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LOYOLA UNIVERSITY CHICAGO

THE IMPACT OF INVOLVEMENT IN MORTAR BOARD SENIOR HONOR
SOCIETY ON LIFELONG VIEWS OF CIVIC ENGAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO
THE FACULTY OF THE GRADUATE SCHOOL
IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

PROGRAM IN HIGHER EDUCATION

BY

DANIEL JAMES TURNER

CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

AUGUST 2012

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To the memory of my grandparents, James Howard O'Rourke,
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ABSTRACT

This study examines the impact that involvement in Mortar Board National Senior Honor Society has on lifelong views of civic engagement and leadership. Mortar Board Senior Honor Society is a collegiate honor society established in 1918 that recognizes students for their outstanding contributions to their college or university community in the areas of scholarship, leadership, and service. Involvement in campus organizations has been shown to facilitate psycho-social and cognitive development, encourage leadership involvement, and enhance students' participation in service and civic activities (Astin, 1999). This study informs the broad area of research on the impact of extracurricular involvement on college students.

Employing the qualitative research approach of phenomenology, interviews were conducted with 11 volunteers from current members of a Mortar Board Alumni chapter in the western part of the United States who had completed their undergraduate degrees 40 or more years ago. Since Mortar Board National Senior Honor Society was only open to women when these participants were college seniors, all participants were women over the age of 60 years. Semi-structured, open-ended interviews were conducted with participants to understand the impact of their collegiate Mortar Board experience.

Four conclusions were identified upon analysis of the data. First, for the group of 11 alumnae in this study, Mortar Board membership and active involvement over many

decades resulted in a high value being placed upon significant relationships that were developed among the participants which both motivated and sustained these women's engagement with Mortar Board. Second, the women in this study developed a significant sense of identity related to Mortar Board due to the reputation and perceived prestige of the organization and their selection for membership. Third, the alumnae in this study are motivated to serve by making a difference in the lives of other people. Lastly, rather than collegiate Mortar Board involvement having had significant impact on lifelong views of and participation in civic engagement and leadership, Mortar Board membership reinforce already held views of civic engagement and leadership and provided opportunities for continued community service.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

Each year thousands of students from colleges and universities across the United States are selected for membership in Mortar Board National Senior Honor Society. With the ideals of scholarship, leadership, and service, Mortar Board taps those students for membership who have exhibited high academic achievement, made contributions to their communities, and are leaders on campus. Mortar Board has recognized over 250,000 students since its founding in 1918. This study examines the impact that involvement in a senior honor society, specifically Mortar Board National Senior Honor Society, has on lifelong views of civic engagement and leadership through a qualitative approach. I was inspired to propose this study by my interactions with Mortar Board alumni past the age of 60 who have very much lived lives committed to the Mortar Board ideals of scholarship, leadership, and service and continue to do so. Having been founded as a senior honor society for women and only being open to men since 1975, Mortar Board alumni over the age of 60 are primarily retired women. Through my own involvement with Mortar Board I have had the opportunity to meet many of these women who have led extraordinary lives and continue to be involved in service and leadership roles in their communities. I am inspired by their stories of achievement, service, fellowship, and accomplishment throughout their lives and hope to better understand how

involvement in a senior honor society during their last year in college may have made a lasting impact.

Background to the Study

Institutions of higher education, and student development professionals specifically, convey the message of involvement to students even before they begin their first semester in college. Colleges and universities identify a large number of organizations available for students with which to become involved on their websites, in their recruitment materials, at new student orientation, during welcome week activities, and throughout first-year seminars and university experience courses. Students and their family members hear how involvement in student organizations will enhance students' satisfaction with their college experience, enable them to meet people and make strong connections, and increase their retention and graduation rates. Institutions posit that college is about helping students develop a sense of themselves, who they are, and what they want to do with their lives. Involvement in campus organizations has also been shown to facilitate psycho-social and cognitive development, encourage leadership involvement, and enhance students' participation in service and civic activities (Astin, 1999).

Much research has been conducted on the impact college attendance has on students. Pascarella and Terenzini (2005) have documented over 30 years of research looking at specific outcomes such as the development of verbal, quantitative, and subject matter competence; cognitive and intellectual growth; psychosocial change; attitudes and values; and moral development among others. Research has focused specifically on

outcomes related to involvement in student organizations during college. This research has examined the relationship between involvement and student development (Abrahamowicz, 1988; Astin, 1999; Gellin, 2003; Hernandez, Hogan, Hathaway, & Lovell, 1999; Moore, Lovell, McGann, & Wyrick, 1998; Terenzini, Pascarella, & Blimling, 1996), how being involved in student organizations facilitates leadership development (Cress, Astin, Zimmerman-Oster, & Burkhardt, 2001; Dugan & Komives, 2007; Kuh, 1995; Moore, Lovell, McGann, & Wyrick, 1998; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005; Posner, 2004), as well as increases in student participation and engagement in service and civic-related activities due to involvement in student organizations (Astin & Sax, 1998; Berger & Milem, 2002).

Collegiate honor societies have existed in the United States since the founding of Phi Beta Kappa in 1776 (Council for the Advancement of Standards, 2005). Honor societies are one type of student organization that continue to have a significant presence on college campuses. According to the Council for the Advancement of Standards (CAS) guidelines (2005), “the mission of College Honor Societies (CHS) is to confer distinction for high achievement in undergraduate, graduate, and professional studies; in student leadership; in service; and in research” (p. 3). Collegiate honor societies have the purpose of recognizing students for high scholastic achievement and scholarship, outstanding leadership, and commitment to service. Furthermore, some honor societies go beyond recognition and promote leadership and scholarship development and encourage active service participation.

Mortar Board Senior Honor Society is a collegiate honor society established in 1918 that recognizes students for their outstanding contributions to their college or university community in the areas of scholarship, leadership, and service. Mortar Board has collegiate chapters at 229 colleges and universities across the country and initiates close to 6,000 new members annually (Mortar Board, 2011a). Mortar Board members are some of the most involved, active, service-oriented, and high achieving student leaders on college campuses. According to its mission, Mortar Board is “a national honor society that recognizes college seniors for their achievements in scholarship, leadership and service, provides opportunities for continued leadership development, promotes service to colleges and universities and encourages lifelong contributions to the global community” (Mortar Board, 2011a). The purpose of Mortar Board as defined in the organization bylaws is:

Mortar Board, Inc., as an honor society, is an association of individuals selected for distinguished ability and achievement in scholarship, leadership and service, which recognizing the advantages of a national union of senior honor societies, has formed a national honor society, whose purpose shall be to facilitate cooperation among those societies, to contribute to the self-awareness of its members, to promote equal opportunities among all peoples, to emphasize the advancement of the status of women, to support the ideals of the university, to advance a spirit of scholarship, to recognize and encourage leadership, to provide service, and to establish the opportunity for a meaningful exchange of ideas as individuals and as a group. (Mortar Board, 2009, p. 1)

Members are selected into Mortar Board based on their involvement in student organizations, participation in civic and service activities, leadership in the campus community, and commitment to scholarship.

Mortar Board Senior Honor Society is an organization made up entirely of college seniors with the expectation of active participation. Members are expected to remain

engaged in the scholarship, leadership, and service pursuits for which they were recognized by membership in Mortar Board as well as to actively participate in the programs and activities of their chapter during their senior year. The expectation of active participation and engagement in chapter activities is what differentiates Mortar Board from other honoraries which do not necessarily expect continued involvement.

Since its inception as an honor society in 1918, Mortar Board has initiated over 250,000 members from 229 institutions of higher education across the country. Many Mortar Board alums continue to be engaged in their communities and take on leadership roles throughout their lives. Alumni describe their experience in Mortar Board as a capstone of their collegiate career and continue to be involved nationally, through local alumni chapters, or through providing financial support to Mortar Board.

Sixteen Mortar Board alumni chapters exist across the country. These chapters vary in their level of activity and involvement. The purpose of alumni chapters is to “perpetuate the ideals of Mortar Board, to assist active chapters in their programs when possible, to bring together persons of similar interests, and to sustain among all its members enduring friendships” (Mortar Board, 2011b). Alumni chapters do not have a specific expectation of participation or involvement for members of the chapter (Mortar Board, 2011b).

Research Questions

Research on the impact of involvement on college student development, leadership development, and civic engagement relates directly to the mission and purpose of Mortar Board Senior Honor Society and the characteristics of students selected for

membership. The literature provides support for the impact of involvement in student organizations on several outcomes.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this study is to examine the relationship of involvement in Mortar Board National Senior Honor Society on lifelong views of civic engagement and leadership.

Research Question One

What motivates people to remain connected to and active in an alumni chapter of Mortar Board National Senior Honor Society years after their undergraduate experience in the Society?

Research Question Two

What is the impact of active involvement in Mortar Board National Senior Honor Society on lifelong views of and participation in civic engagement and leadership?

Delimitations

This study examines the involvement in Mortar Board Senior Honor Society of current members of a Mortar Board Alumni chapter in the western part of the United States who have completed their undergraduate degrees at least 40 years ago.

Participants in this study will be at least 60 years old, female, and reside in a metropolitan area in the western United States. Participants were chosen due to proximity of the researcher and knowledge of membership in a Mortar Board Alumni chapter at least 40 years after their undergraduate graduation.

Definition of Terms

Civic engagement. Civic engagement refers to the way in which individuals are involved in their community. Developing a sense of responsibility and acting on it is how Jacoby (2009) and Komives, Lucas, and McMahon (1998) define civic engagement.

High achieving students. For the purpose of this study, high achieving college students are defined as being in the top 35% of their class. This is the criterion for an honor society to be recognized by the Association of College Honor Societies (ACHS, 2011).

Involvement. This study defines involvement in the context of the college student experience. Defined by Astin (1999), involvement is “the amount of physical and psychological energy that the student devotes to the academic experience” (p. 518).

Leadership. Leadership is defined as the ability to influence, organize, direct, and coordinate the actions and behavior of others. A leader is an agent of change (Astin & Astin, 2000; Jago, 1982; Miller, 2007).

Mortar Board member. Students are selected into Mortar Board based on their commitment to scholarship, leadership, and service. Students must be in the upper 35% of their class in terms of grade point average, have shown dedication to serving their community, and have participated in leadership roles and activities during their undergraduate collegiate experience. Membership only consists of students who have not yet finished their undergraduate degree programs, but have achieved senior standing.

Significance of Study

Mortar Board National Senior Honor Society is a student organization that brings together the notions of student development, leadership development, and civic engagement. Gaining a stronger understanding of the impact of membership in Mortar Board Senior Honor Society has implications for better understanding outcomes of membership in other honor organizations, as well as other student organizations in general. Current research has not examined specific outcomes of involvement in honor organizations. Nor has it examined significant long-term impact of membership. It is important to truly understand the mission and purpose of any given student organization to be able to clearly identify outcomes of involvement. Mortar Board has a unique place among honor societies in its purpose of recognizing students who are involved on college campuses, demonstrate leadership ability, and have a record of service and volunteerism. Mortar Board then provides opportunities for members to become involved, participate in leadership positions, and give back to the community through service and volunteerism. Active participation is expected of Mortar Board members.

Founded as a senior honor society for women, the advancement of the status of women was one of the founding purposes of Mortar Board. A similar organization for men, Omicron Delta Kappa, was founded in 1914 to promote leadership in upperclassmen (Omicron Delta Kappa, 2011). It was not until 1975 after the enactment of Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972, requiring gender equity in education, that Mortar Board opened membership to men (Mortar Board, 2011a). Mortar Board, in this respect, was an early champion of gender equality through the recognition

of outstanding academic achievement, service, and leadership in collegiate women since its founding in 1918. Examining the experiences of high achieving women who were committed to leadership and service as collegiate undergraduate members of Mortar Board National Senior Honor society will provide an understanding of gender equity as it relates to involvement and civic engagement in higher education.

Mortar Board as an organization is committed to facilitating leadership and civic engagement outcomes. All chapter presidents attend an annual national conference focused on learning more about Mortar Board and developing leadership skills. Chapters are expected to develop programming related to the ideal of leadership which may include leadership development activities. Students are encouraged to exhibit Mortar Board's ideals of scholarship, leadership, and service throughout their lives. Members are expected to continue to be engaged in their communities, participate in volunteer activities, and stand out as leaders even after their collegiate experience ends. Research examining student motivation for membership in Mortar Board as well as the impact membership has on development of views of civic engagement and leadership will provide insight into the impact of involvement of high achieving students. Mortar Board involvement presents a unique opportunity for studying the intersecting outcomes of leadership development and civic engagement in high achieving college students.

The next chapter begins with a review of relevant research addressing the outcomes of involvement in extracurricular student organizations in college, including a review of Alexander Astin's (1999) developmental theory of student involvement. It continues with an examination of leadership development by defining what is meant by

leadership, reviewing how leadership development is measured, and providing an overview of collegiate leadership development programs. The chapter concludes with a review of the research surrounding civic engagement in college students which focuses on service learning, motivation for civic engagement, and the impact of participation in service activities.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

The theoretical framework guiding this study is focused on understanding the significance of collegiate involvement, leadership development, and civic engagement. Research in these areas relates directly to the mission and purpose of Mortar Board National Senior Honor Society and the characteristics of students selected for membership. This review is structured thematically and will begin with the examination of the literature surrounding the impact of involvement on student development, move to leadership development in college students, and conclude with a review of the literature on college student civic engagement in higher education.

College Student Involvement

One of the basic principles of student affairs work in higher education and an understanding of college students is the notion that substantial, predictable changes or stages of development occur throughout a student's college experience. Many theories of student development are concerned with students' intellectual, affective, and behavioral growth throughout college (Evans, Forney, Guido, Patton, & Renn, 2010). Researchers attempt to answer the question, "In what ways and to what degree does the experience of attending college promote change in students?" (Love, 1995, p. 162). Much research and

writing have been done to explain and examine development in terms of identity (Chickering & Reisser, 1993) as well as ethical, cognitive, intellectual, and moral development (Baxter Magolda, 1992; King, 2009; Perry, 1999). The American College Personnel Association's Student Learning Imperative statement (1996) called for recognition that institutions must "create conditions that motivate and inspire students to devote time and energy to educationally-purposeful activities both in and outside the classroom" (p. 1). Other writings have focused on defining student engagement (Kuh, 2009), discussing the significance of partnerships between academic and student affairs programs (Nesheim et al., 2007), and examining the relationship between the person and environment through the campus ecology perspective (Banning, 1989). Student affairs professionals recognize the importance of extracurricular activities, including involvement in student organizations.

Much of the literature is focused on the impact that student involvement in college has on student learning and development (Astin, 1993; Foubert & Grainger, 2006; Huang & Chang, 2004; Kuh, Kinzie, Schuh, & Whitt, 2005; Light, 2001; Moore, Lovell, McGann, & Wyrick, 1998; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). But what exactly does "involvement" mean? Research has examined the impact of involvement in college on a number of outcomes (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005; Terenzini, Pascarella, & Bliming, 1996). Pascarella and Terenzini (2005) define four categories of student development outcomes according to Astin's (1973) taxonomy of college outcomes: cognitive-psychological, cognitive-behavioral, affective-psychological, and affective-behavioral. They continue to define outcomes as cognitive skills and intellectual growth,

psychosocial change, attitudes and values, moral development, educational attainment and persistence, and career and economic impacts of college (Pascarella & Terenzini). This section begins with an introduction to Involvement Theory (Astin, 1999), provides definitions of involvement from the literature, explores institutional characteristics related to student involvement in college, and concludes with a review of the literature on the relationship between student involvement and student development outcomes.

Involvement Theory

Originally published in 1984, and again in 1999, Astin proposed a developmental theory of student involvement. Astin's purpose was to create a theory of development that was easy to understand, comprehensive in nature, and useful for both the researcher and practitioner. Involvement, according to Astin (1999), "refers to the amount of physical and psychological energy that the student devotes to the academic experience" (p. 518). Astin looks at involvement from a holistic, behavioral perspective. He identifies a highly involved student as being wholly engaged in his or her college experience. This student interacts regularly with faculty and other students inside and outside of the classroom, devotes time to studying, and is involved in student organizations. A student such as this devotes much physical and psychological energy to his or her college experience.

Astin's (1999) involvement theory postulates that as student energy or involvement devoted to educational activities increases, so also does the learning and development gained from the experience. He continues by stating that the most effective educational activities are ones that maximize student involvement. It is important to note

that the involvement theory addresses how to facilitate student development rather than focusing explicitly on developmental outcomes. Development occurs in response to the amount of time or effort a student puts forth towards an educational experience. In discussing the development of his theory, Astin pointed out his research indicated involvement in fraternities and sororities, honors programs, intercollegiate athletics, ROTC, and undergraduate research projects contributed to increased rates of retention and graduation.

Involvement Defined

Astin's (1999) definition and theory of involvement are widely accepted throughout the literature. Wolf-Wendel, Ward, and Kinzie (2009) provide definitions of three key terms in the student development literature: involvement, engagement, and integration. Involvement is defined as Astin (1999) proposed in his involvement theory and is centrally focused on the student. Engagement is concerned about the combined efforts of the student to focus on purposeful activities and the institution's effort to design educationally focused activities. Finally integration looks at how a student comes to normalize the institutional attitudes and values as well as the beliefs of peers and faculty at the institution. Integration refers to institutional culture (Wolf-Wendel et al.).

Institutional Characteristics

Institutions of higher education are as diverse as the students who attend them. In addition to looking at the impact of specific student organization involvement, it may also be useful to examine how different types of institutions impact the student experience. Does attendance at a small liberal arts college impact student involvement differently

than attendance at a large public university or a regional state institution? Pike, Kuh, and Gonyea (2003) examined the impact of different types of institutions and institutional missions on student outcomes and student involvement in their college experience. Student involvement was defined as previously discussed by Astin (1999). Participants in this study involved 1,500 students who had previously completed the College Student Experience Questionnaire. According to Pike, et al., “Academic and social involvement are thought to have direct effect on gains in learning and intellectual development” (p. 245). It was found that students attending different types of universities have significantly different college experiences. “Students differed in terms of their academic involvement, social involvement, and perceptions of the college environment” (p. 255). This study found, contrary to conventional wisdom, that White male students are among the least involved category of students. First-generation students have significantly lower levels of involvement across institutions. Findings of this study concluded that differences in student learning and involvement are not primarily dependent on institutional type, but on student background and demographics.

Building on Astin’s (1999) involvement principle, Kuh (1995) interviewed seniors from institutions which were known to provide significant out-of-class opportunities for involvement and co-curricular learning. Kuh examined several outcomes based on demographic information looking specifically at five outcome domains: Interpersonal Competence, Cognitive Complexity, Knowledge and Academic Skills, Practical Competence, and Humanitarianism. The two antecedents students attributed most to changes they experienced during college were interactions with their

peers and leadership responsibilities. These two antecedents were mentioned most frequently for gains in Interpersonal Competence as well as for gains in Humanitarianism. It was found that white students related their leadership experiences to gains in Practical Competence while students of color reported more significant gains in Humanitarianism. Looking specifically at leadership activities, “For all outcome domains except Knowledge and Academic Skills, students at the large, state-assisted, and commuter institutions attributed more benefits to their leadership activities than their counterparts did at small, independent, and residential institutions” (Kuh, 1995, p. 131). Pascarella (1985) also studied the impact of institutional characteristics such as size on social integration and academic/intellectual self confidence looking specifically at data from the 1975-1977 Cooperative Institutional Research Program (CIRP) study. Social integration for students was lower at larger institutions with fewer opportunities for social interaction. Further examination of the CIRP data of 1994 by House (2000) found a slight positive correlation between student involvement and academic self concept.

Understanding the significance of co-curricular learning experiences, Kuh et al. (1991) identified several colleges and universities which had developed innovative programs to connect out-of-class experiences with in-class learning. Recognizing that college students spend a minority of their time in class, Kuh et al. focused on the impact of out-of-class activities. After providing an overview of several institutions identified as having benchmark programs to encourage and foster student involvement, several conclusions and recommendations were made for how institutions of higher education can create a culture of student involvement. Among others, Kuh et al. concluded that,

“Institutions that value and expect student initiative and responsibility encourage involvement” (p. 345), and “Institutions that recognize and respond to the total student experience encourage involvement” (p. 347). Although involvement in student organizations for college seniors is not specifically addressed, the significant impact of involvement on students’ experience is clear.

Involvement and Student Development Outcomes

A number of reviews of the literature on the effects of student involvement on student development outcomes have been conducted (Abrahamowicz, 1988; Gellin, 2003; Hernandez, Hogan, Hathaway, & Lovell, 1999; Moore, Lovell, McGann, & Wyrick, 1998; Terenzini, Pascarella, & Blimling, 1996) Gellin’s (2003) meta-analysis of the literature from 1991-2000 found that involvement in extracurricular activities has a positive impact on critical thinking. Literature reviewed by Moore et al. (1998) found, “the resounding theme in student affairs literature is that student involvement at the collegiate level does impact student development and learning” (p. 4). Outcomes associated with the literature reviewed by Moore et al. include leadership development, job placement and success, and degree completion. Terenzini et al. (1996) conclude that “students’ out-of-class experiences appear to be far more influential in students’ academic and intellectual development than many faculty members and academic and student affairs administrators think” (p. 157). The literature has found that student involvement has the potential for significant impact on development.

Hernandez et al. (1999), in their review of the research on involvement, found support for the idea that involvement in clubs and organizations is positively correlated

with student developmental outcomes and student learning. In a meta-analysis of eight studies from 1991 to 2000, Gellin (2003) found that students who were involved in student clubs and organizations made gains in critical thinking. He postulates that increases in critical thinking come from the interactions with other students with similar interests and that involvement may be critical to increases in developmental outcomes due to student commitment level. Students chose which club or organization to participate in so their commitment level to the involvement is strong. Gellin suggests strong commitment levels combined with peer interactions foster increases in critical thinking skills. He also suggested that a cumulative effect of involvement may exist. Gellin calls for examining the impact of involvement in different types of clubs and organizations. Abrahamowitz (1988) found that students who were involved in organizations “indicated significantly greater involvement than nonmembers in the library; with faculty; with course learning; with art, music, and theater; with writing; with science and technology, and with conversations” (p. 236). Involvement in student organizations was found to be a strong predictor of overall involvement in college.

Baxter Magolda (1992) looked specifically at the impact co-curricular experiences have on student intellectual development. She noted that some student affairs professionals take the position that co-curricular experiences in higher education are second to what is being learned in the classroom. Her longitudinal study of college students examined students’ reports of the impact of co-curricular involvement on their intellectual development. She argued that students’ out-of-class experiences are significant to their intellectual development and that student affairs professionals need to

see themselves as full partners in the educational mission of higher education. Baxter Magolda conducted individual interviews of 101 students each fall throughout their college career and asked them about their co-curricular experiences which included involvement in student organizations, living situation, employment, study abroad experiences, and peer relationships among others. Interviews from students were analyzed based on the stage of knowing in which they were identified to be: absolute knowing, transitional knowing, or independent knowing. One main theme identified for students in their senior year was learning how to best relate to people different from themselves. Seniors also reported that involvement in student organizations helped them develop their leadership skills and abilities. Overall, it was found that co-curricular activities challenge and therefore promote intellectual development for students in ways not encountered in the classroom.

Foubert and Grainger (2006) examined the impact of participating in leadership roles in student organizations on psychosocial development as defined by Chickering and Reisser (1993). The participants were 307 randomly selected students who completed the Student Development Task and Lifestyle Inventory (SDTLI) as they entered college, during their sophomore year, and finally during their senior year of college (Foubert & Grainger). The SDTLI measures student development on Chickering and Reisser's (1993) vectors. Student involvement in organizations was found to positively impact psychosocial development along several vectors. "Students with higher levels of involvement in student organizations reported greater levels of psychosocial development in the areas of establishing and clarifying purpose, educational involvement, career

planning, life management, and cultural participation” (Foubert & Grainger, pp. 175-178). Statistically significant differences were found between students who were not involved and students who were involved in student organizations for developmental differences identified by the SDTLI. Stronger levels of psychosocial development were also found for students who were more involved in the organization than students who solely attended meetings. This research finding supports the notion that student leaders in organizations potentially gain more developmentally than students who are not as involved. As Foubert and Grainger point out, however, leaders in student organizations may be predisposed for higher levels of psychosocial development.

