

Over-Involvement of Greek Life Students

by

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ABSTRACT

Astin (1999) defines student involvement as the amount of energy that students dedicate to the academic experience. While much of the research shows a positive correlation in student involvement and retention (Astin, 1999; Clounch, 2010; Gaskins, 2009; Chickering & Reisser, 1993; Crawford, 2007; Tinto, 1993), a gap exists regarding the potential of over-involvement by college students. In order to address the dearth of information on this topic, a qualitative survey was conducted for undergraduate students involved in Greek life at a large, public research university in the Southwest. Results indicated that women were more involved in other student organizations than men. Female respondents were also found to be under higher levels of stress when compared with their male counterparts. Results indicate that there was no significant predictor of what causes a student to be over-involved.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Background

Nationally, 55.5% of students will graduate college within six years of beginning a degree program at four-year institutions of higher learning (Graduation Rates, 2009). Higher education institutions are constantly searching for ways to increase student retention (Astin, 1999; Clounch, 2010; Gaskins, 2009; Chickering & Reisser, 1993; Crawford, 200; Tinto, 1993). Retention for colleges and universities is important because universities are judged by parents, alumni, and potential students on the institution's retention rate and the resulting quality of their end product—the students. One way to increase retention is through student involvement (Astin, 1999; Tinto, 1993). Students who are involved tend to feel a greater sense of connection to the university and will be more likely than noninvolved students to persist until graduation. Tinto and Astin's theories agree that retention is a factor of student involvement; this being so, colleges and universities have implemented a plethora of policies aimed at bolstering the retention rate at their respective institutions, including (but not limited to) prolonged orientation programs, a requirement that all incoming freshmen live on campus, and the encouragement of student involvement in clubs and organizations. In order to increase graduation rates nationally, higher education administrators must look at the transitions that new students face, since the largest number of students who drop out will do so between the first and second year.

Nationally, 77% of freshmen at four-year institutions will return to college for their sophomore year (Retention Rates, 2010).

During the four years to six years that it typically takes to earn a college degree, many classes, organizations, and life experiences influence a student's development. Being away from home, building a sense of independence, and developing many new relationships all contribute to a student's college experience. It is common for students to feel overwhelmed by the sheer novelty of the transition, even without factoring in the struggles and requirements of collegiate coursework. According to Pascarella and Terenzini (2005), during college "students will become more mature, knowledgeable, and focused" (p. 534), allowing them to gain the independence and critical thinking skills that they lacked upon their arrival. Student involvement in on-campus activities is a nontrivial contributor to this documented cognitive boost.

Institutions help students to gain maturity not only through exposure to difficult coursework, but through extracurricular activities as well. Student organizations may provide the student body opportunities to develop leadership skills, invest themselves in their community, and to develop a sense of responsibility to something other than themselves. These organizations run the gamut from religious to fraternal to athletic; this broad-spectrum of involvement allows participants the opportunity to meet new friends and have new experiences. On-campus student organizations, outside activities, and student involvement all contribute to a student's success in the collegiate environment (Astin, 1999; Tinto, 1993).

One type of college student involvement is Greek life, and although there have been many studies that focused on Greek life communities, events, and retention, comparatively little thought has been given to the possible impact of this heightened level of student participation and engagement on academic success. Very few articles have been written that attempt to quantify the dilemma faced by students who are so involved with the Greek community that they lack adequate time for academic endeavors, here after known as over-engagement. It is possible, however, that this dilemma is the invention of an eager scientist, and that students who are involved in Greek life have been taught to manage their time more effectively than the average student, since there are so many events that Greek students must attend every semester.

Statement of the Problem

Research shows that students who are involved in different organizations while in college have better grade point averages and feel a higher sense of connectedness to their institution (DeBard & Sacks, 2011). Furthermore, Greek students who feel connected to their institution are less likely to stop attending college or transfer. In DeBard and Sacks' (2011) study, Greek students were shown to have higher retention rates than non-Greek students. There is a huge gap in the current research when discussing over-involvement. Ryan (2003) also addressed the lack of research on Greek student over-involvement:

No information about time requirements was found in any publication. It would be helpful for the women to know that there is a weekly chapter

meeting, study hours, mandatory participation in events like the Greek Sing, and requirements about involvement in other campus groups, in addition to being in Rho Beta and the other Greek organizations (p.135).

