom. All times are in the U.S. Central Time Zone. Please check all that apply.
   - Monday, May 4: 7:00-8:00 p.m.
   - Monday, May 4: 8:15-9:15 p.m.
   - Tuesday, May 5: 7:00-8:00 p.m.
   - Tuesday, May 5: 8:15-9:15 p.m.
   - Wednesday, May 6: 7:00-8:00 p.m.
   - Wednesday, May 6: 8:15-9:15 p.m.
   - Thursday, May 7: 3:00-4:00 p.m.
   - Thursday, May 7: 4:00-5:00 p.m.
   - Monday, May 11: 7:00-8:00 p.m.
   - Monday, May 11: 8:15-9:15 p.m.
   - Tuesday, May 12: 1:30-2:30 p.m.
   - Tuesday, May 12: 2:45-3:45 p.m.
   - Tuesday, May 12: 4:00-5:00 p.m.
   - Tuesday, May 12: 7:00-8:00 p.m.
   - Tuesday, May 12: 8:15-9:15 p.m.
   - Thursday, May 14: 12:30-1:30 p.m.
   - Thursday, May 14: 1:45-2:45 p.m.

- Thursday, May 14: 3:00-4:00 p.m.
10. Are you a member of a business fraternity? These organizations include: AKPSi, Business Council, DSP, PCT, and PGN. Yes/No
11. Please indicate your business fraternity affiliation.

APPENDIX D: SCHEDULING EMAIL

Dear (First Name),

Thank you for your interest in my dissertation study and for completing the availability survey that I sent to you last week. I am writing today to invite you to schedule a one hour interview at a mutually convenient time. According to your availability, it looks like (DATE at TIME) will work for you. Please respond to confirm this still fits your schedule. Once I hear from you confirming our interview time, I will send you a link to a private Zoom meeting room.

When our Zoom meeting begins, I will go over the interview process with you, including how you will receive your Amazon.com gift card. At that time, I will ask you to consent to having your interview recorded for research purposes. I will ask you questions about your experiences as a Gies student and I expect the interview to last approximately one hour.

Please let me know if you have any questions. I look forward to speaking with you soon!

All the best,
Jana Lithgow
Doctoral candidate, College of Education

Online consent form: https://forms.gle/vmF1SH48uVNxLYJn8

APPENDIX E: INFORMED CONSENT

You are being asked to participate in a research study. Researchers are required to provide a consent form such as this one to tell you about the research, to explain that taking part is voluntary, to describe the risks and benefits of participation, and to help you to make an informed decision. You should feel free to ask the researchers any questions you may have.

Principal Investigator Name and Title: Eboni Zamani-Gallaher, PhD

Department and Institution: Education Policy, Organization and Leadership, UIUC

Address and Contact Information: 380 Education, 1310 S. Sixth St., Champaign, IL 61820, ezamanig@illinois.edu

Sponsor: This research is supported by the Robert P. Larsen Grant for Research in Career Development from The Career Center at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

What procedures are involved?
The study procedures are the 12 interviewees will be interviewed in private Zoom meeting rooms. Each participant will be assessed for their comfort level and interest in a confidential conversation. Each interviewee will be interviewed on one occasion for approximately 60 minutes. The research will be conducted in May 2020 in the aforementioned virtual spaces. Follow-up interviews may be scheduled in the event of interruptions or technical difficulties; there is no formal follow-up interview planned.

This research will be performed in confidential Zoom meeting rooms. You will need to participate one time. Each interview will last approximately one hour.

Will my study-related information be kept confidential?
We will use all reasonable efforts to keep your personal information confidential, but we cannot guarantee absolute confidentiality. When this research is discussed or published, no one will know that you were in the study. But, when required by law or university policy, identifying information may be seen or copied by: a) The Institutional Review Board that approves research studies; b) The Office for Protection of Research Subjects and other university departments that oversee human subjects research; c) University and state auditors responsible for oversight of research; d) The Career Center at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, the funder of this research.

Will I be reimbursed for any expenses or paid for my participation in this research?
You will receive a $25 Amazon.com gift card at the conclusion of your participation in this research. An electronic gift card will be sent to your Illinois e-mail address following your interview.

Can I withdraw or be removed from the study?
If you decide to participate, you are free to withdraw your consent and discontinue participation at any time. Your participation in this research is voluntary. Your decision whether or not to

participate, or to withdraw after beginning participation, will not affect your current or future dealings with the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

The researchers also have the right to stop your participation in this study without your consent if they believe it is in your best interests or you were to object to any future changes that may be made in the study plan.

Will data collected from me be used for any other research?

Your de-identified information could be used for future research without additional informed consent.

Who should I contact if I have questions?

If you have questions about this project, you may contact Dr. Eboni Zamani-Gallaher at 217-300-0897 or ezamanig@illinois.edu or Jana Lithgow at 217-244-3688 or jlithgow@illinois.edu. If you have any questions about your rights as a participant in this study or any concerns or complaints, please contact the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign Office for the Protection of Research Subjects at 217-333-2670 or via email at irb@illinois.edu.

Please print this consent form if you would like to retain a copy for your records.

I have read and understand the above consent form. I certify that I am 18 years old or older. By clicking the "Submit" button below, I indicate my willingness to voluntarily take part in this study and to have my interview audio and video recorded.