Pascarella et al. (1996) examined data from the National Study of Student Learning (NSSL). The NSSL was a longitudinal study of 2,685 students from 23 institutions of higher education. The impact on cognitive development of several variables (including institutional type, demographic characteristics, and participation in various athletics and organizational activities) was examined. No difference was found between two-year and four-year institutions or between historically Black and predominately White institutions in the area of cognitive development. Teachers’ preparedness for class was found to influence cognitive development. Some types of peer interaction were found to positively influence cognitive development while involvement in intercollegiate athletics and Greek organizations was found to negatively influence cognitive development. The results of this study indicate several co-curricular factors that have significant effects on college student learning and development.

Membership in social Greek organizations is especially interesting due to student scope of involvement. Not only are students generally expected to live together in their houses, but they participate in an extensive recruitment and selection process, attend regular meetings, participate in numerous philanthropic activities, and develop strong programming focused on social interaction. Additionally, sorority and fraternity members are expected to maintain grade point averages and other standards. Pike (2003) conducted a study which focused “on the relationships among membership in a fraternity or sorority, student engagement, and educational outcomes” (p. 371). This study examined levels of engagement for Greeks compared to non-Greeks, compared levels of engagement of men to women, and looked at differences between educational outcomes of freshmen and senior college students involved in a Greek system. Pike looked specifically at results of 6,782 students from American Association of Universities institutions that participated in the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE). No difference was found between Greeks and non-Greeks on measures of institutional engagement. Seniors who were Greek were found to be more engaged than seniors who were not, while Greek seniors also reported greater gains in their academic development. The research indicated that students who were Greek reported greater gains in their personal development than non-Greeks. “The results of this research also suggest that the positive effects of belonging to a Greek organization are greater for seniors than for first-year students” (p. 377). This study lends support to the idea that involvement in Greek organizations does have significant impact on student engagement. Pike suggests this is

only a starting point for further research on the impact of involvement in Greek organizations.

Research has also focused on differences in race on outcomes of involvement for college students. Flowers (2004) looked specifically at how involvement in college impacted the experience of African American students. In this study, data from close to 8,000 African American students from nearly 200 institutions participating in the College Student Experiences Questionnaire (CSEQ) over the span of ten years were examined. The CSEQ focused on gains in five areas: understanding of the humanities and the arts; personal and social development; understanding science and technology; thinking and writing skills; and vocational preparation. A number of student involvement scales were developed including library experiences, experiences with faculty, personal experiences, and involvement with clubs and organizations among others. Although there were some positive correlations between organization involvement and student development outcomes, “taken together, these student involvement experiences did not exert a considerable influence on academic and social developmental gains for African American students” (Flowers, p. 648). Other types of involvement experiences, including library experiences and personal experiences, did have a positive impact on academic and social developmental gains for African American students in this study. The literature does not provide explanations for the limited positive gains on student development outcomes for African American students due to involvement in student organizations and clubs. Fischer (2007), however, found that “involvement in formal activities on campus contributes not only to greater satisfaction for Black and Hispanic students but also to

greater academic success” (p. 154). Potential racial differences in outcomes associated with involvement in a senior honor society should be examined. Further research and review of the literature would be needed to understand the results.

Student organizations have many different purposes including social, academic, volunteer, cultural, and recreational, among others. Holzweiss, Rahn, and Wickline (2007) conducted a study which compared outcomes of involvement in academic versus non-academic student organizations. This study pointed out the lack of research differentiating the impact of involvement by type of student organization. As defined by Holzweiss et al., academic organizations were sponsored specifically by an academic department on campus, while non-academic organizations were not. Participants included 354 students who completed a survey on their involvement. Students were asked why they decided to join the organization, why they continued to be involved, what skills or knowledge they developed through their involvement, and specifically how the organization impacted their academic achievement. Student motivation for involvement in academic organizations was primarily career and professionally oriented, while motivation for non-academic organization involvement focused on building relationships and meeting other people. In both types of organizations, students continued to stay involved due to the personal benefits they received (i.e., developing relationships, networking, etc.). Students in academic organizations focused on how involvement could be beneficial in the future, while students in non-academic organizations focused on current benefits. Students in academic organizations reported gains in a field of knowledge while students in non-academic organizations talked about the development

of specific skills such as interpersonal and leadership skills. About half of the respondents in each type of organization reported that their involvement had a positive impact on their academic performance. Main differences between these two groups seem to be that students in academic focused organizations tend to be more future oriented in their reasons for involvement than students in non-academic organizations (Holzweiss, et al.). Ferrari, Athey, Moriarty, and Applyby (2006) found that among honor society members, students who served in officer positions reported their involvement positively impacted career knowledge, skills, and opportunities. More research on the impact of involvement in honor societies is necessary to further understand the impact of serving in leadership position.

Much of the current research suggests that involvement in student organizations positively affects psycho-social and cognitive student development outcomes (Astin, 1999; Huang & Chang, 2004; Moore et al., 1998; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). However, not all studies have replicated this positive effect. Yin and Lei (2007) examined involvement of students in a hospitality program at an institution in the Midwest by looking specifically at student satisfaction with involvement and grade point average. It was found that involvement was negatively correlated to grade point average for the hospitality students in this study. It was also found that satisfaction with student activities did not increase as students became more involved. Yin and Lei discuss several implications for this finding related to preparation for graduate study and employment. The authors attribute the negative correlation to the demands of the academic program on student time and energy. Anaya (1996) found mixed results on measures of cooperative

learning for student organization involvement. Involvement in student organizations was found to increase learning in some situations while deterring learning in others.

Relatively few studies have found mixed results for involvement in student organizations.

Conclusion

The literature reviewed above overwhelmingly supports the notion that involvement has a positive impact on student development. Studies and theories have defined involvement, looked at specific outcomes such as cognitive development, psychosocial development, moral development, academic self concept, critical thinking, and academic achievement among others. The importance of being involved in extra-curricular activities and student organizations is a theme that is echoed throughout the research on student involvement. Research has examined institutional characteristics as well as student demographics and type of involvement. The literature is very robust on the impact of involvement on student development, however little, if any, research has been conducted on how involvement in honor societies impacts student developmental outcomes. The research is also limited in that it does not specifically focus on the impact of involvement on high achieving students. The current literature makes clear the different types of variables and factors to consider when undertaking a study on involvement in honor societies including institutional type and mission, student development outcomes, gender, race, student level of involvement, student level of development, and other demographic factors. Research should examine the longitudinal impact of involvement in college. How does being involved as a college student impact views of community involvement and interaction throughout one's life?

Leadership Development

The missions of many institutions of higher education include statements of commitment to helping students to develop leadership skills and abilities they will continue to practice in their professional and personal lives (Boatman, 1999; Thompson, 2006). Institutions provide many opportunities for students to become involved in a variety of leadership roles and experiences throughout their college careers (McIntire, 1989; Posner, 2004). Students learn leadership skills and participate in leadership roles both in and outside of the classroom (Astin & Astin, 2000; Logue, Hutchens, & Hector, 2005). Students participate in positions of authority in academic organizations, social and Greek organizations, intramural and intercollegiate athletics, service organizations, student government, and honor societies, among others. Students are asked to assume positions of responsibility and provide support and guidance for their peers in these organizations (Astin & Astin, 2000). In many cases student leaders are accountable for significant responsibilities such as the utilization and distribution of millions of dollars in student fees. In addition to student organization involvement, many undergraduate students participate in a variety of paraprofessional roles in college such as resident assistant, orientation leader, or tour guide where they have significant leadership responsibilities.

Institutions of higher education increasingly provide specific leadership programs to help facilitate the development of leadership skills in students (Brungardt, 1997; Cress, Astin, Zimmerman-Oster, & Burkhardt, 2001). In contrast, given their missions of helping students develop leadership skills, many institutions of higher education have

been slow to offer specific leadership development programs (Cress et al., 2001). As colleges and universities continue to create and assess leadership development programs for students, current research examines the impact of these programs on student development outcomes (Cress, Astin, Zimmerman-Oster, & Burkhardt, 2001; Dugan & Komives, 2007; Kuh, 1995; Moore, Lovell, McGann, & Wyrick, 1998; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005; Posner, 2004). McIntire (1989) makes a strong argument that student affairs professionals should take responsibility for leadership development grounded in theory for college students. Eich (2008) states that “students learn about leadership in the process of understanding themselves, others, and the world around them” (p. 186). The following section of this chapter begins with defining leadership and leadership development, reviews measures or inventories of leadership development, examines outcomes of specific leadership development activities, and finishes with a review of research related to leadership development in co-curricular activities.

Leadership, an Overview

What exactly is meant by leadership? A review of the literature provides many definitions and examples outside of higher education and few focused specifically on the college student population. Research has examined leadership from a variety of perspectives. According to Jago (1982) “Leadership is both a process and a property. The process of leadership is the use of noncoercive influence to direct and coordinate the activities of the members of an organized group toward the accomplishment of group objectives. As a property, leadership is the set of qualities or characteristics attributed to those who are perceived to successfully employ such influence” (p. 315). Astin and

Astin (2000) advocate for a collaborative approach to leadership as opposed to one based on power and authority. They define transformative leadership as “a process where there is movement – from where we are now to some future place or condition that is different” (p. 8). A leader is defined as a change agent, someone who supports and advocates for change. Miller (2007) defines leadership as, “the ability of an individual to influence the thoughts, attitudes, and behaviors of others” (p. 1). Komives, Longerbeam, Owen, Mainella, and Osteen (2006) look at leadership from a relational perspective. Relational leadership “values collaboration, ethical practices and moral outcomes, credibility, and authenticity” (Komives, et al., 2006, p. 402).

The literature on leadership development in college students generally views leadership from the perspective of transformative leadership (Astin & Astin, 2000) or relational leadership (Komives et al., 2006; Komives, Lucas, & McMahon, 1998), but other definitions of leadership also exist. According to Miller (2007), several approaches to leadership include trait, behavioral, situational, and contingency approaches, as well as approaches that examine the interaction between the leader and subordinates and transformative leadership. The trait approach looks at inherent personality characteristics of the leader, such as being outgoing or intelligent, while the behavioral approach examines what leaders do. Situational views examine leadership from the context of the influence of events while contingency approaches view leadership from the perspective of learned experiences that are relatively unchanged. Research has examined the impact of subordinates on leadership style as well as the ability for leaders to act as change agents in the transformative leadership approach (Miller, 2007). Komives et al. (1998)

state that “leadership should attempt to accomplish or change something” and that “leadership should be practiced in such a way as to be socially responsible” (p. 14).

What is the difference between leadership development, leadership education, and leadership training? Brungardt (1997) defines leadership development as “a continuous process that spans an entire lifetime” (p. 83) while leadership education includes formal training or educational activities to achieve greater levels of leadership ability.

Leadership training is defined as educational programs focused on specific outcomes.

The term “leadership development” is primarily used in the research on college students.

For the purpose of this literature review, leadership development, leadership education, and leadership training are used interchangeably. Related to understanding leadership,

Rost (1993) argues that rather than developing leaders, the focus should be on leadership development. Efforts should be spent on educating about the relational process of leadership. “Leadership is not what the leader does, but what the leaders and collaborators do together to change an organization” (Rost, 1993, p. 101).

Measures of Leadership Development

The Council for the Advancement of Standards (CAS) Guidelines for Student Leadership Programs (2009) recognize that part of the mission of higher education at many colleges and universities is to facilitate leadership development among students.

Over the past four decades, colleges and universities have moved their focus from developing the leadership of specific student organizations (i.e., fraternities, sororities, student government) to focusing on providing leadership development opportunities for all interested students. According to the CAS Guidelines for Student Leadership

Programs, “virtually every student engages in some type of activity that involves the practice of leadership” (p. 1). Leadership development focuses on helping students better understand themselves, their interactions with others, conflict, and diversity. The Council for the Advancement of Standards provides specific guidelines for how student leadership programs should be organized, developed, and conducted.

How is leadership development measured in college students? A number of instruments have been developed to examine outcomes of leadership development (Dugan & Komives, 2007; Posner, 2004; Wielkiewicz, 2000). It is interesting that Posner (2004) indicates that only two such instruments have been developed specifically for the college student population. One of these instruments is the Student Leadership Practices Inventory (S-LPI), which groups leadership practices into five categories, “Modeling the Way, Inspiring a Shared Vision, Challenging the Process, Enabling Others to Act, and Encouraging the Heart” (Posner, 2004, p. 444). The S-LPI was originally developed using student focus groups, structured interviews, and surveys of student leaders. Five categories of leadership practices emerged which reflected categories of leadership practices already identified in public/private sectors. Studies using the S-LPI have been conducted on leadership in Greek organizations, resident assistants, student orientation leaders, first-year students and retention, and leadership and Myers-Briggs Type, among others. The S-LPI has been updated using revised statements for several leadership practices. Research involving the S-LPI has indicated that students who were more involved in leadership experiences “viewed themselves as more effective leaders”

(Posner, p. 454). The S-LPI and revised S-LPI have been shown to be robust instruments for measuring student leadership practices.

The Leadership Attitudes and Beliefs Scale (LABS), developed by Wielkiewicz (2000), assesses “attitudes and beliefs about leadership in college students and others” (p. 339). Using the LABS, Wielkiewicz surveyed 676 students mainly from two small Catholic liberal arts colleges. Students responded to 86 items measuring eight dimensions of leadership which were developed through a review of the literature on leadership development: authority, relationship orientation, ethics, learning orientation, change-centered, systemic thinking, positional leadership dependence, and cooperative leadership processes. In addition to finding correlations among dimensions, a moderate effect size was found for students who participated in community service and attended cultural events. Using the results of these data, Wielkiewicz created a new scale, the LABS-III with two dimensions, hierarchical thinking and systemic thinking.

Further research has looked at the LABS-III scale in relation to a number of other validated instruments and constructs. Wielkiewicz (2002) examined the relationship between the two dimensions of the LABS-III (hierarchical thinking and systemic thinking) and other constructs including the Measure of Social Desirability, Communal Orientation Scale, and the Transparent Bipolar Inventory. Neither hierarchical nor systemic thinking were correlated with the measures of social desirability, while systemic thinking was found to be correlated with the Communal Orientation Scale. Hierarchical thinking was not correlated to personality types on the Transparent Bipolar Inventory while it was found that systemic thinking was correlated. Additionally, differences in

political beliefs were found between the two dimensions of hierarchical thinking and systemic thinking about leadership. The LABS-III was also validated against student leadership types, political beliefs, grade point average, and life-long learning (Wielkiewicz, Prom, & Loos, 2005).

Thompson (2006) administered an email version of the LABS-III to students at a private liberal arts college in the Midwest. This study asked students to indicate how eight categories of resources contributed to their leadership attitudes and beliefs. Categories of resources based on a review of the literature on involvement and leadership development were defined. “The eight resource categories were: (a) arts, entertainment, or music group; (b) coursework experiences; (c) faculty and administrative staff experiences and interactions; (d) intercollegiate (NCAA Division III) or intramural athletics; (e) internship, field experience, or off-campus study (abroad or domestic); (f) political or social organizations (e.g., student government, Greek); (g) peer experiences and interactions; (h) volunteer service” (Thompson, p. 345).

Other measures of leadership development have focused on socially responsible leadership for the common good (Dugan, 2006a). Dugan examined gender differences in leadership styles of men and women using the social change model. The social change model of leadership looks at leadership from the perspective of self-understanding and collaboration. Participants were 912 students from 100 randomly selected classes at a large public institution in the West who were administered the Socially Responsible Leadership Scale (SRLS). Mean scores on eight constructs of the social change model of leadership (consciousness of self, congruence, commitment, collaboration, common

purpose, controversy with civility, citizenship, and change) were examined for both men and women. It was found that women had higher mean scores on all eight constructs than men. Significant differences of mean scores were found for six constructs between men and women, while no significant differences were found for collaboration and controversy with civility. Women have an advantage over men when viewed through the construct of the social change model of leadership, although differences in collaboration were not found to be significant. This study finds significant differences between leadership development in men and women.

Dugan (2006b) further examined data from the previous study (Dugan, 2006a) looking at student involvement activities on the social change model of leadership. Specifically, students were asked if they were involved in community service, positional leadership roles, student organizations, and/or formal leadership programs. This study found mixed results for the impact of involvement on leadership development as measured by the SRLS. Students who engaged in community service scored at significantly higher levels of leadership on the SRLS. It was also found that non-positional student organization membership and leadership programs did not have significant influence on leadership as measured by the SRLS.

Dugan and Komives (2007) conducted the Multi-Institutional Study for Leadership examining responses to the Socially Responsible Leadership Scale (SRLS). The scope of this study was comprehensive with responses from 50,378 students across 52 colleges and universities who participated in spring 2006. Among other variables, it was found that student organization participation, involvement in formal leadership

programs, positional leadership role, and community service had significant positive impact on student leadership development as measured by the SRLS. Recommendations for students and institutions from this study include encouraging students to get involved in at least one student organization, encouraging participation in formal leadership programs, discouraging involvement in too many organizations as this had a negative impact on leadership development, facilitating mentoring relationships, and broadening leadership positions in student organizations to provide experiences for more students, among others (Dugan & Komives).

Collegiate Leadership Development Programs

A number of studies exist in the literature examining the impact of specific leadership development programs on college students (Zimmerman-Oster & Burkhardt, 2000). Posner (2009) investigated the long term impact of involvement in a leadership development program. The Student Leadership Practices Inventory (SLPI) was administered to business students both in their freshman and senior years of college, as well as non-business seniors. As part of their curriculum, business majors completed a student leadership course during their first year of college. Business students made significant gains on scores of leadership from their freshman to senior year in college. It was also demonstrated that seniors who participated in the leadership development program scored significantly higher on measures of leadership than students who did not. Greater leadership behaviors were found for students who participated in the leadership development program.

Zimmerman-Oster and Burkhardt (1999) looked specifically at outcomes of leadership development programs at 22 institutions funded through the W.K. Kellogg Foundation. They recognized the lack of research focused on the outcomes of leadership development programs on students. The study found that a greater awareness of social, civic, and political issues was an outcome for 93% of participants in the leadership development programs examined. Other outcomes of participation in these leadership development programs consisted of:

Increased commitment to service and volunteerism (86%), improved communication skills (85%), a higher sense of personal and social responsibility (79%), increased sense of social/civic/political efficacy (79%), improved self esteem (74%), improved problem solving ability (73%), increased Social/Civic/Political activity (70%), an increased sense of being galvanized for action (67%), a increased desire for change (62%), an improved ability to vision (57%), improved ability to be issue focused (54%), improved conflict resolution skills (54%), improved likelihood of sharing power (52%), and improved interaction with faculty (50%). (Zimmerman-Oster & Burkhardt, p. 56)

Institutional and community outcomes were also identified in this study. Students who participated in leadership development programs reported greater change in outcomes associated with leadership skills than students who did not (Zimmerman-Oster & Burkhardt). This study demonstrates the significance that specific leadership development programs can have on students. It also helps to define outcomes best associated with leadership development programs.

Cress et al. (2001) continued to examine the data from Zimmerman-Oster & Burkhardt's (1999) study of institutions receiving support through the W.K. Kellogg Foundation for the development of leadership programs. Quantitative data from ten institutions were examined to determine if these programs impacted students' leadership

knowledge and skills as well as their multicultural awareness and civic responsibility. Longitudinal data were collected from 10 institutions that took part in the Cooperative Institutional Research Program (CIRP). Students participated in the CIRP survey during their freshman and senior years in college, between 1994 and 1998. Students were asked to describe changes they experienced throughout college on a number of outcomes associated with leadership development. In concordance with the American College Personnel Association's Student Learning Imperative (1996), directors of leadership development programs examined in this study agreed that outcomes "of leadership education and training should include the development of skills..., values..., and cognitive understanding" (Cress et al., 2001, p. 17). Students reported whether or not they had participated in any leadership development activities during their college experience. Data from 425 students involved in leadership activities through their institution, as well as 450 students who did not participate in these leadership development activities, were examined. Participants in leadership activities reported greater levels of change on 14 outcomes including "understanding of self" than students who did not participate. Students who participated in leadership development activities were also more likely to be involved in student organizations and hold elected leadership positions. The overall findings of this study show that leadership skills can be taught and that students who participate in leadership development and training do indeed gain in knowledge and skills.

Leadership Development in Cocurricular Activities

In addition to specific leadership development activities, the literature suggests that cocurricular involvement in college is correlated with leadership development. In Kuh's (1995) study of college seniors, "the category of out-of-class experiences mentioned at least once by the greatest number of students as instrumental to some aspect of their learning and personal development was specific leadership responsibilities" (p. 129). Pascarella and Terenzini (2005) found that leadership activities correlate strongly with social self concept. Moore (1995) suggests that involvement in student government can lead to significant leadership growth in students. In a study examining differences by gender and ethnicity, Kezar and Moriarity (2000) found that for White men, involvement in leadership positions in student organizations was the strongest predictor of leadership ability. Additionally, Hall (2008) examined the impact of involvement in intramural sports activities on leadership development and found that with reflection, students in leadership positions increased their self confidence compared with students who were not in leadership positions.

An early study of the impact of leadership involvement was conducted by Schuh and Laverty (1983) on the long term impact of engaging in student leadership positions. Students were surveyed up to 30 years after their graduation. Participants included students involved in student government, leadership positions in fraternities and sororities, and student newspaper editors. Similar outcomes for holding leadership positions were found across the three institutions studied, indicating it was the leadership experience rather than the institution that made the impact. It was found that

involvement in leadership positions impacted specific skills, (i.e., organizational, teamwork, communication, decision-making, leadership, assertiveness, planning, budgeting, supervisory, and leisure), rather than major activities later in their lives.

Most leadership development studies and models have been focused on research involving White male students (Kezar & Moriarity, 2000). Studies on leadership development have begun to examine differences in gender and ethnicity, but the literature is still limited. Kezar and Moriarity looked specifically at how leadership development is different for women and African American students. Cooperative Institution Research Program data from 1987 and 1991 were examined for close to 10,000 students at 352 four-year higher education institutions. Involvement activities were found to predict self perceptions of leadership differently for African American men, African American women, Caucasian men, and Caucasian women. It was found that men, regardless of race, rated themselves higher on leadership ability than women. Women also rated their growth in leadership ability less than that of men. Participation in a leadership class was the strongest predictor for a high self rating of leadership ability, while involvement in ROTC, being a resident assistant, “being elected to student office, participating in intramural sports, socializing with someone from another racial or ethnic group, doing volunteer work, and being active in student organizations all had impact on self perception of leadership ability” (p. 60). Volunteer work was found to be the only significant extracurricular predictor for African American men and positional leadership was found to only be a predictor for Caucasian men. In order to most significantly

impact leadership development, institutions of higher education must be cognizant of how groups of students are impacted differently.

Logue et al. (2005) conducted a phenomenological study involving six student leaders at a large suburban institution. Students participated in unstructured interviews focused on their leadership experiences. Based on these interviews, Logue et al. identified three themes: people, action, and organization. Students discussed the significance of interactions and relationships with others including leading people, working in teams, and helping people. “Action” involved achieving a goal, realizing success, and level of action. Themes identified within “organization” include defining events, the interaction between leaders and members, and structure. Logue found that students described negative experiences or costs associated with being a leader along with positive outcomes, and indicated few studies exist that look at the negative impacts of holding leadership positions. It was also found that students’ leadership experiences are greatly influenced by the organization with which they are involved. Organizations had a significant role in perceptions of the leadership activity.

Komives, Owen, Longersbeam, Mainella, and Osteen (2005) focused on how students develop a leadership identity. Thirteen students participated in three in-depth interviews focusing on their history and leadership experience. Four developmental influences were found to influence students’ leadership identity: adult influences, peer influences, meaningful involvement, and reflective learning. Meaningful involvement activities appear to be where students’ leadership identity evolved through their interactions with other students. Students engaged in groups to find a “sense of place” (p.

602). Group involvement directly influences student sense of self. A leadership identity model consisting of six stages (awareness, exploration/engagement, leader identified, leadership differentiated, generativity, and integration/synthesis) was developed through this study. Students progress through the stages through their interactions with others and their understanding of their selves. The stages move from a more hierarchical to a more collaborative, relational view of leadership.

Conclusion

In reviewing the literature on leadership development in higher education four topics emerged: defining leadership, measures or inventories of leadership development, outcomes of specific leadership development activities, and leadership development due to involvement in cocurricular activities. To fulfill their mission of developing leadership in students, institutions of higher education continue to create specific leadership development programs and encourage students to participate in leadership roles in student organizations.