Students who are over-involved could have be exhausted or unable to pay attention in class, and their grades may suffer for it. These students could become so overwhelmed that they would not pass their classes. Involvement in college plays an immense role in the higher levels of student development, such as Chickering & Reisser's (1993) upper level vectors of: establishing identity, developing purpose or developing integrity. However, a student's academic success is the first goal of the university. Astin's theory of involvement states that the more a student is involved, the more he/she will develop (Astin, 1999). However, when students become too involved in student organizations the opposite could occur due to time constraints and the student may not persist to graduation. In fact, today's millennial college students are busier than ever with a generation-wide desire to be high achievers. These students could become so involved that they no longer complete their school work successfully. Therefore, too much involvement does not equal retention. The solution is finding the academic and social balance for students.

It was hypothesized that students who are involved in Greek life are more likely to be retained through graduation due to their level of involvement, but these students often do not have adequate time to balance their academic lives with their social lives.

Purpose of the Study

This study investigated the effects of over-engagement of Greek students and explored this type of student involvement. Specifically, the study focused on the independent variables of gender, race, classification, and Greek-letter organization affiliation. Non-cognitive characteristics were measured by a researcher-developed survey with categories for student involvement, academic supports, and coping ability. Further research is warranted to address the questions of over-involvement and its effects; therefore, Greek life over-involvement will be the focus for the remainder of the study.

Research Questions

The following research questions were examined.

1. What is the relationship between the background demographics of undergraduate students involved in Greek organizations and one's sense of over-involvement?
2. What is the relationship between academic background characteristics of undergraduate students involved in Greek organizations and one's sense of over-involvement?

Are the effects of involvement on students' sense of their own ability to cope the same for all involved Greek students or do they differ by the student's sex, race, academic status and type of Greek organization membership?

Significance of the Study

By understanding the impact of Greek involvement, Greek life offices will be able to adjust programming to create members who can efficiently manage their time and achieve academic success at an institution. Perhaps it is first-semester freshmen who are overwhelmed by all of the involvement that is required by chapters in the midst of their transition to a post-secondary institution from high school. If the ability to manage involvement in Greek life, other student organizations and academic requirements were better known, then this population may be better served. In turn, Greek life students' retention rates will likely increase and their dropout levels decrease.

Definition of Terms

The following terms are used throughout this study, and have been defined as follows:

Bid/Bid Day is a “time when potential members find out which chapter they will join” (Ryan, 2009, p. 45). By receiving a bid to a local chapter, potential members receive their official invitation to become a new member in a particular fraternity or sorority.

Chapter is a term that describes the local group of the larger national organization, which has its own Greek name (Fraternity & Sorority Definitions).

Engaged is defined by Merriam-Webster as someone who is occupied or busy. Greek students are engaged in many different types of activities due to their involvement.

Freshman is the traditional term used for first-year students. The average age of a first-year student is 18-24 years old (U.S Census Bureau, 2012).

Full-Time Employment – is defined as working 37.5 hours or more per week.

Greek Life is defined by the researcher as one type of involvement that is offered in higher education. Students may choose to go through recruitment and become a member of a chapter where the student will be involved in chapter meetings, socials, and philanthropy events.

Higher Education - the formal education received beyond the secondary level, education received at colleges, universities, and community colleges;

Inter-fraternity Council (IFC) is the governing body of the all-male fraternity chapters. IFC operates under the umbrella of the North-American Inter-fraternity Conference (Fraternity & Sorority Definitions).

Involvement is defined by the Merriam-Webster dictionary as engaging as a participant, to partake in, or to occupy. One type of involvement in college is to join a fraternity or sorority.

Multicultural Greek Council (MGC) is the umbrella of sororities and fraternities that focus on a multicultural membership. This council does not have a specific governing board as it is a relatively new council. There are multiple websites that claim to be the national MGC website.

National Pan-Hellenic Council (NPHC) is a national organization that is comprised of sororities and fraternities whose membership is historically African-American (Fraternity & Sorority Definitions).