First and Last Name (typed)

https://forms.gle/4yDn6XL2D9yqL8NB9

Interview Protocol: Undergraduate Student Access and Status within the Business School at a Public Research-Intensive Institution

This interview will be loosely structured and conversational. The questions below are for you to review and prepare to whatever extent makes you most comfortable.

I want to thank you again for your willingness to participate in this interview with me. Just to refresh your memory, I am conducting these interviews as a graduate student to learn about your experience as a student in the Gies College of Business at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

The data from these interviews will be incorporated into my dissertation, which fulfills a requirement toward completion of my doctoral degree.

The interview will last about an hour. You are not obligated to answer any question and may withdraw from this interview at any time. With your consent, this interview will be recorded. You will have the chance to approve any use of direct quotes or summary of your interview data that I wish to publish or share.

Do you agree to have your interview audio recorded?

If you have any questions regarding this interview, please do not hesitate to contact me via email or phone. Thank you once again for your willingness to participate.

Interview Questions

1. Please state your name and your preferred pronouns.
2. Please tell me about yourself. Where are you from? Where did you go to high school? What is your major and minor?
   a. Have you changed your major since you first declared it?
3. What factors led you to decide to attend the Gies College of Business?
   a. Were you directly admitted, or did you transfer into the college?
4. Can you please share your experiences with Gies College of Business student life?
   a. More specifically, what is your RSO involvement within Gies?
   b. Are you active in any RSOs outside of Gies?
   c. Have you stopped participating in any RSOs where you were once an active member? Why?
5. Are you involved in any selective programs within Gies, and if so, what are they? Selective programs for the purposes of this study include: Business Honors, Hoeft Technology and Management Minor, Golder Academies (Finance Academy, Investment Banking Academy, and Investment Management Academy).
6. Do you belong to any groups that provide service to the Gies College of Business?
   a. If so, what group and what service?
7. Have you ever volunteered for any Gies events? Why?
   a. Examples could include: Career Fair, Business Experience, Business Quad Day, New Student Welcome
8. Describe the differences you see between groups of Gies undergraduate students.

9. Are you employed in a paid or volunteer role during the academic year? If yes, please describe your position, whether it is paid, and the hours worked per week.
10. In what ways has your Gies involvement or lack thereof impacted your student experience?
11. What factors influenced your level of involvement within the Gies College of Business?
12. Can you describe any recruitment or "rush" processes that you participated in?
    a. Why did you participate in these recruitment or "rush" processes?
    b. Looking back at your experiences, would you choose to participate in recruitment or "rush" processes if you could start over as a new student?
13. What aspects of your student experience in Gies do you perceive to be within your control?
14. What aspects of your student experience in Gies do you perceive to be out of your control?
15. Describe your friends' involvement within Gies and outside of Gies.
16. Describe your support system both on-campus and off-campus.
17. What are your post-graduation plans?
    a. Please share starting salary and bonus, if applicable, as well as the city where you will be based.
18. What else would you like to add?

Thank you for supporting my dissertation research. This research will be used to complete academic requirements for my doctoral program and to inform program decisions within the Gies College of Business. Thank you for your participation!

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**OFFICE OF THE VICE CHANCELLOR
FOR RESEARCH & INNOVATION**

Office for the Protection of Research Subjects
805 W. Pennsylvania Ave., MC-095
Urbana, IL 61801-4822

Notice of Exempt Determination

February 18, 2020

Principal Investigator	Eboni Zamani-Gallaher
CC	Jana Lithgow
Protocol Title	*Perceptions of Access and Status Among Undergraduate Business Students*
Protocol Number	20614
Funding Source	Unfunded
Review Category	Exempt 2 (ii)
Determination Date	February 18, 2020
Closure Date	February 17, 2025

This letter authorizes the use of human subjects in the above protocol. The University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign Office for the Protection of Research Subjects (OPRS) has reviewed your application and determined the criteria for exemption have been met.

The Principal Investigator of this study is responsible for:
- Conducting research in a manner consistent with the requirements of the University and federal regulations found at 45 CFR 46.
- Requesting approval from the IRB prior to implementing major modifications.
- Notifying OPRS of any problems involving human subjects, including unanticipated events, participant complaints, or protocol deviations.
- Notifying OPRS of the completion of the study.

Changes to an **exempt** protocol are only required if substantive modifications are requested and/or the changes requested may affect the exempt status.

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS AT URBANA-CHAMPAIGN

IORG0000014 • FWA #00008584
217.333.2670 • irb@illinois.edu • oprs.research.illinois.edu

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**OFFICE OF THE VICE CHANCELLOR
FOR RESEARCH & INNOVATION**

Office for the Protection of Research Subjects
805 W. Pennsylvania Ave., MC-095
Urbana, IL 61801-4822

Notice of Exempt Determination

April 21, 2020

Principal Investigator	Eboni Zamani-Gallaher
CC	Jana Lithgow
Protocol Title	*Perceptions of Access and Status Among Undergraduate Business Students*
Protocol Number	20614
Funding Source	Unfunded
Review Category	Exempt 2 (ii)
Amendment Requested	Adding funding information, adding Zoom interviews
Determination Date	April 21, 2020
Closure Date	February 17, 2025

This letter authorizes the use of human subjects in the above protocol. The University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign Office for the Protection of Research Subjects (OPRS) has reviewed your application and determined the criteria for exemption have been met.

The Principal Investigator of this study is responsible for:
- Conducting research in a manner consistent with the requirements of the University and federal regulations found at 45 CFR 46.
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