Research by Astin and Astin (2000) indicates that involvement in leadership roles in student organizations does indeed have a positive impact on leadership development in college, as well as long term significance for volunteerism later in life. Many studies on leadership development in higher education attempt to measure the impact of leadership activities on students. It appears the research on leadership development in college students is relatively new. Many measurement constructs have been developed and continue to be created to examine student leadership development (Dugan & Komives,

2007; Posner, 2004; Wielkiewicz, 2000). A review of the literature indicates the development of these constructs is based on extensive research.

The literature reviewed in this area indicates a growing number of studies and interest in examining leadership development in college students. This is consistent with the growing emphasis placed on leadership development programs in college. Additional research should also examine the types of students who are drawn to leadership development programs. What is the predisposition of students who are drawn to leadership development programs in college? Little research has controlled for students who have not participated in leadership development opportunities throughout college. Examining the experience of students who do not take on leadership roles in student organizations or participate in leadership development programs could provide interesting insight into what leadership means. There is an interesting correlation between community service and leadership development that needs to be examined further. Building on the previous two sections, the last section of this chapter focuses specifically on research on civic engagement in college.

Civic Engagement

Current literature on civic engagement focuses on the impact of service participation and service learning experiences on students. In addition to facilitating student development and encouraging leadership as previously reviewed in this chapter, the purpose of higher education also includes the development of civic responsibility, engagement, and responsible citizenship (Pascarella, Ethington, & Smart, 1988; Rudolph, 1990; Schamber & Mahoney, 2008; Schneider, 2004; Thornton & Jaeger, 2006). Student

and academic affairs staff work together and separately to help students develop a sense of moral and civic responsibility. Institutions of higher education increasingly encourage students to participate in service experiences (Astin, Sax, & Avalos, 1999; Rhoads, 1998). Many institutions have created structured in-class and out-of-class volunteer opportunities for students (Whitt et al., 2008). In-class experiences include service learning opportunities incorporated into the curriculum of a course designed with specific learning outcomes in mind (Hutchinson, 2005; Payne & Bennett, 1999). Extracurricular experiences may include service opportunities provided through student involvement and leadership offices, involvement through specific student organizations (i.e., Greek, service, academic, or honor), or very non-structured self-initiated volunteerism. Research on civic engagement examines student motivation for involvement in volunteer activities (Jones & Hill, 2003; Serow, 1991; Winniford, Carpenter, & Grider, 1997), as well as specific outcomes of service participation (Astin & Sax, 1998; Berger & Milem, 2002). This section begins with a definition of civic engagement, reviews literature on service learning, examines student motivation for engaging in service, and concludes with a review of outcomes of service participation.

Jacoby (2009) defines civic engagement as “acting upon a heightened sense of responsibility to one’s communities. This includes a wide range of activities, including developing civic sensitivity, participation in building civil society, and benefiting the common good. Civic engagement encompasses the notions of global citizenship and interdependence. Through civic engagement, individuals – as citizens of their communities, their nations, and the world – are empowered as agents of positive social

change for a more democratic world” (p. 9). Komives, Lucas, and McMahon (1998) define civic responsibility as a responsibility to the community and others in the community to “keep it functioning and make it even better” (p. 15). Definitions of civic engagement in higher education reflect long standing missions of colleges and universities to educate for citizenship.

Service learning is different from volunteerism in that service learning has additional academic outcomes associated with the experience that are related to the academic mission of the institution (Rhoads, 1998). Bringle and Hatcher (1995) define service learning as, “course-based, credit-bearing educational experience in which students (a) participate in an organized service activity that meets identified community needs and (b) reflect on the service activity in such a way as to gain further understanding of course content, a broader appreciation of the discipline, and an enhanced sense of civic responsibility” (p. 112). Simply put, service learning is the “academic link between experience and education” (Ender, Martin, Marsteller Kowalewsk, Cotter, & Defiore, 2000, p. 207). The academic component of service learning differentiates it from volunteerism (Jay, 2008).

Service Learning

Civic engagement, service, and volunteerism are related to more formal student learning experiences in higher education. Service learning experiences continue to expand at higher educational institutions (Brisbin & Hunter, 2003; Butin, 2006; Hepburn, Neimi, & Chapman, 2000). Many studies have examined the role and impact of service learning experiences in colleges and universities (Astin & Vogelgesang, 2006; Ender et

al., 2000; Hutchinson, 2005; Payne & Bennett, 1999). Other studies have looked specifically at institutional support necessary to develop effective service learning experiences (Bringle & Hatcher, 2000).

Introducing a service learning experience in a course on business and technical writing, Hutchinson (2005) found that students had trouble relating their experience to civic engagement. Students attributed development and learning from their experiences to business aspects of the course rather than the idea of civic engagement. The Civic Values Survey was completed by students before, during, and after their experience. Half of the students in the class indicated their experiences changed their views of the community with which they worked. Half of the students understood civic responsibility to be obeying laws, while fewer than 25 percent felt it was to provide assistance, care, and comfort to the community. This experience certainly was a beginning of a process of civic engagement for many students. The majority of students involved indicated they could see how they could have an impact on the community, while only 52 percent indicated they would participate in civic engagement after the course.

Payne and Bennett (1999) administered the Community Service Involvement Preference Inventory to examine student preferences for community service involvement. Participants included 81 students enrolled in a service learning course. They found that students preferred working with their peers on community service activities and that they gained a greater understanding of the communities with which they worked. Payne and Bennett also found that over 90 percent of students who participated in this study indicated they would participate in community service activities again.

Looking at outcomes of participation in an Americorps service learning experience, Einfeld and Collins (2008) interviewed 10 students to determine their knowledge of service-learning, social justice, multicultural competence, and civic engagement. Participation in the Americorps program increased student awareness of social inequity and sense of empowerment and privilege. Students gained knowledge of diversity and, “increased capacities for empathy, patience, attachment, trust, and respect” (p. 102). All participants indicated their willingness to continue to participate in volunteer activities due to their experience with this program.

In studying 8,474 first-year students at 229 colleges and universities in the fall of 1994, Astin and Vogelgesang (2006) compared outcomes of service learning experiences with volunteerism for students. Looking at 13 outcomes for students, they found that only three were specifically associated with service learning: civic leadership, charitable giving, and overall political engagement. As in previous research, reflection was found to be an important variable impacting outcomes of service learning. Additionally, faculty participation in service learning courses was examined. Over 40,000 college and university faculty from 421 institutions participated in the faculty survey. Astin and Vogelgesang found that only about a third of faculty had participated in service learning courses. Faculty engagement with service learning experiences, although growing, is limited. Service learning can have a long-lasting impact on college students, although the outcomes of this study were mixed. Positive long term outcomes of service learning courses were attributed to the community service aspect of the course rather than the course itself.

Using a constructivist approach, Jones and Abes (2004) examined students enrolled in two service learning courses to understand how participation helped them better understand themselves and their identity formation. Students talked about, “how the course continued to influence their attitudes, values, decisions, actions, and relationships with others” (p. 159). The service learning experience helped participants better understand themselves in relation to others, develop openness to new ideas, and begin a commitment to social responsibility. In particular students realized, “that they can use their economic and educational privileges to help others” (p. 160). The experience helped students define their identities internally rather than by external influences, promoting self authorship.

Participation in the Bonner Scholars program was the focus of a study by Keen and Hall (2009). Students selected for the Bonner Scholars program participated in 1,680 hours of community service throughout their undergraduate collegiate experience. Students were expected to volunteer weekly, reflect on their experience, and participate in weekly training programs. It was found that involvement in the Bonner Scholars program was correlated with academic, civic, and personal gains throughout college. Liberal arts colleges with greater diversity were found to increase program outcomes more than institutions with less diversity. Experience with diversity and multiculturalism has a positive impact on civic engagement outcomes related to students developing a better understanding of themselves and their communities. Overall, dialog and reflection were found to have a significant impact on understanding differences and developing a commitment to service among Bonner Scholars.

The mixed results of research on service learning seem to indicate discrepancies with what is being measured through these experiences. This may be due to a lack of knowledge of how to intentionally link service experiences to educational outcomes (Lewis, 2004). These results may also be consistent with the notion that mandated service does not necessarily lead to the same outcomes as voluntary service (Marks & Jones, 2004). Students in service learning courses may also be motivated more by career aspiration than by societal concerns (Serow, 1991). Service learning courses provide an interesting starting point to discuss outcomes of service participation, but do not necessarily provide an entire picture of civic engagement in higher education.

Motivation for Community Service

Why are students interested in participating in service activities? Winniford et al. (1997) reviewed the literature on student motivation for community service participation. Two primary motivators identified by the literature are egoistic and altruistic motivators. According to Winniford et al., theories related to egoistic realms of motivation include Expectancy Motivation Theory, Maslow's Hierarchy of Human Needs, and Herzberg's Motivation/Hygiene Theory. These theories look at volunteerism from the perspective that helping others is motivated by personal needs such as achievement, affiliation, power, self actualization, and recognition. Literature on altruistic motivators is focused on individual, group, and societal level outcomes. "On campus, this translates to individual students, student organizations, and the college or university as a whole" (Winniford et al., p. 138). Students report helping others as one of the reasons for engaging in volunteer activities. Winniford et al. conclude that most of the research

indicates students are primarily motivated by egoism, but altruism is a significant factor and call for additional research on student service motivation. In addition to egoistic and altruistic motivational factors, Berger and Milem (2002) add obligatory factors.

Vogelgesang and Astin (2005) found that students are motivated more by helping others than by working for social or political change. Students gain positive feelings about helping others; therefore it is difficult to tease apart egoistic and altruistic motivators.

In relatively early research on volunteerism, Serow (1991) examined college student motivation for involvement in service-related activities. The first part of this study included 759 students (of which 260 self-identified as community service volunteers) from four public universities in the South and Midwest who completed a survey focused on community service. In the second part of this study, focused interviews were conducted with 42 additional students who were known to have participated in community service. Students were asked whether or not they would participate in service activities again and why, as well as whether, they would recommend volunteering to others. Eighty percent of students completing the survey who participated in service responded that “sense of satisfaction for helping others” was one of their primary reasons for engaging in service. In examining values, it was found that students who participated in service valued helping others more significantly than those who did not participate in service, while family values were significantly higher for students who did not participate in service than for those who did. It was also found that student motivation for volunteering differed by type of student organization. Students in

academic organizations were motivated more by career concerns, while students in Greek and religious organizations reported more social and organizational motivators.

Serow's (1991) study provides interesting information on student motivation for involvement in community service. This study begins to examine differences between students who were involved and not involved in service as well as differences in motivation for students involved in differing types of student organizations. A distinction in motivation for students involved in honor societies is not made, even though many honor societies have the clear purpose of service to the community. This study examined students enrolled in college over 20 years ago, but does provide foundational information about motivation for service participation.

More recent research conducted by Jones and Hill (2003) explored student motivation for service participation from high school to college. Students in this study were asked why they participated in service activities in high school as well as why they did or did not continue to participate in such service in college. High school participation in service was primarily motivated by external factors. Students who were required to participate in service felt negatively about the experience and were less likely to engage in future volunteerism. For students who continued their service participation in college, it was found that motivation changed from external sources to a sense of commitment while external motivation was still primary for students who did not participate in service in college. The quality of service has a direct impact on the meaningfulness of the experience for students. The authors recommend that service experiences must have a reflective component in order to facilitate learning. Quality community service

participation, along with reflection, was found to be very meaningful for participants in influencing their sense of self and identity formation.

The data on engagement in service and focus on civic responsibility are contradictory. Marks and Jones (2004) comment that the number of students volunteering is increasing with over 80 percent of incoming high school students reporting on the 2000 CIRP survey they had participated in community service and over 60 percent of all undergraduates reporting they volunteered. However, under 60 percent of incoming students reported “helping others in difficulty” was an important value to them. Marks and Jones indicate that students may be participating in service for reasons other than civic responsibility, such as for personal gains or as a requirement. Participation in service in high school has been shown to lead to greater volunteerism in college, unless service is required of students. Using Transition Theory and Social Participation Theory as contexts for their study, Marks and Jones examined four groups of students: students who participated in service in high school, students who participate in service in college, students who participated in service in both high school and college, and students who had never participated in service. Data were examined from approximately 6,500 students who participated in the National Education Longitudinal Study of 1988. Close to half of the students in this study claimed to have been involved in service. “Orientation toward social responsibility was highest among the continuing volunteers and lowest among the students with no service” (Marks & Jones, p. 323). Most relevant to this review is that participation in student organizations, including fraternities and sororities, in college reduced the likelihood that students would drop

volunteerism in college. Student organization membership provided the opportunity for students who previously volunteered to continue their volunteer experience. This study does not address whether students who volunteered in high school were more likely to become involved in student organizations in college.

Cruce and Moore (2007) examined first-year student decision to participate in volunteer opportunities. Student and institutional characteristics were examined for close to 130,000 students from 623 colleges and universities that participated in the 2004 and 2005 National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE). Specifically, this study looked at predictors for volunteerism. It was found that females are more likely than males to volunteer as well as plan to volunteer during their first year of college. Students of color were also more likely than White students to volunteer and plan to volunteer during their first year in college. White male students were found to be the least likely to volunteer or plan on volunteering among all groups studied. Students with greater levels of prior academic achievement were more likely to volunteer and plan to volunteer. Cruce and Moore suggest this may be impacted by greater potential to be involved in honor programs or honor societies that encourage service participation. Living on campus and involvement in campus learning communities were found to be predictors of volunteerism, as was involvement in fraternities and sororities. Learning communities, as well as Greek organizations, have structures in place that encourage and provide for opportunities to engage in service. Interestingly, undecided majors were found to be less likely to volunteer than students in majors. Also, students at larger institutions were found to be less likely to volunteer than students at smaller institutions. Specific

differences were found to exist based on student demographics, type of campus organization involvement, living situation, and institutional type for predictors of student volunteerism. These factors are important to take into consideration when examining civic engagement and service participation.

Impact of Service Participation

How does service involvement relate to student development? Astin and Sax (1998) focused on the impact of involvement in service on undergraduate student development by examining CIRP data for 3,450 students at 42 institutions. Of these students, 2,309 reported participation service activities. The most significant predictor of service in college was found to be participation in service in high school. “Other predisposing factors included leadership ability, involvement in religious activities, commitment to participating in community action programs, tutoring other students during high school, being a guest in a teacher’s home, and being a woman” (Astin & Sax, p. 253). In looking at reasons for service involvement, “to help other people” was reported the highest. Astin and Sax concluded that “participating in service during the undergraduate years substantially enhances the student’s academic development, life skill development, and sense of civic responsibility” (p. 251). It was also found that all 12 outcomes of civic responsibility identified in this study were positively impacted by volunteer activities. Participation in service was also correlated to increases in academic achievement, leadership ability, and social self-confidence.

Long term effects of service participation have also been identified. Pascarella et al. (1988) examined data from 10,326 students who participated in the Cooperative

Institutional Research Program (CIRP) survey of 487 colleges and universities in 1971. Students completed a follow-up survey nine years later in 1980. It was found that type of institution and race did not have an impact on the development of humanitarian and civic values. College grades, social leadership experience, and familiarity with faculty/staff were found to be predictors of civic values after college. Most strikingly, involvement in social leadership activities had significant influence on the development of values.

In a more recent study of the long term impacts of service participation, Astin et al. (1999) found that after graduation, students were more likely to participate in volunteer activities if they had volunteered as an undergraduate. Participants in this study included 279,985 students from 546 institutions of higher education who participated in the Cooperative Institutional Research Program (CIRP) surveys. Students initially completed the Freshman Survey in 1985 with follow-up surveys in 1989 and 1994-1995 to examine longitudinal change. Astin et al. found that “participating in volunteer service during college is associated with attending graduate school, earning higher degrees, donating money to one's alma mater, socializing with persons from different racial/ethnic groups, and participating in volunteer/community service work in the years after college” (p. 197). Significant outcomes of service participation in both high school and college were found for students years after they had graduated from college. Participants who had a history of volunteerism in college reported greater levels of “helping others in difficulty, participating in community action programs, participating in environmental cleanup programs, promoting racial understanding, and developing a meaningful philosophy of life” (Astin et al., p. 197). However, Vogelgesang and Astin (2005) found

the number of students who volunteer in service after college tends to decrease. Overall, these longitudinal studies provide significant evidence for the considerable impact volunteer participation can have on college students' lives.

In a qualitative study, Rhoads (1998) collected data on student involvement in service activities through a naturalistic perspective over a period of six years. Instead of serving in the role of researcher, Rhoads was a volunteer in a variety of service activities examined at three large universities. Using naturalistic inquiry, Rhoads examined student journals, conducted interviews and surveys, and made observations from his perspective as a participant to examine how participation in service impacts student sense of civic engagement. Rhoads argues that "caring is central to the effectiveness of community service" (p. 293). Caring, argues Rhoads, is the reason that students would interact with people different from them in a meaningful way. This study found that participation in service activities enables students to learn about themselves, others, and develop an understanding of the social good. A significant theme in this study was the role of reflection in community service. Reflection was found to enable students to better connect their experience to learning.

Berger and Milem (2002) examined students' participation in service during their fourth year in college looking at three outcomes of self-concept: academic ability, achievement orientation, and psycho-social wellness. They found that higher levels of involvement in community service activities did not have an impact on student self-concept. Quality of involvement was found to be more important than quantity. A strong relationship between level of service involvement in high school and service participation

four years later in college was found to exist. The researchers argue that institutions of higher education are not doing enough to engage students who did not participate in service activities in high school to volunteer during college. Co-curricular service involvement was found to have no significant impact on the three measures of self-concept used in this study. Berger and Milem attribute this finding to differential impact of types of service activity and call for student affairs professionals to “better identify various types of co-curricular involvement and the effects they have on various aspects of student development” (p. 100).

Conclusion

A review of the literature on civic engagement in higher education yields many studies on the impact of service learning experiences on students (Astin et al., 1999). Generally speaking, students’ sense of civic engagement is positively impacted by their involvement in service learning experiences. The most significant factor influencing impact of service learning on students is reflection. Students need time to reflect and think about their service experience and how it relates to societal impact. Research has found that students gain a better understanding of themselves, multiculturalism, and commitment to volunteerism (Berger & Milem, 2002; Pascarella et al., 1988).

Motivation for service participation among college students includes egoistic, altruistic, and a combination of both (Winniford et al., 1997). The strongest predictor for service involvement in college was found to be volunteerism in high school. Students indicated they participated in service for the sense of satisfaction of helping others it provided. Students wanted to help others, but did so because it made them feel good

about themselves. Studies on the long term impact of service participation in college demonstrate that collegiate service involvement leads to greater volunteerism years after college.

Research exists on the impact of service participation in student organizations, but is relatively sparse. Much of the literature examined data from large scale national surveys of college students which included aspects of student organization involvement, but did not focus specifically on service in student organizations. The large scale studies revealed significant impact on academic achievement, civic responsibility, and understanding of self (Astin & Sax, 1998). This review of the literature did not reveal significant research conducted on civic engagement and student organization involvement.

Chapter Summary

Involvement, student development, leadership development, and civic engagement in college students are strongly interconnected. Involvement in college has significant impact on overall student development, leadership development, and sense of civic engagement. Leadership development and civic engagement could certainly be considered measures of student development outcomes. Although much research has been conducted on the impact of college on students (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005), a review of the literature on student development, leadership development, and civic engagement reveals limitations in assessing direct implications of involvement in college.

The relationship between involvement, defined by Astin (1999) as the amount of physical and psychological energy devoted to a task, on college student development is

robust. Extracurricular involvement defined in this manner includes membership in student organizations, relationships with faculty and staff, intramural and intercollegiate athletics, engagement in cultural activities, and time spent studying among others. Specific developmental outcomes of involvement in student organizations have been examined, but consist of a minority of the research on student development. Little research has specifically focused on types of student organization and lesser still on membership in honor societies and how these affect student development.

The research on leadership development is primarily focused on the impact of participation in specific leadership training activities along with limited examination of the impact of holding leadership positions in student organizations (Cress et al., 2001; Dugan & Komives, 2007; Kuh, 1995; Moore et al., 1998; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005; Posner, 2004). Studies have examined participation in student government and Greek organizations and only tangentially looked at specific involvement in student organizations. Little, if any, research has focused specifically on membership in student organizations which recognize students for their leadership. Perhaps this is a bit of a conundrum; examining the impact of membership in a leadership organization on leadership development for students who are already leaders. Or perhaps this is an area of research yet to be explored that may yield significant findings for understanding student leadership development.

Research on civic engagement in higher education has been focused on studying service learning and the impact of participation in service learning courses on civic development and volunteerism (Hutchinson, 2005; Payne & Bennett, 1999). The

research on volunteerism is focused on student motivation for participating in service activities and the impact participation has on identity formation and long term behaviors (Astin et al., 1999; Jones & Hill, 2003; Serow, 1991; Winniford et al., 1997). Studies have examined service participation as part of student organization involvement, but have not provided a complete picture of how volunteerism through student organizations impacts civic engagement. Additional research could compare organizations that have a primary focus on service, Greek organizations with their focus on philanthropy, and other types of organizations, including honor societies, which focus on service as one of a number of primary objectives.

Research on leadership development and civic engagement in college students is not as well defined as the significant research on college student development. Researchers have proposed many theories of college student development to explain changes that take place in students throughout college (Evans et al., 2010). Few, if any, theories exist to describe leadership development and civic engagement development in college students. Additional studies may enable researchers to develop theories based on their observations that will guide the study of leadership development and civic engagement as well as student affairs practices in these areas.

The impact of involvement in an organization such as Mortar Board National Senior Honor Society has not been examined. Involvement in Mortar Board has the potential to provide significant long-term impact on student involvement, leadership development, and views of civic engagement. How does Mortar Board involvement facilitate the development of long term civic engagement values? How does service

participation through Mortar Board impact student sense of civic engagement and responsibility? What type of capstone experience is membership in Mortar Board Senior Honor Society for students? What impact does membership in Mortar Board have on students' motivation for volunteerism and lasting impact on their sense of civic engagement? A review of the literature suggests that involvement in organizations like Mortar Board does have significant impact. Examining the experiences of Mortar Board alumni should provide insight into these questions.

The next chapter describes the research study and outlines the methodology used to explore the relationship of Mortar Board membership experience to lifelong views of civic engagement and leadership development.

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study informs the broader area of research on college student involvement by examining the impact of membership in a senior honor society on members' lifelong views of civic engagement and leadership. Research in the areas of student involvement, leadership development, and civic engagement has not examined this specific population and fails to provide much information on the lasting impact of collegiate involvement. This chapter begins with a rationale for using a qualitative research approach, addresses the design of the study and how the data will be analyzed, provides a discussion of ethical considerations and trustworthiness, and concludes with an examination of researcher positionality and limitations in the methodology.

Rationale for Qualitative Research Approach

This study examines the lifelong views on civic engagement and leadership development from the perspective of women who were members of a senior honor society at a private research institution in the western United States. Many studies have examined the relationship between involvement in college and student development (Abrahamowicz, 1988; Astin, 1999; Gellin, 2003; Hernandez, Hogan, Hathaway, & Lovell, 1999; Moore, Lovell, McGann, & Wyrick, 1998; Terenzini, Pascarella, & Blimling, 1996) using both qualitative and quantitative approaches. The current study asks alumnae to reflect on their experience in Mortar Board National Senior Honor

Society and relate how their views of involvement and leadership in their communities throughout their lives may have been shaped by their Mortar Board experience.

Participants in this study were asked to reflect on their experience and the meaning of their connection with Mortar Board National Senior Honor Society decades after their collegiate involvement. Participants have all made the choice to become members of a regional alumnae chapter and remain connected to Mortar Board at least 40 years after their undergraduate graduation. A lifetime of experiences, contributions to their communities, and achievements will be explored through interviews with these Mortar Board alumnae. A quantitative research approach would limit the richness of data and reflection of the life experiences of these women. A qualitative approach will enable the researcher to develop a personal rapport with participants and more deeply examine their experiences as Mortar Board members and alumnae.

Qualitative research is concerned with painting a picture of a shared experience or phenomenon. According to Creswell “qualitative research begins with assumptions, a worldview, the possible use of a theoretical lens, and the study of research problems inquiring into the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem” (2007, p. 37). Qualitative research seeks to understand phenomena through human experience. It may entail observations or interviews and a thorough analytic understanding of the experience. Identifying themes and developing an understanding of the issue are key characteristics of qualitative research. This study seeks to understand the phenomenon of Mortar Board membership on lifelong views of civic engagement and leadership.