Over-involvement is defined by the researcher as an excessive, or unusually great involvement which leads to someone feeling overwhelmed by the scope of his/her involvement.

Panhellenic (PH) is the national organization that is comprised of women's sororities. Panhellenic is run by the governing body of the National Panhellenic Conference of 26 international women's sororities (National Panhellenic Conference).

Part-time Employment – is defined as working less than 37 hours per week.

Recruitment refers to the process that potential members complete prior to receiving a bid to a fraternity or sorority. It must be noted that recruitment varies between institutions and may occur at different points in the year (Ryan, 2009).

Retention is used to describe the number of students who persist from one year to another. High retention rates are the goal for institutions and Greek chapters.

Assumptions

The main assumption of this study is that the responses are complete and accurate. Due to the anonymity of the survey, the researcher assumes that the responses are gathered from participants who are involved in Greek life at the institution where the survey was administered. It is also assumed that the responses reflect the experiences of the participants who are taking the survey and not responses of a friend, family member, or classmate. Finally, the researcher assumes that by participants submitting the questionnaire, they are willing to be included in the final results.

Delimitations

The following delimitations define how the study was narrowed in scope. This research was conducted with the following delimitations acknowledged:

1. This study was conducted with the Greek life population of a single institution.
2. This study examined Greek life over-engagement, retention, and academic support provided to chapter members.
3. The study asked respondents about Greek life experiences at the institution where research was being conducted only.
4. The study was sent out to all chapter Presidents by the advisors of the four Greek councils. The chapter Presidents handed out the survey to their members to complete, which protects the students' private information from being forwarded to the researcher without the members' permission. Also, using the President or advisor to hand out the survey likely increases the number of responses since the survey came from someone they trust, and not a random email address.

Limitations

This research was conducted acknowledging the following limitations:

1. The study was conducted at one institution in the southwest and there may be a loss of generality when applied to other populations.
2. A more thorough study would have included several institutions of different sizes, populations, and Greek life involvement.

3. The questionnaire was emailed to all chapter Presidents who were supposed to forward the email to their members. The survey was also printed for all chapter Presidents who were supposed to hand out the surveys to their members. Some of the chapters may not have forwarded the email or distributed the survey for their members to complete.
4. The questionnaire was designed to be completed in 15-20 minutes, however, with Greek life members receiving multiple surveys during the course of the academic year many members may have chosen not to complete.
5. Greek life members do not want to shed negative light on their form of student involvement for fear of contributing to the negative stereotype that is already in existence. This limitation could have altered the responses that survey participants provided. Furthermore, Greek life students want others to believe that he/she is in the best chapter. This could also have altered responses.
6. After receiving minimal responses after the first week of opening the survey, the survey was printed and distributed to members at the following chapter meeting. The printed surveys were returned and the results were manually entered into the computer by the researcher. Most of the responses are from the Inter-fraternity Council (IFC). This limitation occurred due to poor planning of the researcher as IFC

received the largest number of printed surveys when compared to the other three councils.

Chapter Summary

This chapter provides the background and rationale for the study, as well as outlines the research questions and the significance of the study. Greek student over-engagement has been left unexamined within the Greek life population. By exploring the time constraints placed on members academically and socially, Greek life offices will be able to work towards a solution that allows for appropriate levels of involvement.

The following chapter explores the literature of the Greek life system, effects of Greek involvement, social and moral development, Greek student retention, and Greek student GPA. These topics combined explain the type of student that is involved with Greek life, as well as how their involvement has impacted their student development while in college.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

The focus of this research study is the over-engagement of students involved in Greek life organizations on college campuses. In order to holistically understand students involved in Greek life, several areas must be researched including the different structures of Greek communities from campus to campus, grade point averages, student retention information, student interactions of those involved in Greek life, the role that gender plays in involvement, and the varying effects of this type of involvement depending on classification (freshman—senior). To provide the context and framework, Astin’s theory of student involvement and Tinto’s theory of student retention must first be explored.

Literature Review

Theories of Student Involvement

Astin’s (1999) study concluded that “Student involvement refers to the amount of physical and psychological energy that the student devotes to the academic experience” (p. 518). Therefore, on one hand, an involved student is someone who spends time on campus, participates in campus events, and is a member of club(s) and/or organization(s). In order to alleviate confusion, Astin (1999) uses active terms to describe student involvement such as: “engage in”, “partake in”, and “devote oneself to” (p. 519). Similar to Astin, Clouch (2010) found that students who are involved feel more connected to the campus and are more likely to complete their

degree. While the uninvolved student can be a successful college student, this literature review focuses on how Greek involvement affects students. Tinto (1993) stated that “if there is a secret to successful retention, it lies in the willingness of institutions to involve themselves in the social and intellectual development of their students” (p. 6). Overall, a large majority of the research shows a positive relationship between student involvement and retention (Astin, 1999; Clounch, 2010; Gaskins, 2009; Chickering & Reisser, 1993; Crawford, 2007; Tinto, 1993).

According to the literature, the more a student is involved in college, the more he/she will learn and develop (Astin, 1999). Greek students have socials, retreats, and weekly meetings that often allow them to feel connected to their institution. Similarly, Tinto (2009) found that students who are involved with other faculty members and peers are more likely to be successful in college. Students who feel connected to their institution are more likely to continue their education (Gaskins, 2009, p. 12; Clounch, 2010). In regards to first year student retention, Tinto (2009) found that students are more likely to be successful in settings that provide academic and social support. Examples of this support could include: learning communities in residence halls, study halls/study groups within student organizations, or extended orientation programs for first-year/transfer students.

Theories of Student Retention

Involvement directly relates to student retention. In order to have high student retention numbers, a campus must know which students are dropping out and why (Tinto, 1993). Students leave college for many reasons including financial reasons,

family demands, and poor fit, amidst other reasons (Tinto, 1993; Hambley & McClanahan, 2004; Kuh, 2007). Once an institution knows why students are leaving, administrators can take note of themes and create a plan in order to increase retention. Tinto (1993) discussed three effective strategies to increase retention: 1.) an institutional commitment to students, 2.) an educational commitment to students and 3.) a social and intellectual community (pp. 146-147). In a study conducted by Hambley and McClanahan (2004) the institutional factors that made the largest difference in student retention were “social environment” and “student involvement in campus life.” These factors were considered to be among the top five contributions on attrition at four-year public institutions (p. 10).

Greek life focuses on the social and intellectual community where students are connected to other students with similar interests. Kuh (2007) found that “a key to academic success for students is their engagement” (par. 6). Furthermore, Tinto (1993) concluded that the best student learning occurs in environments with “social and intellectual support for their efforts” and where all individuals are unified in the “mainstream of the social and intellectual life of the institution” (p. 147). In general, freshman students stated that communication is important “for success in the university” (Johnson & Staton, 1995, p. 341). Kuh, Cruce, Shoup, Kinzie and Gonyea (2008) found that when freshman students are engaged in educational activities, their GPA increases about .04 points. On-campus involvement also means that there is someone to hold students accountable for grades, whether that person is a faculty/staff member or a student organization officer. Kuh, Kinzie, Schuh, and Whitt (2011)

found twenty colleges with high graduation rates across the country that have a very diverse population and many underprepared students. These institutions have sustained their high graduation rates over seven years. The following four themes were found to help retain students to graduation:

- 1.) An ethic of positive restlessness permeates the campus.
- 2.) Data about students and their success inform deliberations and decisions about the curriculum and other institutional priorities.
- 3.) Academic and student affairs staff collaborate to foster student success.
- 4.) Campus leaders work assiduously to increase the numbers of faculty and staff who understand the importance of and become committed to student success (p. 14).

Student retention has many themes including academic support, especially in the first year, student engagement, and feeling a sense of connection to the institution.

Involvement in Greek life or another student organization is one way for students to gain that sense of connection and be engaged. There are many factors that affect a Greek life student's college experience, including the structure of the Greek community.