Creswell (2007) identifies five methodological assumptions of a qualitative research paradigm: ontological, epistemological, axiological, rhetorical, and methodological. The ontological assumption is based on the nature of reality. Researchers using qualitative methods understand that multiple realities exist based on peoples' experiences. Participants' experiences are reflected through quotes depicting their multiple perspectives. The epistemological assumption focuses on the relationship between the researcher and the participants. The researcher attempts to understand participants by developing rapport. The axiological assumption refers to the idea that researchers bring their own values and beliefs to the study. Qualitative researchers reflect on their beliefs and identify their positionality. Qualitative researchers need to be aware of the rhetoric used in their research. Qualitative studies employ personal language which tends to be in literary form. Terms are defined by the participants rather than the researcher. Finally, the methodology used in qualitative research is inductive. The goal of data analysis is to better understand the phenomena being studied (Creswell, 2007).

Creswell (2007) also defines four worldviews that shape qualitative research: postpositivism, constructivism, advocacy/participatory, and pragmatism. A postpositivism approach to qualitative research takes a more logical, scientific approach to the design and analysis of the study. Researchers engaging in postpositivism begin with a theory or hypothesis to be studied. They gather data from multiple perspectives, use multiple levels of data analysis, and report their results in a logical deductive approach. In the constructivism approach researchers "seek understanding of the world in which they live and work" (Creswell, p. 20). Using an inductive approach, researchers

examine participants' views to develop patterns. Participants' perspective and the meaning they construct from the experience are the focus of the study. Researchers understand their background and perspective shapes their interpretation of participants' experiences. The advocacy/participatory worldview is focused on facilitating change for marginalized groups. "Issues such as oppression, domination, suppression, alienation, and hegemony" (Creswell, p. 21) are the focus of researchers using this approach. Researchers will engage participants in the design and reporting of the study. Finally, in the pragmatism approach "the important aspect of research is the problem being studied and the questions asked about this problem" (Creswell, pp. 22-23). The outcomes of the research and solutions to problems are significant in this approach. This approach generally uses both qualitative and quantitative data collection to address the research questions (Creswell, 2007).

This study attempts to understand the impact involvement in Mortar Board National Senior Honor Society had on the views of civic engagement and leadership development for alumnae throughout their lives. A qualitative research approach enables participants to reflect on and explore the meaning of their experiences. The focus in a qualitative approach is to determine how Mortar Board alumnae make meaning of their experience. A qualitative approach allows me as the researcher to hear the stories of participants in order to identify common themes. According to Creswell (2007), "We conduct qualitative research when we want to empower individuals to share their stories, hear their voices, and minimize the power relationships that often exist between a researcher and the participants in a study" (p. 40). In essence my study provides a larger

picture of how involvement in a senior honor society in college may have a life-long impact on members' lives. My study informs and provides insight into the broader area of impact of involvement in college.

Design of Study

This study employs the qualitative research approach of phenomenology. Phenomenology is concerned with examining multiple people's views of a common experience or phenomenon (Creswell, 2007). Phenomenology is "the study of the lived experiences of persons" (Creswell, 2007, p. 58). This study attempts to understand the experiences of membership in Mortar Board National Senior Honor Society on members' lifelong views of civic engagement and leadership. Understanding members' common experiences in Mortar Board as well as their commitment to civic engagement and leadership throughout their lives provides detail and insight into the relationship between Mortar Board membership and lifelong views of civic engagement and leadership development.

Phenomenology is one approach to qualitative research with the aim of getting "at the essence or basic underlying structure of the meaning of an experience" (Merriam, 2009, p. 25). Researchers using a phenomenological approach are concerned with making meaning of the experience from the perspective of several individuals. "Phenomenologists focus on describing what all participants have in common as they experience a phenomenon" (Creswell, 2007, pp. 57-58). This study seeks to better understand the lifelong views of civic engagement and leadership of Mortar Board National Senior Honor Society alumnae who, after several decades, are still involved

with a Mortar Board alumni chapter. The phenomenological research approach enables my study's participants to tell their stories and create meaning that enables me as the researcher to identify common themes. According to Moustakas "The method of reflection that occurs throughout the phenomenological approach provides a logical, systematic, and coherent resource for carrying out the analysis and synthesis needed to arrive at essential descriptions of experience" (1994, p. 47). This study arrives at the essential description of the Mortar Board experience on lifelong views of civic engagement and leadership.

From a philosophical perspective, phenomenology was first used by the German philosopher, Edmund Husserl. Husserl's approach to phenomenology was a focus on how people experience the world and describe their experiences. Husserl's "most basic philosophical assumption was that we can only know what we experience by attending to perceptions and meanings that awaken sensory experience of phenomena" (Patton, 1990, p. 68). "Husserl was concerned with the discovery of meanings and essences in knowledge" (Moustakas, 1994, p. 27). Phenomenologists are concerned with how people make sense of the world. They examine how people experience phenomena and interpret their experiences. Phenomenological research is concerned with understanding shared experience (Moustakas, 1994; Patton, 1990).

Site Selection

This study examines the lifelong views of civic engagement and leadership development for alumnae of Mortar Board National Senior Honor Society. To ensure participants share a common set of experiences, my pool of potential participants only

includes members who graduated from college at least 40 years ago, before 1971 (Creswell, 2007). Since Mortar Board membership was opened to men only in 1975, participants in this study, having been a collegiate member of Mortar Board more than 40 years ago, will all be women over the age of 60. In order to identify alumnae who are currently still active in Mortar Board, I identified an active Mortar Board alumni chapter with at least 35 members who regularly participate in chapter activities. There exist approximately 16 active alumni chapters of Mortar Board National Senior Honor Society across the country. Alumni chapters have the purpose of continuing to connect members who remain committed to Mortar Board's ideals of scholarship, leadership, and service. Alumni chapters meet to discuss their Mortar Board experience, reconnect, and sponsor relevant speakers for members. They also generally support collegiate chapters or Mortar Board graduates with fellowships or other sponsorships. The targeted chapter meets the criteria of this study. I obtained formal approval and permission from the Mortar Board National Council and Alumni Chapter to conduct this study.

Participant Selection

Participants consist of volunteers from current members of a Mortar Board Alumni chapter in the western part of the United States who have completed their undergraduate degrees. To narrow the scope of the study, only members who have earned their undergraduate degree 40 or more years ago were invited to participate. Since Mortar Board National Senior Honor Society was only open to women when these participants were seniors in college, all participants were women over the age of 60 years.

Since this study uses phenomenological inquiry, an expected sample size of 10-15 participants will be selected (Creswell, 2007) from a total potential group of 35 members. All participants were located in a metropolitan area in the Western United States. This population was chosen because after at least 40 years of membership in Mortar Board National Senior Honor Society, these individuals continue to be members of an alumni Mortar Board chapter. Participants may or may not have been active in their communities or been involved in civic leadership positions.

Data Collection Procedures

Pilot Study

A pilot study was conducted with a Mortar Board alumna to determine the effectiveness of research questions and approach. The pilot consisted of a 60 minute interview that was recorded. The pilot study took place with a Mortar Board alumna who graduated from college in 1946 and is 83 years old. The pilot enabled me to share the synopsis of the research study, to gain experience with conducting an interview, and to test my research questions. Conducting a pilot study also enabled me to become familiar with using the digital recording equipment and developing a rapport with my participants.

The pilot study took place in the participant's home, in her living room, a place in which she was comfortable. I arrived on time, greeted my participant, and began to develop an informal rapport with her. I started the pilot study by describing the purpose and scope of the research and allowing the participant to ask clarifying questions. I asked for permission to record our conversation and proceeded to follow my interview protocol. As I might have anticipated with interviewing older adults, due to hearing difficulties, I

needed to be sure to speak loudly, clearly, and intentionally. At times the participant asked me to repeat and/or clarify the interview questions asked. Throughout the interview process I was cognizant of my own perspective of involvement in Mortar Board National College Senior Honor Society and strived to ensure that the questions I asked were not biased or leading. Several times throughout the pilot I thought of follow-up questions which I determined to be leading and did not ask. On two occasions during the interview we were interrupted by phone calls, for which I stopped the recording and allowed the participant to answer. This did not seem to distract from the focus of the interview in any way and made me realize that unanticipated interruptions may occur during this process. At the end of the interview protocol, I specifically asked the participant for her feedback on the timing of the interview, the interview questions, and scope of the study. She commented that she felt the timing was very good and the questions I asked seemed appropriate given the scope of my study.

The experience with conducting a pilot study enabled me to practice my skills of being thoughtful throughout the interview process. It allowed me to focus on my own bias and preconceived notions of Mortar Board involvement and put them aside for the sake of trustworthiness of the study. It also enabled me to reflect on the meaning of the Mortar Board experience. I have reviewed the order and content of my questions for bias and have made changes to ensure their relevance to the research study.

Gaining Access to Participants

An informal gatekeeper, a member of the group who is respected, can serve to help or hinder access to participants (Seidman, 2006). Upon approval of the Loyola

University Chicago Institutional Review Board (IRB), a neutral volunteer, the past president of the chapter, was invited to be my research liaison to elicit participation from members. I contacted her via email (Appendix A) to elicit her participation and inform her of my study. I shared with her the synopsis of the study (Appendix B), invitation to participate (Appendix C), participant response form (Appendix D), and the informed consent form (Appendix E).

The research liaison sent an invitation to participate in this study to 30 members of the Mortar Board Alumni Chapter, all members who graduated from college at least 40 years ago. Of 30 invitations sent out, 14 participants responded directly to me. Thirteen members indicated their willingness to participate in the study, while one indicated she was not interested. All 13 members were contacted via telephone to set up individual interviews. Two potential participants declined to be interviewed due to their schedules while 11 members participated in individual interviews.

All participants in this study are Caucasian women currently residing in a large metropolitan area in the Western United States. Participants ranged in age from 75-92 years old with an average age of approximately 81 years old. All but one participant indicated they were married and had children at some point in their lives. All participants have been involved with the local Mortar Board Alumni Chapter ranging from three to 70 years with an average involvement of 26.7 years.

Interviews

Semi-structured, open-ended interviews were conducted with participants. My research liaison, the alumni chapter past president, informed members of the study and

asked for their participation at an Alumni chapter meeting, through a printed mailing and email message (Appendix C) sent to all members of the Alumni chapter, Members responded directly to me as the researcher to indicate their willingness to participate in this study. Participants were assured that their interview responses were confidential.

The individual interviews took place over a period of two months starting in mid-November 2011 with the final interview conducted in early January 2012. All interviews took place in participants' homes where we were free from distractions and they felt comfortable. Participants were provided with a synopsis of the study (Appendix B) and asked to review and sign an informed consent form (Appendix E) before proceeding with the interview process. The average length of the 11 interviews was 56 minutes.

An interview protocol, as suggested by Patton (1990) (Appendix F), was used to ensure consistency of interviews. The interview protocol included the topics of the interview that I identified were important to discuss with participants and allow me to engage participants in a conversational interview. It provided for structuring interviews while remaining flexible. Interviews were recorded using a digital recording device and transcribed by me. Notes were taken throughout the interview to assist in the documentation as well as to make note of my reactions, observations, and reflection. Immediately following the interview I listened to the digital recording to make notes of my reflections of the interview process (Patton, 1990).

Semi-structured interview questions that explore the impact of membership in Mortar Board National Senior Honor Society on lifelong views of and involvement in civic engagement and leadership were used. According to Seidman, "At the root of in-

depth interviewing is an interest in understanding the lived experience of other people and the meaning they make of that experience” (2006, p. 9). This study used what Seidman (2006) calls in-depth phenomenological interviewing. Open-ended questions guided the participant to reconstruct her experience. This study used Seidman’s approach of asking participants to reconstruct their experiences with the topic, asking details of the topic, and reflecting on the meaning of the experience.

Before the interviews, I contacted volunteer participants by phone to confirm the date, time, and location of the interview. Participants signed an informed consent form and permission to record the interview just before the start of the interview (Appendix F). The interviews begin by asking participants specifically about their experiences as a member of Mortar Board National Senior Honor Society at their undergraduate university. Participants were asked to describe their perception of Mortar Board as an undergraduate, what motivated them to accept membership in Mortar Board, and how membership impacted them. The focus of the interview then changed to ask participants about their views of leadership and community service while they were in college, while they were members of Mortar Board, and throughout their lives. Participants also were asked to discuss their current participation and motivation for participation in the Alumni Mortar Board Chapter. I transcribed all interviews individually, which allowed me to gain an in-depth understanding of our interactions. A letter was sent to participants to thank them for their involvement in the study as well as to solicit their review of the transcript of the interview (Appendix G).

Artifacts

Prior to the interview, participants were asked to bring photos, certificates, or memorabilia related to their Mortar Board experience. Using photos or other artifacts to elicit narratives during interviews can yield positive results (Bailey, 2007; Creswell, 2007; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Merriam, 2009). Participants were asked to identify and explain the meaning of the artifact they possessed as part of the interview. Questions about the artifacts were prepared ahead of time as part of the interview guide (Appendix F). The artifacts were used to solicit additional memories and feelings related to Mortar Board

Data Analysis

Creswell (2007) describes an approach to phenomenological analysis by using “a simplified version of the Stevick-Colaizzi-Keen method discussed by Moustakas” (p. 159). I used Creswell’s six steps in the analysis of data for this study. To begin, I described my own experiences with the topic of this study, the impact of Mortar Board National Senior Honor society involvement, in order to set my experiences aside and focus on my participants. Next, as I analyzed the transcripts, I identified significant statements about how Mortar Board involvement, community service, and leadership were experienced by my participants. I then grouped these significant statements into larger themes and “[wrote] a description of what the participants in the study experienced with the phenomenon” (p. 159). According to Creswell this is called the “textural description” (p. 159) of the experience. The “structural description” (p. 159) is a statement of how the experience happened or what factors contributed to it. I analyzed

the setting and context of the phenomena. The last step of the data analysis was to combine the textural and structural descriptions into what Creswell calls the “essence” (p. 159) of the experience. This study examines the essence of the experience of Mortar Board involvement on lifelong views of civic engagement and leadership development.

Data in this study was collected through interviews which were recorded using a digital recording device and transcribed by the researcher. The transcriptions will be analyzed and coded for common themes and experiences by the researcher using coding techniques for qualitative research as suggested by Creswell (2007). A coding manual was created to ensure reliable coding of themes across participants. Themes were identified and reported with the goal of understanding the phenomena of the impact of Mortar Board involvement on lifelong views of civic engagement and leadership development. Participants were invited to review a synopsis of themes that emerge from the study to indicate if they were consistent with their experience.

Artifact Analyses

Artifacts and personal documents can be analyzed and used effectively in qualitative research (Creswell, 2007; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Merriam, 2009). Documents can make real the phenomena from the participant’s personal perspective. Documents enable the participant to determine what is of significance and help to illicit memories, thoughts, and feelings about an experience or topic. The analysis of artifacts can assist in the triangulation of data, contributing to trustworthiness of the study (Bailey, 2007). Participants were asked about the significance and meaning of their artifact as part of the interview process. During and immediately following the interview I took

notes of my reactions to and thoughts about the artifact. Artifacts were used to facilitate recall and solicit feelings and responses.

Ethical Considerations and Trustworthiness

Informed Consent and Confidentiality

Participants were provided with a description of the research study and informed consent form when their involvement was solicited. Participants were ensured that their responses would remain confidential and that neither they nor their university or alumni chapter would be named in any of the research results. All recorded digital files, field notes, transcriptions, coding manual, and artifact analyses were kept in a secure location by the researcher at his home and will be kept for a period of no more than two years. The final research report refers to participants, their undergraduate institutions, and their alumni chapter using pseudonyms to preserve confidentiality.

Trustworthiness

The purpose of research is to expand or inform current knowledge and experience in any given field. The goal of qualitative research is to provide a better understanding of an experience or phenomenon. Researchers are concerned with ensuring the account depicted accurately reflects participants' experiences with the topic. Trustworthiness refers to ensuring the findings of the study are meaningful (Bailey, 2007; Creswell, 2007; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Merriam, 2009). Lincoln & Guba (1985) refer to measures of trustworthiness as credibility (internal validity), transferability (external validity), dependability (reliability), and confirmability (objectivity).

Prolonged engagement, a method for increasing credibility of a study, enables the researcher to observe and understand the culture, build trust, and check for misinformation introduced by the researcher or participants (Creswell, 2007; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). I have 18 years of involvement with Mortar Board National Senior Honor Society and have worked professionally in higher education for 15 years. My experiences with Mortar Board and as a higher education professional enable me to build trust with participants by demonstrating understanding of the culture of the organization and their experiences. The practice of interviewing multiple sources and member checking also increases credibility of a study (Creswell, 2007; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). This study employs the methodology of interviewing multiple participants to gain an understanding of their experiences. To use the practice of member checking I provided participants with a copy of the transcription for them to review as well as a summary of the themes identified through analysis of the interview transcription.

Lincoln & Guba (1985) and Creswell (2007) describe the use of rich, thick descriptions in qualitative studies to allow for transferability. The onus for judgment of transferability rests upon the reader while the researcher is responsible for providing sufficient detail and information to make the judgment. I used thick description to describe the experiences of participants to allow for transferability by thoroughly describing the interview and themes that emerge.

Dependability in qualitative research can be achieved through consistency of method, interactions, and research questions and is addressed by developing detailed field notes and transcription of the interview (Creswell, 2007). I thoroughly documented the

data collection and analysis process and developed a detailed coding manual to assist with increasing dependability and consistency. The interview and data analysis approach used with participants in this study has been outlined and will be used with consistency.

Confirmability refers to the ability for multiple researchers to come to the same conclusions through careful data analysis and can be established through a detailed audit trail of the researcher's interpretations (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The audit trail used in this study consists of written field notes, digitally recorded interviews and photos of artifacts, write-up of field notes, coding manual, process notes, information on the pilot study, and member checking materials.

Researcher Positionality

I have significant personal and professional interest in this research topic. I have been a higher educational professional for 15 years having worked in positions in new student orientation, first-year experience, and academic advising. I have worked at a large regional public university, a small private liberal arts college, and a large public flagship research university. I have worked with high achieving students throughout my professional career through university honors programs, orientation, and honor societies.

I have been involved with Mortar Board National Senior Honor Society since 1994 when I was the chapter president at my undergraduate institution. Since 1995 I have served in a variety of volunteer leadership roles nationally including section coordinator, committee chair and vice president, president-elect, and national president of the Mortar Board National Council. My presidency ended July 31, 2011. As national

president I have made several visits to the alumni chapter at the focus of my research and have talked with members on several occasions.

My position as former national president certainly could impact participants in this study. It may possibly encourage members of the alumni chapter in this study to more likely participate in individual interviews with me. Participants may feel more comfortable being open and honest with me about their experiences because I can relate to them through our common involvement. Conversely, participants may feel more reserved in their comments because they know me as the national president. Throughout the study I need to be aware of my role in Mortar Board and as a researcher and how this relates to my participants. Since I have a significant experience and understanding of Mortar Board, I need to understand my own bias in analyzing the themes that become evident through the data collection process.

My own experience in Mortar Board has impacted my commitment to civic engagement and leadership. I have been active in volunteer leadership positions in Mortar Board for 17 years. Throughout this study I must be aware that my experience as a member and alumnus of Mortar Board is not the same nor even similar to the experiences of my participants. I wrote about my experiences and reactions after each interview. I did not discount outlier views or experiences that were different than my expectations. Throughout reading the transcriptions, I reflected on outlying themes and experiences to make meaning of them. Most importantly, I did not have specific expectations for the interviews. I allowed my participants to share their experiences and reflect on their meaning for themselves. Moustakas (1994) describes what the

philosopher Husserl refers to as Epoche where the researcher attempts to see the experience from a fresh perspective unbound by previous experience. Although I have much experience in Mortar Board, I attempted to see my participants' experience from a fresh perspective and not allow my experience to prejudice that of my participants.

Limitations

Being qualitative in nature, this study is limited by the sample of participants. Participants are limited to women over the age of 60 who are members of one Mortar Board alumni chapter in the western United States. It would be extremely difficult to generalize the findings to other populations of Mortar Board alumni from other types of institutions of higher education from other areas of the country. The focus of qualitative research is not to generalize across populations, but to tell a story about a specific population. There have been no previous studies examining the relationship between Mortar Board involvement and lifelong views of civic engagement and leadership. This study explores this phenomenon to better understand the experiences of these women.

A second limitation is the age of participants. It could have been challenging for participants who graduated from college over 70 years ago to fully remember their experiences in Mortar Board and how it impacted their lives. Members who volunteered to participate in this study, nonetheless, did remember their experiences and were able to reflect on the impact these experiences have had throughout their lives.

A third limitation is related to the type of student who is drawn to membership in Mortar Board. These are students who are high achieving, involved in their undergraduate institutions, and already committed to serving their communities. It may

be difficult to determine what impact Mortar Board involvement had compared to their own intrinsic motivation for leadership and civic engagement. This study will not attempt to control for intrinsic motivation outside of the Mortar Board experience, however, it attempts to tell the story of a specific group of Mortar Board alumnae.

Chapter Summary

This study informs the broad area of research on the impact of extracurricular involvement on college students. Specifically this study examines the impact of involvement in Mortar Board National College Senior Honor Society on lifelong views of civic engagement and leadership. The methodology for this study is based on established principles of qualitative research. The design of this study ensures trustworthiness by utilizing well planned and organized methods of identifying participants, conducting interviews, and analyzing results. The findings of this study may have application to the relevance and impact of honor society membership in general and specifically for the impact of membership during one's senior year in college.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

This study examines the lifelong views of civic engagement and leadership development from the perspective of women who were members of Mortar Board National Senior Honor Society. This study informs the broader area of research on college student involvement by examining the impact of membership in a senior honor society on members' lifelong views of civic engagement and leadership. Many studies have examined the relationship between involvement in college and student development (Abrahamowicz, 1988; Astin, 1999; Gellin, 2003; Hernandez, Hogan, Hathaway, & Lovell, 1999; Moore, Lovell, McGann, & Wyrick, 1998; Terenzini, Pascarella, & Blimling, 1996) using both qualitative and quantitative approaches. The current study asked alumnae to reflect on their experience in Mortar Board National Senior Honor Society and relate how their views of involvement and leadership in their communities throughout their lives may have been shaped by their Mortar Board experience. This chapter begins with an overview of participant demographics, provides a brief biography of each participant, and identifies the themes that emerged related to each research question from an analysis of interview transcripts.

Participant Demographics

Participants in this study are all members of a Mortar Board National Senior Honor Society Alumni Chapter in the Western United States. A research liaison was identified from the Alumni Chapter who assisted with contacting potential participants. The research liaison sent an invitation to participate in this study to 30 members of the Mortar Board Alumni Chapter, all members who graduated from college at least 40 years ago. Of 30 invitations sent out, 14 participants responded to the researcher. Thirteen members indicated their willingness to participate in the study, while one indicated she was not interested. All 13 members were contacted via telephone to set up individual interviews. Two potential participants declined to be interviewed due to their schedules while 11 members participated in individual interviews.

The individual interviews took place over a period of two months starting in mid-November 2011 with the final interview conducted in early January 2012. The average length of the 11 interviews was 56 minutes. All interviews took place in participants' homes. All participants in this study are Caucasian women currently residing in a large metropolitan area in the Western United States. Participants ranged in age from 75-92 years old with a mean age of approximately 81 years old. All but one participant indicated they were married and had children at some point in their lives. All participants have been involved with the local Mortar Board Alumni Chapter ranging from three to 70 years with a mean involvement of 26.7 years.

In order to provide for confidentiality, pseudonyms have been used for all participants in this study. The women interviewed were eager and excited to participate

and very willing to share their own personal lives, experiences, and opinions. Table 1 provides an overview of self-reported participant demographics.