Greek Communities on a College Campus

Greek letter organizations on college campuses take a variety of forms and structures. Historically, Greek organizations belong to one of four governing councils. The all-male governing council is the North-American Inter-fraternity Conference which governs a relationship with the Inter-fraternity Council (IFC) where 75

international and national chapters are available to choose from (North-American Inter-fraternity Conference). Panhellenic Council (PH) is governed by the National Panhellenic Conference which offers 26 fraternities and sororities for women to choose from (National Panhellenic Conference). There are multiple national organizations for the Multicultural Greek Council (MGC), but none of these organizations serve as the official governing body over the Multicultural Greek Council. In time, there will likely be an official national governing body; however, the chapters are still currently too new for a national organization to be established. MGC unites students among Hispanic, African American, Indian, and Asian members and any other interested ethnicities. National Pan-Hellenic Council (NPHC) unites nine African-American fraternities and sororities (National Pan-Hellenic Council, Incorporated). Each institution will have a different number of chapters available from each of the four councils.

Greek life membership involves socials with other chapters, weekly chapter meetings, officer retreats, workshops, and community service events. Some institutions allow members to live together in the chapters' house, while other schools have a lodge where only one or two people will live and potentially a "house mom or house dad". Most universities allow members to live in the chapter house; however, there are a few institutions that permit members from living in the house. Reasons that members may not live in the house include, but are not limited to, city law/ordinances and institutional policies. When members cannot live in the house the lodge is used as a gathering place for chapter meetings, events, and for study sessions.

Many chapters in the country allow their members to reside in the house and some chapters even have a requirement that members live in the house 1-4 years. The rules for living in the house vary depending on the institution and the chapter.

The recruiting procedures of Greek life chapters across the country also vary from institution to institution and chapter by chapter. The process for each four of these councils is different. IFC and Panhellenic have a formal recruitment and a semi-formal recruitment process. Formal recruitment often takes place the week prior to the start of classes in the fall or the week that classes begin. Semi-formal recruitment takes place during the spring. Students interested in Greek life may also join outside of these recruitment events, however, formal and semi-formal recruitment are the most popular times to join. Potential new members visit with each chapter during the week. As the week progresses, both the chapter and potential new member make selections and the number of new members that a chapter recruits decreases during the week. At the end of the week, new members receive bids and are inducted into a fraternity or sorority.

MGC and NPHC on the other hand do not recruit similar to the IFC and Panhellenic Councils. MGC and NPHC hold meetings randomly during the semester to help recruit new members. The number of recruiting meetings that are held each semester depend on the leadership of the presiding officers. After the meetings are held, invitations are sent to start the new member process. The new member process is usually 6-10 weeks after the initial recruitment meeting. Two weeks to one month is the waiting period for an initiation or reveal ceremony called “probate”. During

probate new members will dress up in masks and robes prior to their big reveal.

Potential new members are also judged based on their GPA. Greek chapters recruit students who will work to be academically successful since students who are academically successful will be more likely to be retained year to year.

Greek student GPA

Some students look to Greek life to become connected with other students and to the campus. A significant amount of research that has been conducted on Greek life in college is negative (Kimbrough, 2010; Rosenburg, 1997; Sylvia, 1998). While the stereotype of Greek life is often perceived to be negative in the media and some universities due to parties, drinking, and group think, it is easy to dismiss this type of involvement as a purely negative impact on students.

O'Donnell (2009) discussed that the negative press fraternities receive is a reflection on individual chapters' execution of a fraternity and not the holistic concept of a fraternity. One limitation of O'Donnell's article is that the author is relying solely on his experiences in Greek life at Dartmouth University; no official research was conducted in writing this article. However, in one of the largest studies ever conducted on Greek life with 45,000 student records from 17 institutions, DeBard and Sacks reached a similar conclusion on the effects of Greek life. The findings in this study should be highly regarded due to the immense amount of student records that were used during the research. DeBard and Sacks (2011) found that students who were involved with Greek organizations their first semester in college actually had higher GPAs compared to students who were not involved. Conversely, a study

conducted by Grubbs (2006) found that by graduation, students who were involved with Greek life had a “1-2 percent cumulative lower GPA than their non-Greek counterparts” and this percentage increased as fraternity size decreased (p. 1102). When comparing these two studies the discrepancies could be due to the fact that DeBard and Sacks looked at students’ first semester of college whereas Grubbs looked at students’ entire college career. Student grade point average could easily be higher during the first semester of college for Greek students and non-Greek students’ grade point average could be higher when looking at all four-years cumulatively.