Table 1. Self-Reported Participant Demographics

Average Age Age Range	80.81 years 75-92 years
Undergraduate Institution Type	Small Private – 7 Public Flagship - 4
Undergraduate Majors/Minors	Education/Physical Education Elementary Education - 2 English/Education English/Spanish, Business, and Teaching Home Economics Journalism Mathematics Education Music Education Political Science/History and Economics Social Sciences
Year of College Graduation	1941 1946 1949 1950 1953 – 2 1954 1955 1956 1957 – 2
Average Years in Alumni Chapter Range of Years	26.7 years 3-70 years

Participant Biographies

Adele is a 92 year-old Caucasian woman who was originally from the upper Midwest, but has lived most of her life in the Western United States. She chose her university as an undergraduate because it was her neighborhood institution of higher education. Adele was the editor of the yearbook, worked at the student newspaper, and

was involved in a sorority among other activities. Adele graduated from a small, private college in the West in 1941 with a major in journalism. She has been active throughout her life in politics and proudly identifies herself as a conservative Republican. While raising her children, Adele was extremely active in the PTA and her children's education. She very much values independence and achievement and indicates she has been very involved in activities throughout her life, "because I want it done right." Adele has been a member of her Mortar Board alumni chapter for 70 years and has served in positions of committee chair, board member, secretary, treasurer, president-elect, and president throughout her involvement.

Elizabeth is an 84 year-old Caucasian woman who grew up in the upper Midwest region of the United States where she attended college at a large, flagship public university on a full scholarship. Elizabeth's initial dream to be a concert pianist changed in college when her advisor informed her it would take \$2,500 for her Carnegie debut. Her father only earned \$25 per week and could not afford to support this pursuit. Elizabeth instead decided to pursue music education. As an undergraduate, Elizabeth was involved in a professional music fraternity for women, earned money as an organist, and worked at the state educational radio station. Elizabeth graduated with her undergraduate degree in music education in 1949 and has been involved with music throughout her entire life. After college Elizabeth taught music in junior and senior high schools for a time until she raised three children. She supported her family while her husband finished his doctorate and moved to the Western United States. Elizabeth has been devoted to service through music throughout her life. In addition to being a church

organist, she participated in several music groups and civic organizations. Elizabeth has been a member of the Alumni Chapter of Mortar Board for 14 years and has served as a chairperson in the chapter.

Deborah is a 75 year-old Caucasian woman originally from the Eastern part of the United States, but moved to the Western U.S. early in her childhood. She attended a large, public flagship college in the Southwest on a scholarship and majored in elementary education. As an undergraduate, Deborah was involved in leadership positions in the residence halls, honor societies, service organizations, and student government. After graduating from college in 1957, Deborah taught school with the Armed Forces in Europe before teaching in the Western United States full time while raising children. After her teaching career, she became a realtor and was involved in several civic organizations “helping the people who needed help.” Deborah has been very involved in her church, raising money to serve the needy, and as a victim advocate volunteer. Deborah had been involved in the Alumni Mortar Board Chapter for over 30 years and has served in positions as president and vice president.

Florence is a 76 year-old Caucasian woman from the Western United States. Florence began college at a small, private liberal arts institution in the Midwest, but transferred back home to another small, private liberal arts college due to homesickness and better weather at home. In college, Florence was involved in a sorority and organizations related to international affairs. She graduated from college in 1956 with an undergraduate major in social sciences. Florence then received a scholarship at a prestigious research university in the Midwest where she finished a master’s degree in

international relations. She returned to her home in the West and earned a second master's degree in library science. Florence began her professional career working in a public library, found employment at a government bureau in Washington, D.C., and continued her professional career in libraries and research until she made the decision to "stay at home and raise two kids." She worked part time off and on for 19 years doing special projects for a local hospital foundation. Florence continues to volunteer as a docent at a local art museum and is active in service through her church. She remains connected to her international affairs background through involvement with the Council on Foreign Relations. Florence has been involved with the Mortar Board Alumni Chapter for three years and has served as a chairperson.

Natalie is an 87 year-old Caucasian woman from the Western United States. Natalie attended her neighborhood, small, private liberal arts college in the Western United States. She majored in political science with minors in history and economics after realizing she did not want to pursue her initial interests in medicine. Natalie was involved in the international relations club, student government, and a sorority on campus in addition to volunteering as a mentor for needy children in the area. After graduating from college in 1946, Natalie was hired as an administrative assistant at a railroad company. She also assisted with a non-profit bookstore, raising money for her alma matter, and planning a number of conferences and conventions. Natalie participated in the local chapter of the United Nations and volunteered with the local symphony and opera. She was instrumental in the development of a program for international students studying abroad which enabled them to learn about the culture of different areas of the

United States. Natalie has been involved with the local Mortar Board Alumni Chapter for 60 years and has served as president.

Denise is an 82 year-old Caucasian woman from the Western United States. Denise chose her undergraduate institution, a small, private liberal arts college, because it was close to home and was “all we could afford.” She decided to major in English due to her interest in literature. Denise felt pressure to “be either a teacher or a nurse” and decided to minor in education. As an undergraduate, Denise was involved on the newspaper staff, in a sorority, and in student government. After graduating in 1950, Denise taught elementary education until she decided to start her family. After her family was raised, she earned a master’s degree in the teaching of remedial reading at a flagship public institution close to home and continued her career in teaching. Denise is involved in raising money for the local symphony, active in the local opera guild, and in her sorority alumni club. Denise has been a member of the Mortar Board Alumni Chapter for five years and has been a director, president-elect, and president.

Nicole is an 80 year-old Caucasian woman from the Western United States. She attended the local, small, private liberal arts college because it was close, her family could afford it, and many of her friends were also attending. Nicole decided to major in home economics because she enjoyed sewing and wanted to teach. As an undergraduate, Nicole was involved in a sorority on campus, the student government, and was in charge of organizing the campus May Days celebration. Nicole graduated in 1953 with a degree in home economics. Immediately after college Nicole left the state to teach. She taught for three years when she decided to quit her job and travel through Europe. Nicole was in

Europe for six months. Upon return to the States, she found work as a substitute teacher and then taught physical education until she had children. Nicole was very involved in her children's education, assisting in their classrooms and providing support. Throughout her life, Nicole has been involved with political campaigns, political organizations and church organizations. Nicole has been involved with the Mortar Board Alumni Chapter for 10 years as program chair, committee chair, vice president, and president.

Kay is a 76 year-old Caucasian woman who grew up in the Midwest and East coast before moving to the south central part of the United States. Kay attended a small, private religiously-affiliated college close to home because it was affordable and she was offered a scholarship. With interests originally in art, Kay ultimately decided to major in mathematics and education. As an undergraduate, Kay was involved in a sorority, department clubs, and honor societies. She graduated a semester early in 1957 and immediately was married. She traveled with her husband in the Air Force and worked as a substitute teacher before starting a family and finally settling in the Western United States. Kay was very involved in her children's education, serving as a room mother. She has also been involved in community service organizations, her church, and served as a tutor for underprivileged children. Once her children were older, she returned to teaching math. After she left the teaching profession, Kay began volunteering at the local art museum and recording books for the blind. Kay has been involved with the Mortar Board Alumni Chapter for 45 years and has served in positions as board member, treasurer, and president.

Janice is a 78 year-old Caucasian woman originally from the Southern United States, but moved early in her life to the Western part of the country. She decided to attend the state flagship university because she received a scholarship. As an undergraduate Janice was involved in a variety of leadership positions in the residence halls on campus. She was also active in the student government, church organizations, and honor societies. Janice graduated in 1955 with a degree in elementary education after deciding not to pursue interests in art. After graduation she accepted a teaching position further west before spending time teaching in Germany with the Armed Forces. Upon returning to the States, Janice continued teaching close to home. After she was married she quit teaching to raise three children. She was very involved in her children's education having served in positions in the PTA and assisting in the classroom. Janice also volunteered with political campaigns, raised money for educational foundations, and served in roles that advanced theatre in public schools. Janice has been involved with the Mortar Board Alumni Chapter for three years and has served as a director.

Shirley is a 79 year-old Caucasian woman from the Midwestern United States. She attended the state flagship university because it was financially feasible for her and her family. Shirley was an undeclared major for three years but always had interests in journalism. As an undergraduate she was involved in leadership positions in the residence halls, student government, orientation, and various other service activities. Shirley graduated in 1954 with a degree in English and minors in Spanish, business, and teaching. After graduation she taught junior high school in the Upper Midwest before moving West to teach junior high and high school for 25 years. Shirley did recording for

the blind, hosted international students in the community, and has been involved in a community service organization supporting women's education. She has also been extensively involved in a national opera organization affiliated with the Metropolitan Opera in New York. Shirley earned a master's degree in Spanish while studying abroad in Madrid. She has been involved with the Mortar Board Alumni Chapter for close to 40 years and has served in positions as membership chairperson and president.

Marion is an 80 year-old Caucasian woman from the Western United States. Marion decided to attend a small, private liberal arts college in her neighborhood because it was close to home and she received a scholarship to help finance her education. She followed her interests and passions and chose to major in education with a minor in physical education. While in college, Marion was a leader in a service organization, was involved in the pep club, and participated in a sorority. She was also very involved in athletics, participating in hockey, basketball, volleyball, gymnastics, and the ski team. After graduating from college in 1953, Marion became a flight attendant. After getting married, Marion could no longer continue as a flight attendant since airlines had strict rules that attendants must be single women. Marion began to substitute teach and become more involved in the community. She returned to her home in the West and pursued positions until she and her husband decided to have a family and raise children. Marion continued to be involved in the PTA, school education committees, and in her church. Marion has been involved in the Mortar Board Alumni Chapter for 14 years and has served in positions of president-elect and president.

Table 2 summarizes demographic characteristics for each participant.

Table 2. Specific Participant Demographic Characteristics

Name	Age	Undergraduate Major	Institution Type, Location	Year of college graduation	Years in MB Alumni Chapter	Type of Civic Engagement After College
Adele	92	Journalism	Small private, West	1941	70	Political, education, service, community
Natalie	87	Political science, minors in history and economics	Small private, West	1946	60	Community service, international affairs, cultural
Elizabeth	84	Music education	Flagship, public, Midwest	1949	14	Political, cultural, service
Denise	82	English, minor in education	Small private, West	1950	5	Education, cultural, service
Marion	80	Education, minor in physical education	Small private, West	1953	14	Education, social, church
Nicole	80	Home economics	Small private, West	1953	10	Education, political, church, service
Shirley	79	English, minors in Spanish, business, and teaching	Flagship, public, Midwest	1954	40	Education, international affairs, cultural
Janice	78	Elementary education	Flagship, public, West	1955	3	Education, political, cultural
Florence	76	Social sciences	Small private, West	1956	3	Public service, community service, church, international affairs
Kay	76	Mathematics education	Small private, South Central	1957	45	Education, community service, church, cultural
Deborah	75	Elementary education	Flagship, public, Southwest	1957	30	Church, community service, education

Interview Data Analysis

Immediately following each individual interview, I took note of my initial reaction to the interview and common themes that arose in a separate journal. I then transcribed each interview myself in order to begin to identify common themes related to each research question as well as other themes that became apparent. In order to begin to identify themes, I focused on each research question individually as I analyzed the transcripts for comments related to the specific research question. My analysis began by identifying statements related to Research Question One: What motivates people to remain connected to and active in an Alumni Chapter of Mortar Board National Senior Honor Society years after their undergraduate experience in the Society? After identifying statements for Research Question One, I turned my attention and analysis to comments related to Research Question Two: What is the impact of active involvement in Mortar Board National Senior Honor Society on lifelong views of and participation in civic engagement and leadership?

After identifying statements related to the research questions, I then classified each statement based on a theme or issue that emerged. In my review, for example, participants commented on the importance and significance of the relationships they developed through their service in the Alumni Chapter as well as during their collegiate experience in Mortar Board. Statements related to involvement with others were grouped together into the theme of relationships. I reviewed each theme, noted the frequency of occurrence for each participant, and was able to collapse them into more general categories related to each research question and that grew naturally out of the interviews.

For each research question, I identified the overall number of occurrences as well as the number of specific participants who mentioned the theme. I have established that significant themes should be mentioned by at least 6 of the 11 participants. All themes will be addressed in further detail in the following section.

Table 3 indicates findings for Research Question One: What motivates people to remain connected to and active in an alumni chapter of Mortar Board National Senior Honor Society years after their undergraduate experience in the Society? Themes identified six or more times by participants include Relationships, Pride in Accomplishment, Service to Others, and Intellectual Stimulation.

Table 3. Themes for Motivation to Remain Connected

Themes	Number of Occurrences Overall	Number of Participants Who Indicated
Relationships	36	11
Pride in Accomplishment	25	9
Service to Others	21	7
Intellectual Stimulation	9	6
Making an Impact	16	5
Responsibility	8	2
Satisfaction	7	4
Identity	1	1
Independence	1	1

The second research question asks what is the impact of active involvement in Mortar Board National Senior Honor Society on lifelong views of and participation in civic engagement and leadership? The key findings related to this question emerged into four sections: Collegiate Mortar Board experience; Types of civic engagement after

college; Lifelong views of civic engagement; and Impact of Mortar Board involvement on views of civic engagement. Table 4 includes themes related to participants' collegiate Mortar Board experience. Themes mentioned by at least six participants include: Membership is an honor; Mortar Board identity; Reputation of Mortar Board; Memory of Tapping; Active Chapter; and Relationships. Tapping is the physical process of tapping of a new member with a mortarboard to indicate their selection into Mortar Board National Senior Honor Society.

Table 4. Themes for Collegiate Mortar Board Experience

Themes	Number of Occurrences Overall	Number of Participants Who Indicated
Membership is an Honor	27	11
Mortar Board Identity	18	10
Reputation of Mortar Board	15	9
Memory of Tapping	9	8
Active Chapter	11	7
Relationships	10	6
High Achieving Women	5	4
Inactive Chapter	3	3

Table 5 indicates Types of Civic Engagement After College related to lifelong impact of collegiate Mortar Board involvement. All participants indicated continued involvement in the Mortar Board National Senior Honor Society Alumni Chapter. Additional types of activities mentioned by six or more participants include: Educational, Community Service, Church, and Cultural. Participants also indicated they

were involved in Political Activities, International Affairs Activities, and Social Organizations.

Table 5. Types of Civic Engagement After College

Types of Civic Engagement	Number of Occurrences Overall	Number of Participants Who Indicated
Educational	28	10
Community Service	16	7
Church	7	7
Cultural	10	6
Political	6	4
International Affairs	3	3
Social	2	2

Table 6 indicates Lifelong Views of Civic Engagement themes related to lifelong impact of collegiate Mortar Board involvement. Themes identified six or more times by participants include: Duty and Responsibility to Help Others, Community Service is Rewarding, and Relationships with Women Committed to Service.

Table 6. Lifelong Views of Civic Engagement

Themes	Number of Occurrences Overall	Number of Participants Who Indicated
Duty and Responsibility to Help Others	28	9
Community Service is Rewarding	15	9
Relationships with Women Committed to Service	13	6
I Identify as Giver and Leader	2	3

Key Findings Addressing Research Questions

This research study was guided by two research questions: (1) What motivates alumnae to remain connected to and active in an alumni chapter of Mortar Board National Senior Honor Society years after their undergraduate experience in the Society? (2) What is the impact of active involvement in Mortar Board National Senior Honor Society on lifelong views of and participation in civic engagement and leadership? Five key themes emerged that were mentioned by six or more participants for the first research question; and three themes emerged for research question two. While analyzing the types of involvement after college for research question two, four types of involvement were addressed by at least six participants. Additionally, other key themes emerged related to participants' sense of identity and experience with being in Mortar Board as an undergraduate. Seven such themes were addressed by at least six participants. The following three sections identify and discuss the key themes emerging from this study.

Themes Related to Motivation to Remain Connected

The first research question asked what motivates alumnae to remain connected to and active in an alumni chapter of Mortar Board National Senior Honor Society years after their undergraduate experience in the Society? The mean number of years of involvement with the Mortar Board Alumni Chapter was 26.7 years with a range of three to 70 years. Key themes include Relationships, Pride in Accomplishment, Service to Others, and Intellectual Stimulation. The next section provides a description of each theme related to motivation to remain connected as each emerged during interviews.

Relationships. The first topic that emerged from the interviews, Relationships was addressed by all 11 participants as a reason for continuing to be connected and involved in the Mortar Board Alumni Chapter. This theme was indicated a total of 36 times throughout the interviews. When asked why she was still involved in the Alumni Chapter of Mortar Board, Elizabeth indicated, “I believe in what the group is doing, and I really like the women in the group, it just sort of happened. I don’t want to give it up.” Deborah responded, “Well, I really like the associations with the people.” Florence indicated similar feelings, “They [other alumnae] were interesting, fun to be with, you had similar interests, similar values, similar goals.” Florence continued,

You're like ‘oh yes, that was really worth it’ and I think that's the satisfaction that you get out of feeling that what you do maybe it's worthwhile and if you're doing it with people, I think again that sense of community and being part of... hopefully supporting a positive part of your community, it feels right, it feels right.

The friendships that were formed through participation in the Alumni Chapter have been significant to the women I interviewed. Nicole said, “I like the camaraderie. I like being able to talk and hear what other people are doing because they are all so interesting.” Nicole indicated, “I think the biggest thing to me, and always has been, is just friendships and people.” Kay said, “I think I have stayed active in Mortar Board Alumni because I enjoy and respect the women who are members.”

For the women I interviewed, the meaning of their continued involvement is about the women with whom they have formed strong relationships. Adele said, “well, it had meant getting to know these ladies.” Natalie’s view of why she continues to be involved in the chapter is, “because of just good friends, I think.” Denise’s reasoning was, “the people and the speakers that they got for their meetings were interesting. But

yes, it was the people mostly.” Shirley also indicates the people in the Alumni Chapter are the reason she continues to be involved. She states, “A lot of it is probably just the human contact of meeting and knowing a lot of people...because I like the women, they are interesting.” Kay states,

I like going to the meetings. They are always good meetings. I like the women, of course...I enjoy the alumni group and the friends that I have. I think almost without exception the Mortar Boards I have met are people I have been interested in getting to know. So it's nice to have that connection if you're looking for associations.

Janice sums up her feelings when she said,

It was such a good experience and I can't explain why other than the fact that it was being with people you really liked and respected as much as anything. And I guess I wouldn't ever just sit on my hands. It's always been fun.

Finally Marion indicated, “It's important to me to continue to be involved in the Alumni Chapter. I believe in it and enjoy being around women with similar interests and involvements.” Each participant indicated she very much valued the relationships she formed by being with and getting to know other women that have similar interests and values.

Pride in accomplishment. The next theme that emerged from the research related to motivation was the sense of accomplishment participants felt about still being involved with the Alumni Chapter and feelings of satisfaction and pride in what was being accomplished through their continued involvement. Elizabeth summed up her feelings about being in the Alumni Chapter when she said, “I believe in what the group is doing.” Florence indicated,

In a way I felt some of these things are mixed bags because they require effort and energy and sometimes you don't have that energy and it's a struggle to even put

forth the effort. But when you do, there is always the reward. You're like 'oh yes, that was really worth it.'

Florence indicates that even though it can be a struggle, being involved with the group and having an impact on others through the relationships she has built provide her with a sense of pride and accomplishment.

The pride participants felt by continuing to be involved in Mortar Board was mentioned several times. Natalie said, "Even today if you ask a Mortar Board to do something, don't worry, it's done." Nicole adds, "Mortar Board members have and will always make a difference and do something to better us all." The pride she feels about the impact Mortar Board members have is evident when she said,

I think everyone needs to look at what they are interested in and if they find that they can make a difference, I think the people that do are the outstanding people. And I think a lot of the people in Mortar Board have made a difference in different things in life.

Kay's reasoning for continued involvement includes, "I feel I have to be involved in something that helps other people...I guess I'm hopeful that I've given someone else something they wouldn't have had otherwise." Shirley said, "They are really interesting women. And they do things." Reflecting on her reasoning, Janice indicated, "It's been fulfillment, I think, as much as anything. Certainly your family is fulfillment, but this is something you do for, just for you too." The women I talked with continue to be involved with the Alumni Chapter because they feel passionate about what they are accomplishing together. They feel quite a bit of pride in continuing to be connected to Mortar Board and what it means to be "a Mortar Board."

Service to others. A third theme that emerged when women in the study were asked about reasons for continued involvement with the Alumni Chapter was the importance and significance of active service to others throughout their lives. The Alumni Chapter gave them the opportunity to continue to be involved in community service and have an impact. When asked why Adele continues to be involved in the Alumni Chapter, she responded, “I was interested in doing those things I wanted to find a little spot that would make a better world.” Denise indicated, “I joined the alumni group. It was another way to be involved, a new way. And I started liking what they did and the programs they had and so forth, I enjoyed it a lot.” Nicole commented,

I think everyone needs to look at what they are interested in and if they find that they can make a difference, I think the people that do are the outstanding people. And I think a lot of the people in Mortar Board have made a difference in different things in life.

She continues, “Mortar Board members are leaders and by being involved it stimulates you to keep doing activities that will help make this a better place to live.” Janice feels a responsibility to continue to provide service to others, “I think it’s something people need to do.” Kay indicated, “I guess I’m hopeful that I’ve given someone else something they wouldn’t have had otherwise.” A focus on having an impact on others and even a responsibility to make an impact on others is an important value for women in the Alumni Chapter.

Intellectual stimulation. The final theme mentioned by more than half of the participants in this study regarding reasons for continued involvement in the Mortar Board Alumni Chapter is that members find it intellectually stimulating. They enjoy the

programs of the chapter and the caliber of women in the group. Elizabeth demonstrates this in her statement,

I think it's the stimulation of the really talented, not just music, but very sharp women and I liked the committee and so each group I ran I liked that people shared, cross-fertilized their ideas and accomplished a goal...I just enjoy people. I enjoy making a goal and if I believe in their goal, I mean I'm willing to be the caller, be the chairman, do whatever and I just...it's just stimulating for me.

Kay said, "I think I have stayed active in Mortar Board Alumni because I enjoy and respect the women who are members. Programs are always interesting and stimulating."

Shirley feels similarly when she said, "Because I like the women, they are interesting. They have good programs." The continued learning through chapter programs stimulates participants.

The significance of continued learning was mentioned by Denise, "You need to keep learning, your mind needs to keep active or else you are going to become somebody who can't think anymore, who is not interested in the world around them." Denise describes the caliber of the women in the Alumni Chapter and her reasons for being involved in the chapter,

I liked it. I liked meeting the caliber of women that I met. They were very intelligent people who don't just talk about the latest...I'm a good bridge player, not a good bridge player, but I am a bridge player and I don't mean that they shouldn't talk about bridge, but they should talk about other things. They are people that talk about what's going on in the world and they care about what is going on in the world. I met a lot of very interesting women and I decided to keep on going.

Nicole described her interest in the Alumni Chapter and significance of intellectual stimulation,

All the members that I talk to seem to have made a difference and are still leaders and so much fun to talk to about any subject at the meetings." Yes, the

relationships and what their kids were doing and what our kids were doing and what we had done and what we'd like to do and what books are you reading. It was just oh, interesting...very interesting people and conversations and...speakers. We always had really good speakers and very interesting things.

Janice talked about how she came to be involved and why she continues to participate,

One of the people on the board of [another organization] was going to a Mortar Board meeting and I said, "You're what?" And she said "Yes, I'm going to a Mortar Board meeting." And I said, "Oh, you were in Mortar Board?" And she said, "Yes, I was at Ohio State in Mortar Board." And I said, "How about that?" I said, "You go to meetings now?" And she told me about it and said, "Why don't you come?" So I did. And it was an interesting topic and interesting meeting and I think that's the reason I've gone, interesting people.

Participants in this study indicated they became interested in and continue to participate in the Alumni Chapter because they find their involvement to be interesting and intellectually stimulating.

Lifelong Impact of Collegiate Mortar Board Involvement

The second research question asked what is the impact of active involvement in Mortar Board National Senior Honor Society on lifelong views of and participation in civic engagement and leadership? Participants were asked about their collegiate Mortar Board involvement as well as how they have been engaged in their communities throughout their lives after graduation. Throughout the interviews participants were also asked about their views of civic engagement, community service, and leadership and the impact their collegiate involvement in Mortar Board had on forming their views. It is important to note that the women in this study have led very full lives which include significant involvement in community service activities, professions, and in many cases raising families. On average the women in this study are 59 years removed from their

collegiate Mortar Board experience with a range of 54 (1957) to 70 (1941) years of life experiences after graduation.

It is also significant to note that a distinction was not made between civic engagement and leadership involvement or distinct views of civic engagement versus leadership. Participants were not asked to consider civic engagement and leadership as two discrete variables, but rather they were presented together. For the following discussion of lifelong impact of Mortar Board involvement, the variables of civic engagement and leadership have been combined and are referred to as civic engagement or community service interchangeably. The following sections discuss the impact of collegiate Mortar Board involvement, identify the types of civic engagement participants have been involved with since their undergraduate experience with Mortar Board, examine participants' current views of civic engagement, and end with a discussion of findings related to the impact of Mortar Board involvement on lifelong views of civic engagement.

Collegiate Mortar Board experience. The first set of key themes that emerged related to lifelong impact of Mortar Board involvement is focused on participants' views of and feelings about Mortar Board, their selection into Mortar Board, and their collegiate participation in Mortar Board. Themes mentioned by at least six participants include: Membership is an Honor; Mortar Board Identity; Reputation of Mortar Board; Memories of Tapping; Active Chapter; and Relationships. The following sections examine these themes.

Membership is an honor. All 11 participants in this study indicated they felt it was a great honor to have been selected for membership in Mortar Board. Several participants indicated they were surprised by their selection and felt that perhaps they did not deserve to have been selected. Adele indicated, “It was a very prestigious honor to be tapped for Mortar Board and I thought, ‘I hope they tap me.’ And yeah, I remember the day that I was tapped...thinking if I don't get tapped that would be dreadful.” Deborah said, “Oh, I thought it was a dream come true, that I had achieved a dream. I had worked hard, but with that in mind hoping that I would have been chosen.” When asked about how she felt about her selection, Deborah said,

That was a great honor and it was exclusive. That it was a great honor and that there weren't a lot of people that were chosen. And that you had to have scholarship, leadership, and service.

Nicole indicated,

I just felt very, very honored to have been chosen...one of the people that they chose. And they chose so few that I felt even better. You know, I thought well isn't that nice. And we all were so involved, all of us, in everything; we all knew each other pretty well... You know, it was very well thought of. It was a real honor to be chosen and among all of the people that worked. And you knew if you were chosen that you had done an awful lot for the school in all of the activities and done them well.

For Kay Mortar Board selection meant more to her than any other recognition in college,

Mortar Board does. It's not something you go around telling people, but if it does come in conversation in any way and you find out that another person is, you do have a feeling of that it's exciting that you were one too. It was, of the honors I might have had in college, I suppose it would have been my choice if I'd wanted to choose something.

The women interviewed for this study expressed very strong positive feelings about their selection into Mortar Board. They were honored and extremely proud to have been selected.

Mortar Board identity. The next theme emerging from the research is related to participants' feelings of identity as a "Mortar Board." Mortar Board identity was indicated by 10 participants and mentioned 18 times. This identity was very public and visible for the women in this study. Participants indicated they remembered fondly the uniform and pin they wore on a regular basis on campus identifying them as Mortar Board members. Deborah indicates, "We were very evident. We wore our black skirts and white blouses and our letter, the Mortar Board letter." Florence said, "Well I can remember we all had black suits made with our little patch on them and we helped with certain activities." Janice describes the uniform,

And we did have uniforms. We had white jackets, white blazers and our Mortar Board emblem on the pocket. So we, I can't remember how often we wore those. I suppose we wore those at least once a month, maybe more often than that. I don't remember how often.

Nicole talked about the visibility the uniforms provided on campus,

We had uniforms, and once a week everyone wore your uniform. And so the university, the four years I was there, they were really all around; you saw them in their uniforms. They had a hat. So it was very noticeable, then you ask about it and you found out about it.

The uniform stood out to Shirley,

We all wore white blazers. It had the Mortar Board on the pocket and you know you wore them whenever you were going to a meeting or going to one of our meetings, or going to another activity where you were representing Mortar Board. That was part of the tapping too, you got a white blazer.

When asked about what Mortar Board meant, Marion also remember the uniform,

Well, you know, we wore; on Friday we wore our uniform. It was a blaro jacket, black with a gold Mortar Board on it, black skirts. And it was when we had our meetings on Friday. I think we probably sold them to the next group. That was our main thing. We were very visible on Fridays.

The Mortar Board uniform and pin were visible, public symbols of each participant's selection into a student organization to which they felt very honored and proud to have been selected. These symbols of membership help to solidify these women's sense of identity as a Mortar Board.

In addition to the uniform and pin, it became clear how each women's involvement meant more to them than solely being a Mortar Board member. They describe themselves as a "Mortar Board" and identify with the high level of achievement that Mortar Board recognized in them with their selection. Natalie said, "And really it wasn't all that important because even today if you ask a Mortar Board to do something, don't worry, it's done." Kay indicated,

I think almost without exception the Mortar Boards I have met are people I have been interested in getting to know. So it's nice to have that connection if you're looking for associations.

Nicole indicated, "I felt very, very proud to have been a Mortar Board...Mortar Board members have and will always make a difference and do something to better us all." The women in this study identified as "Mortar Board" and have clear memories of the symbols of membership.

Reputation of Mortar Board. Nine participants indicated that the reputation of Mortar Board on their campus was extremely high. Mortar Board's strong reputation was indicated 15 times throughout the interviews. Mortar Board was very well known on

their campuses and something to which women strived to be selected. When asked about the reputation of Mortar Board, Elizabeth said, “It was very, very highly regarded. It was highly regarded, it was an honor. The women were all outstanding, on-campus leaders.”

Adele said, “Oh, it was a big thrill. It was a wonderful thing to be in Mortar Board.”

Deborah indicated, “Well, it was prestigious, particularly since it was hard to get in.”

Regarding Mortar Board’s reputation, Natalie said, “It was very high. There were a lot of tears of people who didn’t make it.” Shirley commented on the overall reputation of

Mortar Board at her institution,

Well, it was a big deal on campus...It was very positive. I would say that this was a fairly large school by then because of all the returning veterans from World War II. But it was still small enough in a certain sense that you had a general knowledge of basically almost all kinds of things that were going on in organizations and on.

The reputation of Mortar Board for Denise was, “academic excellence, involvement in the community, in the school, and service to the school. It had a very high reputation. It was very desirable to be picked for Mortar Board.” Participants in this study indicated Mortar Board had a very high reputation on their college campuses.

Memory of tapping. Even though the average number of years since their collegiate selection in Mortar Board was 59 years, the women in this study vividly recalled their tapping into Mortar Board. Tapping was a very public event and highly coveted. Elizabeth described being tapped into Mortar Board,

I didn't know a thing about Mortar Board until I was tapped. And my roommate and I were tapped at either 11 p.m. or midnight. We were sleeping. And they came in the house. See we were independents, we weren't social [sorority], she was very active in home economics and I was very active in music. We were just absolutely stunned. We were tapped into Mortar Board.

Asked if she remembers being tapped into Mortar Board, Deborah responded,

Do I ever. At the University of [state] they have old main. And there's a fountain there and we went on Women's Day in May we walked to this when I was chosen...They walked around in their Mortar Boards and their gowns and it was their job to locate the person they were going to tap and each one individually tapped someone. So we all knew certain ones were going to be tapped and I think I was tapped, if not toward the end, at the end because I don't remember anything beyond the fact that we were all in white. All the women wore white that day. And the gal that chose me came through the group, and I kept on backing up to look around to see who it was gonna be and when she came to me, it was one of the most exciting days I've ever had.

Kay responded,

Yes I do. I was sitting in a classroom and Mortar Boards came in and I was looking around to see who it might be and I couldn't decide. And so they said to the professor that they wanted permission to tap someone in class and they went to the back of the room and it was me. And I was so surprised. The first opportunity I had I called my father. My father probably finished ninth or tenth grade, but at that time though, he was teaching classes in management in Cornell. He would just fly up there and just do, it would be like a two-day thing for business people even though he wasn't educated, he had work credentials. And later I thought that was interesting, it was my father that I first wanted to tell how exciting this was.

The experience of tapping was an important memory in many participants' collegiate experience. Eight participants talked about their experience of being tapped into Mortar Board and remembered the events during the interviews. For many participants tapping was a surprise. Prospective members did not apply for membership in Mortar Board, they were chosen by the current chapter members.

Active chapter. While some participants indicated their Mortar Board chapter was not very active and others could not remember details of the chapter's activities, seven participants indicated they remembered chapter events. Deborah reflected on her experience in the chapter,

Well, I took notes. Mortar Board formal was in February. I don't even remember going to that dance. But we elected the most, we didn't, but the coeds elected the most eligible bachelor. There was an edition of Mortar Board Suggests pamphlets published bi-monthly by the group. Part of a program to improve campus attitude toward general learning and cultural events. And we were big sisters to foreign coeds. And advised during registration and freshman week.

Florence remembered her activities in the chapter,

The chapter demonstrates its purpose of service every year by giving a tea to collect food donations for needy families. Members also serve coffee to press box guests at football games and ring the chapel bell proclaiming gridiron victories.

Denise indicated,

We had regular meetings. We talked a lot about what we could do for the university and the community and why that is an important thing for someone to do. That you don't just take, you give of yourself and your talents, if you have any. We had meetings that were informative; some of the times it was some of the professors who would speak and talk about careers. Where we would be going, because we going to be seniors, you know, and what our plans were. I think we had some, if I remember correctly, we had some people from the community who already were out in the workforce who would talk to us about careers.

Janice recalls her collegiate experience in Mortar Board,

I think everybody knew what Mortar Board was and about Mortar Board. We did a number of things. We had a Mum sale at homecoming. Worked our tails off. And that was for a charity project. I can't remember exactly what it was. We also did a freshman dance and then we had. I was in charge of, I wasn't one of the officers, but I was in charge of a special project and the year before the person who was in charge of the special project did a survey of the Johns on campus. And I thought I don't think I want to do that again. So we did a last lecture series. We choose three popular professors to do their last, what they would say in their last, what they would say if they had just one last lecture to give. And people could say, well I think this person would be a good person for that.

Chapter activities and involvement were remembered by seven participants in this study.

The women interviewed recalled very specific activities and events where they contributed to their university community and had an impact on campus including participating in homecoming activities, providing service to sportscasters during football

games, coordinating a last lecture series on campus, mentoring freshmen and sophomore students, raising money for service projects, and participating in regular chapter meetings.

Relationships. The last theme emerging related to participants' collegiate Mortar Board experience was the importance of the relationships participants developed. This theme focused specifically on the ensuing relationships formed during participants' undergraduate experience in Mortar Board. While this is related to the theme of relationships identified previously in this study for motivation for continued involvement in the Alumni Chapter, it is distinctly focused on participants' collegiate experience.

Florence commented on the significance of these relationships,

I just remember meeting together and the girls that I enjoyed so much. I remember it more socially, but I know that we did do things on campus...I just remember the girls and being with them. Well I think the girls that were in the group were, of course, good students, and usually social as well. So they were interesting, fun to be with, you had similar interests, similar values, similar goals, and I think I would say most of them seemed what used to be called well-rounded in terms of being involved in things, the good students and leaders as well.

Nicole described the friendships she made during her collegiate involvement,

I think the biggest thing to me, and always has been, is just friendships and people. And it was so fun when we got together, it seemed like we were all on the same plane. I look now back and I look at all of the Mortar Boards in the alumni and I say to myself, it's the same. They are all sharp. They all want to do things. They all have ideas.

Shirley talked about these relationships,

So it was an opportunity to really get better acquainted with a more diverse group of women than I knew just in the dormitory. And we just had a lot of fun together as I recall. We had a round robin letter that went around for three or four years until everybody just sort of, this is of course prior to email and everything. This is literally a letter that went around. And, I kept track of a lot of them for a while, and actually one of the members of our group is still one of my very best friends.

Elizabeth described a lifetime of relationships made through her collegiate Mortar Board involvement. Members still to this day contact each other every year to provide updates on their lives. This has been going on for over 50 years. Elizabeth said,

We really didn't know each other until we left campus and [a member] decided she wanted us to remain friends the rest of our lives. She just started this letter idea and it used to be January 1st was the deadline, which has kind of moved on. But, I would say in the early years probably 12 minimum would respond every year, out of the 16. We were all moving around, our husbands were in careers, or we were in careers. One of these gals got her law degree and moved to New York, we just heard from her last spring. A lot of them were going on to school and a lot of them just had very interesting careers and the letters...we just kept in touch with how many children we had, where we were, what we were doing how many travels, and we usually were asked to tell what we were interested in reading. So that has involved into the last year, there was a recommended reading list of nine people, because we were down to nine that year. I think it is so unusual that we have hung in there.

The relationships participants formed during their collegiate experience in Mortar Board were very important to the women in this study. Many of these relationships continued for years and decades after their undergraduate graduation. For at least one woman, the relationships with the entire chapter have continued for more than 50 years.

Types of civic engagement after college. Participants were asked about the types of civic involvement in which they have been involved throughout their lives after college. All participants have been and continue to be involved in activities related to Mortar Board National Senior Honor Society, specifically an alumni chapter of Mortar Board. The most frequent type of involvement indicated by participants was in educational activities (indicated by ten participants), which included Parent Teacher Associations, professional teaching experience, substitute teaching, adult education,

educational boards, fundraising efforts for education, women's educational programs, and volunteering in children's education.

Church and community service organization involvement were both mentioned by seven participants. Church involvement ranged from service activities specifically organized through participants' churches, volunteering as an organist, being involved in social groups through church, teaching religious education, fundraising efforts, and being a lector. Involvement in service organizations included women's groups related to the Masons, Kiwanis, and Rotary; women's library; fundraising efforts for non-religious community organizations; and public service careers including working at the local library, being a flight attendant, working as a realtor, and working at the Bureau of National Affairs in Washington, D.C.

Cultural involvement was raised by six participants, which included volunteering at the local art museum, being involved with a local symphony, fundraising efforts for the local opera, and service with theatre and the performing arts in a K-12 school district. Other types of involvement mentioned by participants included working on political campaigns, being involved with the Council on Foreign Relations, and serving with the Committee for Friendly Relations among Foreign Students.

Lifelong views of civic engagement. Three themes emerged related to participants' views of civic engagement: (1) Duty and Responsibility to Help Others; (2) Community Service is Rewarding; and (3) Relationships with Women Committed to Service. As mentioned previously, participants were not asked for their views of civic

engagement and leadership as two discrete variables, but rather they were presented together. The following three sections illustrate these themes in detail.

Duty and responsibility to help others. The overwhelming view participants raised throughout interviews was that community service and civic engagement were a duty and responsibility. Participants felt called to give back to their communities and become involved in a variety of activities from politics, church-related service, international affairs, the arts and cultural activities, to educational activities of all sorts. Adele's feelings of responsibility are evident by her comments and her mother's observation of how busy she was,

I just knew it had to be done and I felt that I've got time to do this I'll do it. My mother always said to me, cause I was raising the girls, as soon as they were off to school I'd have a coffee meeting, and then I'd have to pick up one of them for lunch or something. In the afternoon, they'd go back to school. I'd have an afternoon meeting. And sometimes when my husband was home I'd have a night meeting. Mother says you don't need a house Adele, you just need a car.

For Deborah, "It's essential. If a person has the time to volunteer, that person should choose the interest of service and volunteer." Deborah strongly views community service as a responsibility. Nicole recognizes the many contributions Mortar Board members have made throughout their lives and views the responsibility to service similarly,

I think everyone needs to look at what they are interested in and if they find that they can make a difference, I think the people that do are the outstanding people. And I think a lot of the people in Mortar Board have made a difference in different things in life.

Denise indicates, "It is a necessity to me, to feel that I have contributed to whatever organization I am involved in." Denise is committed to remaining active in community service. Kay said, "I've always felt that you had to do something in the communities.

You can't just be inactive." Janice added, "I just think that doing community service is very important for most people." Shirley shared her view of the importance of community service, "I just feel like you need to do something with your life...I liked expanding educational opportunities and horizons...I can't imagine not doing something, I guess, is more why I do it." The women in this study indicated they feel very strongly about community service as a duty and part of their identity.

Community service is rewarding. The next theme that emerged from the research related to views on civic engagement is that the women in this study felt community service is rewarding. They indicated they enjoyed community service and received a sense of fulfillment through their involvement. They felt that what they were doing made a positive impact on others in their communities. Denise commented,

I like doing things for people. I like being part of a community...contributing toward that community. My community involvement is teaching me all the time what is going on in the world, what people are thinking, and so it is a learning experience and it is also an enjoyable experience.

Florence said, "When you do, there is always the reward. You're like, 'oh yes, that was really worth it,' and I think that's the satisfaction that you get out of feeling that what you do may be worthwhile." Natalie said, "Well, I thoroughly enjoyed it. It may have been helpful for other people, but it sure was helpful to me." Discussing one of her volunteer involvements, Kay indicated, "I know it's really kind of fun doing the Maya tours at the art museum to get the kids involved talking about that civilization." Janice indicates she feels her involvement in community service has been enjoyable and fulfilling,

It's been fulfillment, I think, as much as anything. Certainly your family is fulfillment, but this is something you do for, just for you too, I think...I enjoy

working on the things and most of them, in fact I can't think of anything I really haven't. I guess I wouldn't do it if I didn't enjoy it.

The women I talked with expressed a great sense of reward by participating in community service activities throughout their lives.

Relationships with women committed to service. Participants in this study indicated that their relationships with other women committed to service were important to them. This theme differs from the theme of relationships related to motivation to stay involved in an alumni chapter due to the focus on service. Not only were relationships important to the women in this study, but relationships with women committed to service guided their views of civic engagement. They enjoyed being involved in service with others who have similar views and goals. Shirley describes the importance of these relationships when asked about her views on civic engagement,

A lot of it is probably just the human contact of meeting and knowing a lot of people. So these other organizations like [community service organization] and Mortar Board and so on, these women are from different walks of life, or not just women, these other people, they do other things. It's been a broadening experience and also keeps you from being so one-sided. I guess you'd say, as far as your views of things. You have to have some different experiences and that has just been it.

Shirley indicated, "I view working with people as an opportunity to meet new people, to meet interesting people." Janice said, "It was such a good experience and I can't explain why other than the fact that it was being with people you really liked and respected as much as anything." Elizabeth commented that she benefited from the experience of serving with others,

I don't think about the fact that I'm going to be serving, I have simply just chosen groups of women that seem to have a purpose and they don't waste time, they appreciate the work of one another, and I find that stimulating.

Marion formed long lasting relationships through her service with others,

I think being encouraged to participate in community when an active gave me the confidence to be a leader in a variety of organizations in my adult years. I was very shy. The strong ties of working together are not forgotten.

This theme builds on previous themes about the importance of relationships and rewards participants experienced by being engaged in service activities. The focus in this theme is that participants specifically commented on the experience and value of serving with others who were also committed to community service.

Impact of Mortar Board on views of civic engagement. The primary focus of this study was to determine what impact the phenomena of being involved in Mortar Board National Senior Honor Society had on lifelong views of and participation in civic engagement and leadership. In addition to understanding their collegiate Mortar Board experiences, involvement in community service throughout their lives, and current views of civic engagement, participants were asked to comment on the relationship between Mortar Board involvement and their views and participation in civic engagement. Specifically participants were asked, “As you think back over the years, in what ways did your Mortar Board service and leadership experiences possibly impact who you have become and the contributions you have made since that time?” Additionally, participants were asked, “Looking back, what did it mean to you to be a member of Mortar Board?”

Findings related to the impact of Mortar Board involvement on lifelong views of civic engagement and leadership were mixed. Three participants specifically said there was no impact, two indicated euphorically there was impact, while the other six participants provided no clear indication that they felt Mortar Board involvement was

responsible for their commitment to community service and leadership. Kay summed up the relationship between community service engagement and Mortar Board impact when she said,

I believe the answer to the question is that participation in civic engagement and leadership describes who and what we are and why we became Mortar Boards in the first place. I am not certain I would have been any different if I had not been tapped, but I have always been proud that I was.

Adele felt that she had brought more to the Mortar Board experience than it provided to her when she responded,

Well, I don't think it's anything to do with Mortar Board because what I am I would have been with or without Mortar Board. To me I've done more for Mortar Board than Mortar Board has done for me. Which is true. I've given and given and given of myself to Mortar Board.

Shirley commented that her parents had more to do with her views of civic engagement than her Mortar Board involvement,

I don't know if those experiences impacted me as much...I really think my parents did... They were both always involved in civic activity, I guess I should say. So that was the first part of it that I remember. You know, they always did those things. So even though I enjoyed the Mortar Board experience, I wouldn't say it was necessarily the thing that led me to get ultimately involved in things, it helped but I really think it was my parents that sort of were the model for that, as far as getting out and being involved and giving. We didn't have money, but we had time.

These women indicated their commitment to civic engagement was developed before they were tapped for Mortar Board. Kay also attributes these values having been instilled in her at an early age from her parents.

For the majority of women, their Mortar Board involvement served as a support or reinforcement of the views and values towards community service and leadership that they already held. When asked about the impact of Mortar Board, Florence said,

You know, I just think probably it helps when you focus on, I think the balanced life, you know? And again the leadership, scholarship and service, it helps you focus on making your life balance, it brings it back into consciousness for you. I think those concepts have been the association that you have with other people that have similar interests and similar desires helps, is encouraging of all those things and more.

Marion expressed the support women felt through their Mortar Board involvement,

I think being encouraged to participate in Community when an Active gave me the confidence to be a leader in a variety of organizations in my adult years (I was very shy). The strong ties of working together are not forgotten. I'm grateful for the experience. It helped me with my own self-confidence.

Involvement in Mortar Board during their collegiate experience provided these women with the opportunity and support to continue to grow and be committed to community service and leadership throughout their lives. Deborah's comment reflects the connection between Mortar Board involvement and intrinsic motivation to serve when she said,

Well, I think that it has quite a bit to do with it. Because I've always been interested in learning new things. I've been interested in serving. I think they've started with Mortar Board scholarship, leadership, and service. And that's part of my constitution.

It is evident that Deborah was drawn to Mortar Board involvement and commitment to the ideals of scholarship, leadership, and service because Mortar Board was a reflection of her own values and views. Being tapped for membership in Mortar Board was recognition and reinforcement of participants' dedication to community service and leadership rather than the reason for it.

Member Checking

To enhance the validity of this study, I used a technique called member checking. After the interviews were transcribed, I sent a copy of each individual transcript to each participant to check for accuracy of content. I also sent a one-page summary of themes to

all participants for their review. Participants provided responses to the transcripts. I did not anticipate the overwhelming response, which was a desire to “edit” the transcripts so they better reflected written communication rather than a record of a spoken interview. I sent a clarification to participants that the transcripts were a reflection of the exact conversation we had and were not expected to be grammatically correct. I attribute this response to participants’ intrinsic nature of being high achieving women who “want it done right.” Participants in this study replied that they very much agreed with the themes that were identified through the transcript analysis. One woman suggested a better name for the sense that community service was enjoyable. She indicated it was more than enjoyment that was felt through community service, it was a sense of fulfillment. I changed the second theme related to Research Question Two to more strongly represent this feeling of fulfillment.

Conclusion

This chapter provides an overview of participant demographics and a description of the interview and coding process. Through an analysis of the individual transcripts, themes were identified related to each of two research questions as well as other themes that emerged through the process of coding.

Participants indicated they continue to be involved with an alumni chapter of Mortar Board National Senior Honor Society years after their collegiate experience primarily due to the relationships they have with other members in the chapter. It was also found that participants continue to be involved with the Alumni Chapter because they take pride in the accomplishments of the chapter, they feel a need to continue to be

of service to others throughout their lives, and they find their involvement to be intellectually stimulating.

When asked about the impact of collegiate Mortar Board involvement participants talked about their own experiences in Mortar Board as a senior in college, identified types of civic engagement after college, discussed their lifelong views of civic engagement, and focused on the impact of Mortar Board involvement on their views. Six themes were identified related to participants' collegiate Mortar Board experience. Participants spoke about the honor they felt having been selected for membership in Mortar Board, the high reputation of Mortar Board on their college campuses, their own identity related to Mortar Board, details of their own tapping, chapter activities, and the importance of the relationships they developed through their collegiate experience in Mortar Board.

In addition to involvement in the Alumni Chapter of Mortar Board, it was found that participants were also involved in educational, community service, church, cultural, political, international affairs, and social organizations. Participants' primary lifelong view of civic engagement was a sense of duty and responsibility to helping others and having an impact. Participants found community service and engagement to be rewarding. They liked volunteering in the service of others and enjoyed the relationships they made with women who were committed to service.

Collegiate Mortar Board involvement was found to have had limited impact on participants' lifelong views of or participation in civic engagement and leadership. However, it was found that Mortar Board provided the opportunity for high achieving

and involved senior women to continue to be engaged in their communities. Mortar Board tapping recognized women who were already inclined towards civic engagement and leadership as undergraduate students.

The next chapter will identify and discuss specific conclusions reached in this study along with how the research relates to the findings of this study. The final chapter will present limitations of this study and propose future areas for research and recommendations for policy and practice.

CHAPTER V
SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, DISCUSSION,
AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Mortar Board National Senior Honor Society has recognized high achieving college seniors for commitment to scholarship, leadership, and service at American institutions of higher education since 1918. Mortar Board has initiated over 250,000 students at 229 institutions of higher education since its founding (Mortar Board, 2011a). Students selected for membership not only have high academic achievement, but also have been involved in service and leadership throughout their collegiate experience. Many Mortar Board members continue to be engaged in their communities years after they have graduated from college. This study examines the impact of alumnae involvement in Mortar Board National Senior Honor Society on lifelong views of civic engagement and leadership.

This chapter provides a summary of the research study, including the key findings for each research question; conclusions drawn from the findings and their significance; limitations of this study; recommendations for higher education and Mortar Board; suggestions for future research; and final reflections.

Summary of Research Study

This study examines the impact of alumnae involvement in Mortar Board National Senior Honor Society on lifelong views of and participation in civic engagement and leadership. Previous research has examined outcomes related to involvement in student organizations during college including the relationship between involvement and student development (Abrahamowicz, 1988; Astin, 1999; Gellin, 2003; Hernandez, Hogan, Hathaway, & Lovell, 1999; Moore, Lovell, McGann, & Wyrick, 1998; Terenzini, Pascarella, & Blimling, 1996), the impact of student organization involvement on the facilitation of leadership development (Cress, Astin, Zimmerman-Oster, & Burkhardt, 2001; Dugan & Komives, 2007; Kuh, 1995; Moore, Lovell, McGann, & Wyrick, 1998; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005; Posner, 2004), and increases in student participation and engagement in service and civic-related activities due to involvement in student organizations (Astin & Sax, 1998; Berger & Milem, 2002).

As a student organization, Mortar Board National Senior Honor Society selects for membership from among the most talented and motivated students in higher education. Mortar Board was founded as a senior honor society to recognize the accomplishments and involvement of high achieving women. In 1975 Mortar Board membership was opened to men in response to regulations implemented by the U.S. Department of Education to enforce Title IX, which prohibits gender discrimination in clubs and organizations in educational organizations.

Through my own involvement with Mortar Board, I have been inspired by the stories of Mortar Board alums who continue to be involved in service and leadership

roles in their communities throughout their lives. Many Mortar Board alumni also continue to be involved with alumni chapters years after their collegiate experience. This study attempts to better understand how involvement in a senior honor society during their last year in college may have made a lasting impact on students. Research on the impact of involvement on college student development, leadership development, and civic engagement relates directly to the mission and purpose of Mortar Board Senior Honor Society and the characteristics of students selected for membership.

The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship of involvement in Mortar Board National Senior Honor Society on lifelong views of civic engagement and leadership. Two research questions guide this study: 1.) What motivates alumnae to remain connected to and active in an alumni chapter of Mortar Board National Senior Honor Society years after their undergraduate experience in the Society? and 2.) What is the impact of collegiate involvement in Mortar Board National Senior Honor Society on the lifelong views of and participation in civic engagement and leadership?

To address the research questions, I interviewed 11 women who graduated from college at least 40 years ago regarding their collegiate Mortar Board experiences, participation in civic engagement and leadership throughout their lives, and their views on civic engagement and leadership. Participants were all members of a Mortar Board Alumni Chapter in a metropolitan area of the Western United States and were Caucasian women ranging from 75 to 92 years of age. Individual interviews were conducted with each participant and were digitally recorded, transcribed, and then coded for the purpose of analysis. Themes that emerged from the transcript analyses were identified for each

research question. My own experience in Mortar Board, having been involved for 18 years, guided my analysis and provided me with insight into the emerging themes.

Motivation to Remain Connected

The first research question asked what motivates alumnae to remain connected to and active in an alumni chapter of Mortar Board National Senior Honor Society years after their undergraduate experience in the Society? Four key themes emerged from the analysis of the transcripts related to this question: Relationships, Pride in Accomplishment, Service to Others, and Intellectual Stimulation. The first theme identified was Relationships. The 11 women with whom I spoke remain active in the Alumni Chapter of Mortar Board because of the strong relationships they have formed with other women who have similar interests. The theme of Relationships was the most important theme that emerged related to the first research question. The second theme was Pride in Accomplishment. The women in this study continue to be involved in an alumni chapter because of what the chapter does and accomplishes. They are proud of their service in the Alumni Chapter. The next theme identified through the analysis is Service to Others. Participants indicated they felt it was important for them to continue to remain active and involved throughout their lives and that the Alumni Chapter provided them the opportunity to serve. The last important theme is Intellectual Stimulation. The women in this study indicated they remain involved in an alumni chapter because they are stimulated by other members of the chapter and by the types of programs and activities the chapter provides.

Lifelong Impact of Collegiate Mortar Board Involvement

The second research question asked what is the impact of active involvement in Mortar Board National Senior Honor Society on lifelong views of and participation in civic engagement and leadership? The women in this study talked about their collegiate Mortar Board experiences, civic engagement activities after college, and their current views of civic engagement and leadership. Additionally, they discussed the relationship of their collegiate Mortar Board involvement to their current views of civic engagement and leadership. Participants did not address civic engagement and leadership as two discrete variables. The concepts of civic engagement and leadership have been combined for the purpose of this study and are referred to as civic engagement or community service interchangeably.

The women in this study readily discussed their own collegiate experience in Mortar Board National Senior Honor Society. The emergent themes were strongly related to their views of and feelings about Mortar Board, their selection into Mortar Board, and their collegiate participation in Mortar Board. The common themes that emerged related to collegiate Mortar Board experience include: Membership is an Honor; Mortar Board Identity; Reputation of Mortar Board; Memory of Tapping (process of physically being tapped by a mortarboard to indicate selection); Active Chapter; and Relationships. On average the women in this study are 59 years removed from their collegiate Mortar Board experience with a range of 54 (1957) to 70 (1941) years. Even though it has been a significant number of decades since their collegiate Mortar Board

experience, the women in this study vividly remembered their experiences in Mortar Board.

The alumnae were also asked about the types of community engagement they have been involved in throughout their lives after college. All women have continued to be involved in the Alumni Chapter of Mortar Board. They also indicated they were involved in educational, church, community service, cultural, political, and international affairs activities throughout their lives.

I also asked the women in this study about their lifelong views of civic engagement and leadership. Three main themes emerged related to participants' current views of civic engagement and leadership. First, the women interviewed felt a sense of responsibility to remain active and involved in their communities throughout their lives. They indicated they felt a clear duty to help others. The second theme, related to participants' views of civic engagement, was that they found community service to be rewarding. The women in this study found personal satisfaction and fulfillment in their community service activities. Another theme identified through my analysis was related to the relationships that were formed with others committed to service. Participants indicated they enjoyed being engaged in their communities with other women who also shared their commitment to helping others.

Collegiate Mortar Board involvement was found to have had limited impact on lifelong views of or participation in civic engagement and leadership. It was found that Mortar Board recognized high achieving women who were predisposed to service and provided opportunities for these women to continue to be engaged in service and

leadership activities. The next section will identify and discuss the main conclusions that stem from the themes identified in this study.

Conclusions and Discussion

Through this study I examined the experience of membership in Mortar Board National Senior Honor Society and its impact on lifelong participation in and views of civic engagement and leadership through the lenses of 11 remarkable women. The women I interviewed for this study each have a lifetime of experience after their graduation from college and collegiate involvement in Mortar Board. In addition to looking at their undergraduate experiences, this study examined a combined 650 years of life experiences after graduation for these 11 women.

Upon examination of the themes related to each research question, I have identified four key conclusions that I will discuss in further detail. First, based on my research findings, I conclude that for the group of 11 alumnae in this study, Mortar Board membership and active involvement over many decades resulted in a high value being placed upon the significant relationships that were developed among the participants which both motivated and sustained these women's engagement with the organization. Second, I conclude that the women in this study developed a significant sense of identity related to Mortar Board due to the reputation and perceived prestige of the organization and their selection for membership. My third conclusion is that the alumnae in this study are motivated to serve by making a difference in the lives of other people. My last conclusion is that rather than collegiate Mortar Board involvement having had significant impact on lifelong views of and participation in civic engagement and leadership, Mortar

Board membership reinforced already held views of civic engagement and leadership and provided opportunities for continued community service.

Significant Relationships

The first key conclusion of this study is that for the group of 11 alumnae in this study, Mortar Board membership and active involvement over many decades resulted in a high value being placed upon the significant relationships that were developed among the participants which both motivated and sustained the women's engagement with the organization. The women in this study indicated they made long-lasting significant relationships with other high caliber women who are committed to the Mortar Board ideals of scholarship, leadership, and service. When asked to bring an artifact related to Mortar Board to our interviews, all the women I interviewed brought some sort of photo or college yearbook. I asked each woman what the photo meant to them and they replied that it was the relationships with other women in the chapter that stood out the most to them. Florence said, "It makes me smile; I'm looking at all those faces of people that I remember fondly."

The value of the relationships made during their collegiate Mortar Board experience was a common theme. One participant indicated that each year since the chapter graduated, every member sent a letter to one person of their chapter who would then coordinate all letters, make copies, and send them out to everyone. These letters shared updates on each others' lives and included significant happenings of the past year. All alumnae in the chapter have kept in contact in this way for over 50 years now and continue to send their annual letter through e-mail. The relationships formed through the

common shared experience of Mortar Board were significant and long lasting for the women in this study. Deborah expresses the importance of relationships she made when asked about what stands out most to her about experiences in her collegiate chapter,

Probably the relationships of the people and when I went to the 50th reunion of our graduating class, I remember seeing just a few that came. I still correspond with our president and have kind of lost touch with most of the others, but they were a great group of women.

The significance of relationships was identified as a primary motivation for the Alumnae in this study to remain connected to and involved in a Mortar Board alumni chapter years after their undergraduate experience in college. The findings of this study suggest that the most significant reason for continued involvement was due to the relationships participants had with one another in the Chapter.

The theme of relationships is found throughout the research on involvement in college. In examining the impact of co-curricular involvement on student intellectual development, Baxter Magolda (1992) identified learning to relate to people with different backgrounds as a major theme. Holzweiss, Rahn, and Wickline (2007) concluded that student motivation for involvement in non-academic organizations was relationships. Logue et al. (2005) indicated that students discussed the significance of relationships in leadership positions. Gilligan (1993) discussed the importance of relationships in the moral development of women.

The women in this study remain connected to the Mortar Board Alumni Chapter because of their relationships with other members. They were brought together through a shared common experience of being in Mortar Board as undergraduate students. The alumnae form relationships with other members of the Chapter due not only to their

shared experience, but a shared commitment to civic engagement and service to communities. Nicole indicated,

I think the biggest thing to me, and always has been, is just friendships and people. And it was so fun when we got together, it seemed like we were all on the same plane. I look now back and I look at all of the Mortar Boards in the alumni and I say to myself, it's the same. They are all sharp, they all want to do things, they all have ideas.

Similar to the experiences of women in sororities, Serow (1991), the women in Mortar Board feel connected to each other due to their experiences.

For the women in this study, the relationships were important because they were a reflection of themselves. They recognized that Mortar Board members were high achieving campus leaders and they felt honored and privileged to be a part of such a group of women. Denise indicates,

As a student, again, I felt very privileged to be with a group of very bright, interested women and women, girls at that time, who were involved with their community and giving service and so, I felt very much at home with them.

The alumnae in this study were proud to be part of an elite group of women that they respected. The relationships they formed as campus leaders connected the women in this study to each other and Mortar Board in the shared purpose of scholarship, leadership, and service.

Impact of Mortar Board Experience on Identity Development

The second conclusion I have identified is that the women in this study developed a significant sense of identity related to Mortar Board due to the reputation and perceived prestige of the organization and their selection for membership. The women in this study spoke passionately about their collegiate experience in Mortar Board. They talked at

great length about the honor of being tapped for Mortar Board, the very strong reputation of Mortar Board on their college campuses, chapter activities and traditions, the specific act of being tapped for membership, and visible symbols of membership in Mortar Board. Their memories of their collegiate Mortar Board experience were quite clear even after up to 70 years after their graduation. The women in this study spoke of being “Mortar Boards.” They strongly identified with their perceived honor that was bestowed upon them by being tapped for membership. For Deborah membership in Mortar Board meant, “That I had achieved a dream. I had worked hard, but with that in mind hoping that I would have been chosen.” Mortar Board became part of their identity while in college which they have embraced for their entire adult lives.

The collegiate Mortar Board experience was always present throughout my interviews. The women commented first on the significant honor it was to have been selected for membership. Deborah indicated, “It was a great honor and it was exclusive.” Many women knew about Mortar Board years before they were tapped for membership and one participant first learned about Mortar Board when she was in high school. For the women in this study, Mortar Board was an involvement and a recognition to which they aspired throughout their college experience. While in college, Mortar Board was the most prestigious honor organization on their campuses that recognized the accomplishments of college women and was extremely visible on the campuses of women in this study. Nicole commented,

When we were Mortar Boards...we had uniforms, and once a week everyone wore your [sic] uniform. And so the university, the four years I was there, they were really all around. You saw them in their uniforms. They had a hat. So it was very noticeable.

Several participants commented on seeing outstanding women tapped into Mortar Board at public events on their campuses.

In addition to the honor of actually being tapped for membership, my interviewees indicated that the reputation of Mortar Board was extremely high. The fact that students did not apply for membership, but were chosen by the chapter was mentioned by several participants and added to the reputation of the Society. Florence commented,

Knowing it was an honor and being thrilled when I was tapped. I think things have changed now where people apply, but when I was in school you didn't apply, you were selected. So it was just a huge surprise and exciting and an honor.

The women in this study commented that Mortar Board tapping was a capstone experience for them. Being tapped was public recognition of their commitment to scholarship, leadership, and service. It was interesting to me that several women revealed a sense of modesty toward their tapping into Mortar Board. They indicated they did not know who would be tapped and that they were surprised when they were tapped.

All participants remembered vivid details of their own tapping. The tapping experience was very public, usually held at some sort of May Days celebration or vaudeville show with most of the college or university in attendance. It is significant that the clear memories of tapping range from 55 to 70 years after the tapping. The symbols of membership in Mortar Board were very public and led to development of participants' sense of identity as a "Mortar Boarder" or a "Mortar Board." The women indicated that they wore a particular Mortar Board uniform that consisted of a skirt, blouse, and jacket with the Mortar Board emblem embroidered on it. In addition to the uniform, members

also wore a Mortar Board pin on a regular basis on campus. These symbols were tangible signs of their membership and identity as a “Mortar Boarder.”

My respondents also indicated their chapters were active on their college campuses; and they recalled several service and leadership programs sponsored by their Mortar Board chapters. The chapters were focused on recognizing members for their commitment to scholarship, leadership, and service and on providing opportunities for the women to continue to give back to their college and university communities.

Jones and Hill (2003) found that quality community service participation, along with reflection, was found to be meaningful for participants in influencing their sense of self and identity formation. Participants in the current study indicated an extremely strong sense of commitment for community service that has been engrained in their sense of identity. Through their experiences, the women in this study developed a sense of identity as “Mortar Boarders.” This sense of identity and affiliation with Mortar Board has lasted throughout their lives. Their connection to Mortar Board is significant for them and helps define who they are. Selection into Mortar Board was a defining moment in the lives of the women I interviewed.

Motivated to Serve by Making a Difference

The next conclusion of this study is that the alumnae interviewed were found to be motivated to serve by their ability to make a difference in the lives of other people. Winniford et al. (1997) identified egoistic and altruistic motivators as two primary motivators for community service participation identified by the literature. In the current study, feeling a sense of responsibility and duty to participate in community service is an

altruistic, external motivator; whereas the sense of personal reward can be seen as an egoistic motivator for community service.

Jones and Hill (2003) examined the impact of motivation for service on continued service participation from high school to college. For students whose motivation for service was external in high school, their continued participation in service activities in college subsided. High school students whose motivation for service was internal were more likely to continue service participation in college.

Jacoby (2009) defines civic engagement as

Acting upon a heightened sense of responsibility to one's communities. This includes a wide range of activities, including developing civic sensitivity, participation in building civil society, and benefiting the common good. Civic engagement encompasses the notions of global citizenship and interdependence. Through civic engagement, individuals – as citizens of their communities, their nations, and the world – are empowered as agents of positive social change for a more democratic world. (p. 9)

The women in this study indicated they felt a sense of responsibility and duty to their communities to participate in civic engagement activities. Participants very much exemplify Jacoby's definition of civic engagement. Komives, Lucas, and McMahon (1998) define civic responsibility as a responsibility to the community and others in the community to "keep it functioning and make it even better" (p. 15). The respondents in my study are motivated to continue to be engaged in their communities to make them a better place and to help others.

Participants' feelings of responsibility and an obligation to make society better are demonstrated by the types of civic engagement participants have chosen. These include educational, community service, cultural, and church-related activities. Two women

volunteered to record textbooks for the blind. Several women volunteered with the local art museum, symphony, or opera and one participant told a story of introducing children from working class backgrounds to art and why it is so important to her. She talked about a time when she invited a friend to the art museum with her and she was surprised that her friend had never been to an art museum. Her friend indicated that she thought only the wealthy visited art museums and that she thought it was not a place for her. The woman in this study felt an obligation to society to help people from all backgrounds and socio-economic classes feel comfortable taking part in the arts. Astin and Sax (1998) concluded that “participating in service during the undergraduate years substantially enhances the student’s academic development, life skill development, and sense of civic responsibility” (p. 251).

Participants in this study indicated they felt a sense of fulfillment, enjoyment, and accomplishment through their community service work. Research on motivation for community service among college students supports this theme. Serow (1991) found that 80% of students completing a survey who participated in service responded that “sense of satisfaction for helping others” was one of their primary reasons for engaging in service. In examining values, it was found that students who participated in service valued helping others more significantly than those who did not participate in service, while family values were significantly higher for students who did not participate in service than for those who did.

Rhoads (1998) found that participation in service activities enables students to learn about themselves, others, and develop an understanding of the social good. Astin et

al. (1999) found that “participating in volunteer service during college is associated with attending graduate school, earning higher degrees, donating money to one's alma mater, socializing with persons from different racial/ethnic groups, and participating in volunteer/community service work in the years after college” (p. 197). Service participation can have significant influence on one’s sense of fulfillment and accomplishment. Janice indicates she feels her involvement in community service has been enjoyable and fulfilling,

It's been fulfillment, I think, as much as anything. Certainly your family is fulfillment, but this is something you do for, just for you too, I think...I enjoy working on the things and most of them, in fact I can't think of anything I really haven't. I guess I wouldn't do it if I didn't enjoy it.

Community service was rewarding to the women in this study.

Mortar Board Provided Structure and Purpose

The relationship between involvement in Mortar Board National Senior Honor Society and lifelong views of and participation in civic engagement and leadership was examined by this study. My last conclusion is that rather than collegiate Mortar Board involvement having had significant impact on lifelong views of and participation in civic engagement and leadership, Mortar Board membership reinforced already held views of civic engagement and leadership and provided opportunities for continued community service. This study provided evidence for the conclusion that Mortar Board selects for membership and recognizes students who are predisposed to be engaged in civic engagement and leadership. Adele commented, “Well, I don't think it's anything to do with Mortar Board because what I am I would have been with or without Mortar Board.” Deborah said, “I think [my views] started with Mortar Board [ideals of] scholarship,

leadership, and service. And that's part of my constitution.” Kay’s comments were illustrative of this view,

I believe the answer to the question is that participation in civic engagement and leadership describes who and what we are and why we became Mortar Boards in the first place. I am not certain I would have been any different if I had not been tapped but I have always been proud that I was.

The women interviewed were selected for membership in Mortar Board because of their demonstrated commitment to the ideals of scholarship, leadership, and service. As undergraduates, the women in this study were active in student government, residence hall government and supervision, and service organizations on campus. They served in leadership roles in their sororities and helped coordinate campus wide activities and events. These women were recognized for involvement in civic engagement and leadership roles by being tapped for membership in Mortar Board.

Mortar Board, however, provided an outlet and structure for continued service and leadership involvement. The women interviewed indicated they were involved in chapter events, activities, and service projects as collegiate Mortar Board members. Mortar Board membership provided connections to other high achieving women who were also drawn to service and leadership as well as the opportunity to participate in civic engagement. As members of the Alumni Chapter, my respondents indicated they continue to remain involved in Mortar Board years after their collegiate initiation because they enjoy the activities of the chapter. The Alumni Chapter continues to provide ways for these women to be active and engaged in their communities. In this way, Mortar Board connects those who are inclined to service and leadership with opportunities to be involved in service and leadership.

Limitations

Inherent in qualitative research are limitations to the credibility of a study that need to be addressed by the researcher (Creswell, 2007). The most common limitation of qualitative research is the sample of participants. The goal of qualitative research, specifically phenomenology, is not to generalize across populations, but to tell a story about a specific population (Moustakas, 1994). Although this study attempts to describe the experiences of Mortar Board National Senior Honor Society alumnae related to their views of civic engagement and leadership, only eleven women who are currently involved in a Mortar Board alumni chapter in the Western United States participated in this study. Participants were all Caucasian women between the ages of 75 to 92 years old who currently live in a single metropolitan area in the Western United States and are currently involved in a specific alumni chapter of Mortar Board. Gaining the experience of participants from other racial ethnic backgrounds may provide for more diversity of themes. Additionally, interviewing Mortar Board alums of varying ages may certainly impact the diversity of experiences and views of civic engagement and leadership. The gender of participants is also related to diversity of experiences. Since men were not initiated into Mortar Board until 1975, examining the experiences of members initiated into Mortar Board before 1975 would only yield samples of women. However, examining the experiences of members initiated after 1975 would include the perspective of men. I used rich, thick description (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) of the experiences of the women in this study to provide for transferability, or the ability of the findings of this study to apply to other experiences.

Subjectivity of the researcher and researcher bias are also potential limitations in qualitative research (Creswell, 2007). The questions I asked, how I conducted the interviews, and my own analysis of the transcripts are all framed from my own personal assumptions and subjectivity. Although my own experiences with Mortar Board National Senior Honor Society do inform my study, I recognize that my significant experience with Mortar Board also provides a challenge for me as an impartial observer. I was mindful of my own subjectivity throughout the research process and employed a purposeful methodology and process for the analysis of data. I recognize that I cannot completely remove my own personal experiences from this study and that my experience is intertwined in the data collection, analysis of transcripts, and the study itself (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Merriam, 2009; Seidman, 2006).

Reliability or consistency is another inherent limitation of qualitative research (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Consistency addresses whether the findings of the study can be replicated. Merriam (2009) indicates for qualitative research, “The question then is not whether findings will be found again but whether the results are consistent with the data collected” (p. 221). To ensure consistency, Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggest the use of an audit trail. The audit trail I used in this study consisted of written field notes, digitally recorded interviews, photos of artifacts, coding manual, process notes, information from the pilot study, transcriptions, and member checking materials.

An additional limitation of this study may be the length of time elapsed from participants’ collegiate Mortar Board experience, 54 to 70 years. Although the experience of Mortar Board selection and involvement as a senior in college was a key

event for the women in this study, the significant passage of time may have made recall of specific events challenging. Furthermore, my interviewees were asked about experiences related to civic engagement and leadership throughout their lives. They provided me with a wealth of information about their collegiate experiences as well as significant life events, but it may have been challenging due to the length of time to remember specific details and accounts over the span of 75 to 92 years.

Recommendations

This section provides recommendations from this study for collegiate chapters of Mortar Board National Senior Honor Society, National Mortar Board, and higher educational professionals. It also provides recommendations for future research.

Recommendations for Key Stakeholders

Mortar Board National should provide expectations for chapter activity and minimum standards that are intentional and purposeful for establishing strong relationships among collegiate chapter members. The importance and value of relationships was clear for the alumnae in this study. Many of these relationships began during their collegiate Mortar Board experience and continued throughout their lives. Establishing strong relationships for collegiate members may lead to lifelong connections to Mortar Board.

Mortar Board collegiate chapters need to continue to recognize students for prior and current commitment to scholarship, leadership, and service and provide opportunities for these students to contribute to their communities as Mortar Boards. Collegiate chapter members must make it clear that students are tapped into Mortar Board because

of their commitment to the ideals of scholarship, leadership, and service. The findings in this study indicate that students who are attracted to membership in Mortar Board are predisposed to civic engagement and are looking for continued opportunities to provide service. Mortar Board collegiate chapters need to meet the needs of their members.

Collegiate chapters need to increase the visibility on campuses directly related to the honor of selection and tapping into Mortar Board. As higher education has changed over the past 50-70 years, based on my recent experience, the visibility of Mortar Board on college campuses has diminished. It is clear that the reputation of Mortar Board and visibility of being tapped for membership was extremely important for my interviewees. Maintaining the strong reputation of Mortar Board National Senior Honor Society is significant to the identification with the Society for alumni.

Mortar Board National needs to find ways to link members of alumni chapters with collegiate chapters in order for alumni to share their experiences and for the sustainability of alumni chapters. Participation in the Alumni Chapter was important to the alumnae in this study. Mortar Board needs to look for ways to continue to encourage younger alumni to remain connected to the organization and become involved in alumni chapters.

Institutions of higher education with Mortar Board chapters need to find ways to connect with Mortar Board alumni to link them to their institutions after graduation. I would suggest forming Mortar Board affinity groups through alumni relations or development offices. These institutions should work to support regional Mortar Board alumni chapters to remain connected to and involved with Mortar Board alumni.

Higher education professionals need to provide and support opportunities for students who are committed to civic engagement to connect to other students with similar values and goals. The women in this study were motivated by their service to others and the relationships they developed with other women who were also motivated to by service. Institutions of higher education need to support and recognize the value of student organizations such as Mortar Board that, in addition to high academic achievement, recognize students for leadership and service and provide opportunities for these students to connect and continue service to their communities.

Higher education professionals need to recognize the significant impact organizations such as Mortar Board National Senior Honor Society have on the identity development of undergraduate students and provide resources to chapters to ensure their continued success in American higher education. So many student organizations exist on college campuses that it becomes difficult for student development professionals to provide the necessary support and resources to enable their continued success. The entire higher education community needs to better understand how student organization involvement can impact student development and identity formation in college and throughout one's life.

Recommendations for Future Research

Further research could examine the impact of collegiate Mortar Board involvement on men's views of civic engagement and leadership. Since men were not initiated into Mortar Board National Senior Honor Society until 1975, this study only addresses the perspective and experiences of women. It is important to also examine the

experiences of men who were initiated into Mortar Board to determine the impact of Mortar Board involvement on their participation in and lifelong views of civic engagement and leadership.

An additional study could examine differences in impact of collegiate Mortar Board involvement on views of and involvement in civic engagement and leadership for women initiated before 1975 and after 1975. The difference between these two potential groups of women being that men were allowed membership in Mortar Board starting in 1975. It would be important to determine if any differences in experience and views exist for these experiences of women before and after men were allowed to be selected.

Additional research should expand on alumni's motivation to remain connected or not connected with Mortar Board National Senior Honor Society. This research may enable Mortar Board and higher education professionals to better understand conditions that connect students to organizations after their collegiate experience.

Research should also examine the reputation of Mortar Board on today's college campuses, the meaning of tapping and selection into the Society, and motivation of today's college students for applying for membership as well as the impact of involvement in Mortar Board for current undergraduate students. This research would enable a comparison of the current Mortar Board experience to that of the past and allow for a better understanding of the meaning of Mortar Board membership to today's college seniors.

Research on the collegiate experience of women is related to the current study. It was fascinating to discuss participants' collegiate experiences related to the time they

were in college. Higher education has changed greatly from the 1940's and 1950's and continues to change rapidly. Historical research related to women's experience in college during the 1940's and 1950's would provide a more complete perspective on the student college experience.

Further research should explore the long-term impact of collegiate involvement on the careers and lives of college graduates. Do graduates who are very involved in college continue to remain involved in organizations throughout their lives? Are there generational differences that exist in commitment to community involvement? For men and women later in life, what has been the impact and significance of lifelong commitment to civic engagement? Little research has explored the significant long-term impact of collegiate involvement.

Final Reflections

I was drawn to conduct this study because of my own experiences with Mortar Board National Senior Honor Society for the past 18 years. I was selected for membership as an undergraduate student; was elected president of my collegiate chapter; have served as a chapter advisor for the past 17 years; and have been involved nationally as a section coordinator, committee chair, vice president, president-elect, and national president. I have met many alumnae who continue to be involved in Mortar Board and their communities years after their own collegiate experience. I am inspired by their stories of service, leadership, and community engagement.

I suspected that Mortar Board involvement would have significant impact on members' continued involvement and views of civic engagement and leadership. What I

found was that collegiate Mortar Board involvement itself did not lead to the development of views of civic engagement and leadership for the women in this study. Instead, their selection into Mortar Board served to reinforce their existing commitment to scholarship, leadership, and service and provided an opportunity for women in this study to continue to follow their passion for community service and leadership. What I did not anticipate was how strongly the women I interviewed felt about their selection, involvement, and membership in Mortar Board as college students. Mortar Board selection was a defining moment in the undergraduate lives of the 11 women I interviewed. Mortar Board recognized these outstanding women for high academic ability, service to their communities, and leadership at a time in the 1940's and 1950's when the role of women was still secondary to that of men in society. Even up to 70 years after their undergraduate collegiate experience, these women remembered vividly the reputation of Mortar Board on the college campuses, their own tapping, what it meant to them to have been selected for membership, symbols of their membership, and the relationships formed through their experience.

This study gives voice to 11 very remarkable women who were committed to service as undergraduate students, continued to be active in their communities as adults, and remain committed to the ideals of scholarship, leadership, and service as seniors. These women have made significant contributions to serving their communities throughout their lives.

A long-standing Mortar Board tradition is to read a poem, entitled, "The Torch" written by Mortar Board alumnae, Elizabeth Furry, in 1925, at the end of the Mortar

Board initiation ceremony. “The Torch” symbolizes the meaning of leadership and community service and is a wonderful reflection of and tribute to the 11 women who volunteered to share their lives with me through participation in this study. These 11 women have carried “the torch” of civic engagement and leadership throughout their lives. They are wonderful role models and examples for me and others committed to community service and improving the world in which we live.

The Torch

The God of Great Endeavor gave me a torch to bear.
I lifted it high above me in the dark and murky air,
And straightway, with loud hosannas, the crowd proclaimed its light,
And followed me as I carried my torch through the starless night.
‘Til drunk with the people’s praises, and mad with vanity,
I forgot ’twas the torch that they followed,
And fancied they followed me.

Then slowly my arm grew weary upholding the shining load,
And my tired feet went stumbling over the dusty road,
And I fell—with the torch beneath me. In a moment the light was out,
When lo’ from the throng a stripling sprang forth and with a mighty shout,
Caught up the torch as it smoldered, and lifted it high and tall
‘Til, fanned by the winds of heaven, it fired the souls of all.

As I lay in the darkness, the feet of the trampling crowd
Passed over and far beyond me, its paeans proclaiming aloud,
And I learned in the deepening twilight, the glorious verity,
’Tis the torch that the people follow,
Whoever the bearer may be.

- Elizabeth Furry, 1925 (Florida State University, Torchbearer Chapter), rev. 2011.

Mortar Board National College Senior Honor Society

APPENDIX A

LIAISON INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE

LIAISON INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE

<date>

Dear <name>:

I invite you to participate as an administrative liaison for a research study examining the impact of involvement in Mortar Board National College Senior Honor Society on lifelong views of civic engagement and leadership development. I am conducting this research in fulfillment of my doctoral dissertation in higher education administration at Loyola University Chicago.

As an administrative liaison, I will ask you to help me in contacting an appropriate sample of members in the Alumni Chapter who would be eligible to participate in individual interviews. My goal is to interview 10-15 members of the alumni chapter who were members of their collegiate chapter at least 40 years ago to gain lifelong perspectives on their involvement. Interviews will last approximately 60-90 minutes and will take place in a location that is convenient and comfortable for participants. Once potential participants are identified, you would send them materials provided by me about the research study including an invitation to participate, a participant response form, synopsis of the study, and informed consent form. The information gathered in this study will only be used for the purpose of research. Your identity and the identity of all participants will remain confidential.

Thank you for your consideration to serve as an administrative liaison. If you are interested in participating, please contact me by <date> through either email or phone and we will set up an appointment. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me. Thank you again.

Sincerely,

Daniel J. Turner
13581 Via Varra Rd, Unit 3403
Broomfield, CO 80020
Dturne4@luc.edu
970-430-6713

APPENDIX B
SYNOPSIS OF STUDY

SYNOPSIS OF STUDY

**The Impact of Involvement in
Mortar Board National Collegiate Honor Society on
Lifelong Views of Civic Engagement and Leadership Development**

A study by Daniel J. Turner, Ph.D. Candidate at Loyola University Chicago.

Researcher Background

My name is Daniel J. Turner and I am a Ph.D. candidate in the Higher Education Administration program at Loyola University Chicago. I received a master's degree in Instructional Technology and a bachelor's degree in Psychology both from Northern Illinois University. Please contact me with any questions you may have either through email at dturne4@luc.edu or phone at 970-430-6713.

Purpose of Research Study

I am proposing to conduct an interview based study to examine the impact that involvement in a senior honor society, specifically Mortar Board National Senior Honor Society, has on lifelong views of civic engagement and leadership. I was inspired to propose this study by my interactions with Mortar Board alumni who have very much lived lives committed to the Mortar Board ideals of scholarship, leadership, and service and continue to do so. Having been founded as a senior honor society for women and only being open to men since 1975, Mortar Board alumni over the age of 60 are primarily women. Through my own involvement with Mortar Board I have had the opportunity to meet many of these women who have led extraordinary lives and continue to be involved in service and leadership roles in their communities. I am inspired by their stories of achievement, service, and fellowship throughout their lives and hope to better understand how involvement in a senior honor society during their last year in college may have made a lasting impact.

How the Study will be Conducted

The researcher will contact a member of a Mortar Board Alumni chapter to ask her to serve as a research liaison. The research liaison will distribute information about the study to members of the alumni chapter who have graduated from their undergraduate college or university at least 40 years ago. A participant response form will be distributed to approximately 30 potential participants. Interested participants will respond directly to the researcher to indicate their willingness to participate and to set up an in-person interview. Interviews will take approximately 60-90 minutes and will be conducted in a location of convenience for participants. Participants will also be asked

to bring an artifact from their experience in Mortar Board that has a particular significance to them.

Managing Data and Results

All interviews will be digitally recorded and transcribed. Digital photos will be taken of all artifacts. Participants will be provided with a copy of their transcript to review for accuracy. Pseudonyms will be used for the names of all participants, undergraduate institutions, and their alumni chapter to preserve confidentiality. All data and information collected will be kept in a secure location both physically and digitally. Data collected will be used for the purposes of the researcher's dissertation. Transcripts will be coded and analyzed for common themes. Participants will be provided with a one page summary of themes for their review.

Possible Risks to Participants

Potential risks in this study are no more than would be encountered in everyday life. The possible risk to participants is the investment of time to conduct the interview and review the transcript and summary of themes as well as the potential for breach of confidentiality. To minimize risks all data collected and participant information will be stored in a secure manner and destroyed after a period of two years. To preserve confidentiality, the researcher will use pseudonyms for the identification of all participants, their undergraduate institution, and their alumni Mortar Board chapter.

Possible Benefits to Participants

Participants in this study will be assisting with the contribution of knowledge to the research in the area of the impact of involvement in college. Specifically participants will be sharing their experience of being involved in Mortar Board Senior Honor Society, a topic for which very little research exists. Involvement with this study will assist to illuminate the experience of membership in collegiate honor societies.

APPENDIX C
INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE

INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE

<date>

Dear <name>:

As a member of a Mortar Board Alumni chapter I invite you to participate in a research study examining the impact of involvement in Mortar Board National College Senior Honor Society on lifelong views of civic engagement and leadership development. I am conducting this research in fulfillment of my doctoral dissertation in higher education administration at Loyola University Chicago.

My goal is to interview 10-15 members of the alumni chapter who were members of their collegiate chapter at least 40 years ago to gain lifelong perspective on their involvement. If you are willing to participate, your involvement will be a 60-90 minute interview which will focus on your involvement in Mortar Board as a collegiate member and your views of community engagement, service, and leadership. The interview will be digitally recorded, professionally transcribed, and reviewed by me to identify common themes and experiences. You will have the opportunity to review the transcript. Once I have analyzed all transcripts, I will provide you with a one page summary of themes for you to give feedback.

Your participation in this study will only be used for the purpose of research. All information gathered will remain confidential and will not impact your membership or involvement in Mortar Board National Senior Honor Society or the Alumni chapter in any way.

I thank you for your consideration of participation in this study. If you are interested in participating, please contact me by <date> through either email or phone and we will set up an appointment. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me. Thank you again.

Sincerely,

Daniel J. Turner
13581 Via Varra Rd, Unit 3403
Broomfield, CO 80020
dturne4@luc.edu
970-430-6713

APPENDIX D
PARTICIPANT RESPONSE FORM

PARTICIPANT RESPONSE FORM**CONFIDENTIAL RESPONSE FORM**

Name: _____

Age: _____ Phone Number: _____

Postal Address: _____
Address city state zip

Email Address: _____

Are you a member of a Mortar Board Alumni Chapter? _____

How long have you been involved with the Alumni Chapter? _____

Have you served in leadership positions in the Alumni Chapter? If so, what positions have you held? _____

At what university were you a member of Mortar Board at during your senior year in college? _____

What year did you graduate from college? _____

What are the best days and times for the researcher to contact you to schedule an interview?

As with all data collected in this study, the information you provide on this form will be kept confidential and will not be used in a manner that will enable you to be identified by either name or institution.

Thank you.

Daniel J. Turner
13581 Via Varra Rd, Unit 3403
Broomfield, CO 80020
dturne4@luc.edu
970-430-6713

APPENDIX E
INFORMED CONSENT FORM

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

Project Title: The Impact of Involvement in Mortar Board Senior Honor Society on Lifelong Views of Civic Engagement and Leadership

Researcher: Daniel J. Turner

Faculty Advisor: Terry E. Williams, Ph.D.

Introduction:

You are being asked to take part in a research study being conducted by Daniel Turner for a dissertation under the supervision of Dr. Terry Williams in the Program of Higher Education at Loyola University Chicago. Results of this study will be used for partial completion of the doctorate of philosophy degree. The results may also be written up for publication or conference presentations. You are being asked to participate because you are an alumna of Mortar Board National Senior Honor Society with at least 40 years of life experiences after graduating from college. Please read this form carefully and ask any questions you may have before deciding whether to participate in the study.

I have a sense of what it means to be a member of Mortar Board through my own collegiate involvement and participation in national leadership roles. I am extremely interested in your story and better understanding what your membership meant to you throughout your life. I was the National President of Mortar Board through July 31, 2011, but currently hold no formal national leadership roles. I do serve as the chapter advisor for the University of Colorado Boulder chapter.

Purpose:

The purpose of this study is to examine the impact of Mortar Board involvement on lifelong views of civic engagement and leadership.

Procedures:

If you agree to be in the study, your participation will include the following:

- An interview asking you to comment on your experience in Mortar Board National Senior Honor Society, civic engagement, and leadership roles throughout your life. The interview will be audio recorded and take 60-90 minutes.
- You may be contacted to review the interview transcript and provide clarification if necessary. This participation is entirely optional and you are under no obligation to participate.
- You have been invited to bring an artifact (photo, document, etc.) from the time you were a collegiate member of Mortar Board National Senior Honor Society. You will be asked to comment on the nature and meaning of the artifact to you. Photos will be taken of your artifact and used for theme analysis.
- You will be invited to review a synopsis of themes that emerge from the study and indicate if these themes are consistent with your experience. This participation is entirely optional and you are under no obligation to participate.

Interviews will take place in a location agreed upon by the participant, preferably a quiet location perhaps in the participant's home, a local library, or meeting room on campus. A digital audio recording will be made of the entire interview and digital photos will be taken of the artifact. A professional transcriber, who will sign a confidentiality agreement, will transcribe the interviews. Participants will have the opportunity to review the transcription and will be provided with a one page summary of themes that emerge from all interviews.

Risks/Benefits:

Your participation in this study will provide insight into the impact Mortar Board involvement has on lifelong views of civic engagement and leadership development. Your participation will help to contribute to better understanding the role Mortar Board involvement played throughout your life. Potential risks in this study are no more than would be encountered in everyday life.

Confidentiality:

To protect your privacy, data from the interview (that is, the recording or a transcript of it) will be available only to the researcher, to his dissertation advisors, the Loyola University Chicago IRB and its representatives and to professional colleagues directly involved in this dissertation project. Only the researcher will know names of participants, which will remain confidential at all times. Interview recordings and transcripts will be coded to preserve confidentiality. Interview recordings and transcripts will be stored either under lock and key or by password protection. No names will appear on interview notes. Participant contact information and consent forms will be stored in a separate, locked, and secure location at the home of Daniel Turner and will be kept for a period of two years. After two years this information will be securely destroyed and deleted.

If any data (recordings and transcriptions) are kept for possible presentations or publications, any information that can identify individuals (i.e., names and other identifying details) will be deleted.

Voluntary Participation:

Participation in this study is voluntary. If you do not want to be in this study, you do not have to participate. Even if you decide to participate, you are free to not answer any questions or to withdraw from participation at any time without penalty.

Contacts and Questions:

If you have questions about this research study, please feel free to contact the researcher, Daniel Turner, at dturne4@luc.edu or 970-430-6713; or faculty sponsor, Terry Williams, at twillia@luc.edu or 312-915-7002.

If you have questions about your rights as a research participant, you may contact the Assistant Director for Research Compliance in Loyola's Office of Research Services at 773- 508-2689.

Statement of Consent:

Your signature below indicates that you have read the information provided above, have had an opportunity to ask questions, and agree to participate in this research study. You will be given a copy of this form to keep for your records.

Participant's Signature

Date

Researcher's Signature

Date

By initialing here, you are indicating your understanding and permission to digitally record the interviews for the purposes of transcribing them for analysis. _____

APPENDIX F
INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Interview Protocol

Dissertation Project: The Impact of Involvement in Mortar Board Senior Honor Society on Lifelong Views of Civic Engagement and Leadership Development

Date and Time of the Interview: _____

Interviewer: _____

Interviewee Number: _____

I appreciate your willingness to talk with me today about your experiences in Mortar Board National College Senior Honor Society. The purpose of my study is to examine the impact of involvement in Mortar Board on members' views of service, civic engagement, and leadership over their lifetime. Since you were involved in Mortar Board at least 40 years ago and continue to be connected to your Alumni Chapter, I am interested in learning more about what the Mortar Board experience meant to you and how it contributed to your own views of and engagement with community service and leadership over your life.

Before we begin, I'd like to ask you to complete the Informed Consent Form. Your participation in this study will be kept strictly confidential. I am using this study toward completion of my dissertation towards a Ph.D. in higher education administration at Loyola University Chicago. If you wish I'd be happy to provide you with an abstract of the results of this study. Our interview will last between 60 and 90 minutes and will be digitally recorded in order for me to analyze the transcription. You can stop the interview at any time for any reason.

1. **To start, I'm interested in getting to know more about you and your background. Can you tell me a little about where you are from, how you chose your university, and how you chose your major?**

Probes:

- When did you begin college?
- How did you choose your undergraduate institution?
- How did you decide on your major?

2. **Thinking back to your college experience, what types of student organizations were you involved in? What involvements stand out the most for you now?**

Probes:

- Were you involved in the Greek System? Student Government? Service organization? Departmental or major Club? Other honor societies?
- Did you work while you were a college student?

- Why did the specific involvement stand out for you and what did it mean to you?

3. **How did you first learn about Mortar Board?**

Probes:

- What year in college were you when you learned what Mortar Board was?
- When did you consider becoming involved with Mortar Board?
- What did Mortar Board mean to you before you considered it for membership?
- Did you know other students who were involved with Mortar Board?
- What was the reputation of Mortar Board on your college campus?

4. **Tell me about your experiences as a member in your Mortar Board chapter. What was your perception of Mortar Board when you were in college?**

Probes:

- What priority did your Mortar Board membership have for you?
- How involved were you in your chapter?
- What types of activities did you participate in?
- Did you hold any leadership position in your chapter?
- What activities or events stood out for you the most about your experience?
- How many students were selected for membership?
- When were you selected for membership?

5. **Please describe for me the kinds of experiences you had while involved in service and leadership as a senior Mortar Board student at your university.**

Probes:

- What types of experiences stand out for you?
- How was Mortar Board active on your college campus?
- What was the purpose of Mortar Board in your experience?

6. **Tell me about the artifact you brought for this interview. What significance does it have for you?**

Probes:

- What does the artifact you brought represent to the chapter? To you?
- When you see this artifact, what do you remember? What do you feel?

7. **Tell me about how you have been involved in your communities since graduation from college.**

Probes:

- What types of community activities have you been involved with?
- What have you done professionally?
- How have you made an impact on others throughout your life?
- What leadership roles have you been involved with throughout your life?

8. **As you think back over the years, in what ways did your Mortar Board service and leadership experiences possibly impact who you have become and the contributions you have made since that time?**

Probes:

- How did your Mortar Board involvement impact what you did after graduation?
- What did your Mortar Board involvement mean to you?

9. **How do you view community service and leadership at this point in your life?**

Probes:

- What does it mean to you to be engaged in your community?
- What value do you put on community service and leadership?
- How has your involvement in community service and leadership activities impacted your life?
- How do you view Mortar Board's ideals of scholarship, leadership, and service?

10. **In what ways have your views of community service, involvement, and leadership changed over the years?**

Probes:

- Have your views of community service changed?
- What types of changes happened?
- What happened to change your views?

11. **Why are you still involved with Mortar Board now after so many years?**

Probes:

- You are still involved with the Alumni Chapter, what has kept you involved?
- How long has it been since you were a collegiate Mortar Board member?
- Have you stayed in contact with others who were in Mortar Board when you were?
- What does Mortar Board membership mean to you now at this point in your life?
- What types of leadership roles have you participated in with your Alumni Chapter?

12. **Looking back, what did it mean to you to be a member of Mortar Board Senior Honor Society?**

Probes:

- What intrinsic meaning do you attach to your experiences?
- How do you feel your Mortar Board experience impacted your life?
- How would you be different if you had not been a member?

13. **What has it meant to you to have been involved in the types of community service and leadership experiences throughout your life?**

Probes:

- What intrinsic meaning do you attach to your experiences?
- How do you feel you have made an impact throughout your life?
- How would you be different if you had not had these experiences?

APPENDIX G
PARTICIPANT THANK YOU LETTER

PARTICIPANT THANK YOU LETTER

<date>

Dear <name>:

Thank you for your participation in my study, "The Impact of Membership in Mortar Board Senior Honor Society on Lifelong Views of Civic Engagement and Leadership." It was a pleasure to meet with you and learn about your experiences in Mortar Board and views on civic engagement and leadership throughout your life. Your experiences may provide insight into the value of participation in Mortar Board and the impact of involvement in college.

As a reminder of confidentiality, your identity will be protected by the use of pseudonyms. All identifying information such as names of institutions and other persons or places mentioned in the interviews will be masked. All interview transcripts, photographs of artifacts, participants response forms, and any other data will be kept in a secure location and destroyed within two years of the completion of this study.

I would like to invite you to review the enclosed transcript of our interview for accuracy. Please make any corrections and return to me by <date>. If I have not heard from you by this date I will assume the transcript is accurate. Please feel free to contact me with any questions you may have. Thank you again for your participation.

Sincerely,

Daniel J. Turner
13581 Via Varra Rd, Unit 3403
Broomfield, CO 80020
dturne4@luc.edu
970-430-6713

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VITA

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Daniel was a member of Mortar Board National Senior Honor Society in 1994 and served as president of his collegiate chapter at Northern Illinois University. He served as chapter advisor at NIU for 13 years, section coordinator for chapters in Illinois and Wisconsin, National Vice President, National President-Elect, and National President. Daniel currently is the senior chapter advisor for the Mortar Board chapter at the University of Colorado Boulder.