Greek involvement negatively impacts academic performance (Grubbs, 2006; Baker, 2008; Pascarella et al., 1996). Furthermore, with a 1-2 percent decrease in grade point average, Grubbs (2006) suggests that Greek students may begin a job with a lower starting salary than someone who is non-Greek with a higher grade point average. However, by the eighth year of employment, salary levels will be minutely different between Greek college students and non-Greek college students (Grubb, 2006). It is likely that salary differences will no longer be as important by the eighth year of employment since the potential employee will be interviewed based on their *job experiences* and not as much focus is needed on what their grades were in school. Some studies’ results have positive findings of the social experiences of Greek life students. (Grubbs, 2006; O’Donnell, 2009).

Alternatively, one study conducted by Pike (2000) found that the integration mean of Greek life students was lower than non-Greek students. Pike (2000) notes that the integration mean was not significantly lower but “was significantly lower than

would be expected given high levels of social involvement by Greeks” (p. 133). In Pike’s (2000) study only one university was used in the research and many of the participants were women. These limitations should be considered when discussing Pike’s findings. Similarly, Pascarella (1996) found that Greek men and women were not as developed by the end of their freshman year compared to their non-Greek counterparts. Furthermore, Greek men had significantly lower scores on all four areas that were measured. The four areas that were measured in the Pascarella et al. (1996) study included “reading comprehension, mathematics, critical thinking, and composite achievement score” (p. 14).

Greek student retention

Lounsbury and DeNeui (1996) found that Greek involvement contributes to a “student’s sense of community” (p. 391). Therefore, if students feel connected to their institution, then they will work harder to continue their education at that institution. The retention rate of Greek students in DeBard and Sack’s study was 93 percent. If non-Greek students’ retention rate were also 93 percent, then there would be an increase of “9.2% of the independent students, being retained to their sophomore year” (DeBard & Sacks, 2011, p. 121). Tinto’s (1993) three principles of student retention included the social and intellectual community. He found that in order for a retention program to be successful, students must feel connected to the social and intellectual community.

If institutions adopted some of the practices of the Greek community to meet the needs of the general student population, institutions could potentially increase their

retention by approximately nine percent. According to the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) (2011), “The findings indicate that fraternity and sorority members received a greater personal benefit from attending college than similar non-Greek peers, perhaps because Greek life provides a type of learning community where students study and engage in co-curricular activities together” (p. 13). The research seems to support the idea that a sense of family and togetherness of a Greek environment contributes to the higher retention of students involved with these organizations.

The same philosophy of family and togetherness found in Greek life could be applied to other organizations on campus. When students are involved with organizations such as Greek life, then they will experience growth and persistence and develop a sense of value for college (Chickering & Reisser, 1993). For example, a student who is actively involved in multiple facets of a university such as Greek life, honors society, or regular attendance at sporting events will make more out of his/her college experience compared to someone who is only on campus when classes require him/her to be on campus. According to Crawford (2007) and the NSSE findings, student involvement, student interaction with faculty and peers, and student engagement all contribute to a college student’s success. Another indirect facet of student success is the student interactions with one another. Relationships formed in college could contribute to a student’s desire to succeed.

Student Interactions

To be better integrated into their environment, students must not only be involved with organizations on-campus, but they must also have a positive experience with the people they see on a daily basis, especially during the first few weeks of school (Diccio, 2009). People that students are more likely to see on a daily basis include students who are in the same major, students who are involved in the same activities and faculty members. One negative experience with any one of these groups could discourage someone from continuing to be involved or convince him/her to transfer from the institution or stop-out of college entirely. Terenzini & Pascarella (1977) found that both social and academic integration are important factors in a student's decision to remain in college or withdraw.

Some would say that college friendships and relationships create unique bonds since many students arrive at college with no family or friends near. For example, Ryan (2003) discussed the word use of "love" and "family" when describing the other members of the Rho Beta sorority (p. 93). When looking at romantic relationships in the Greek community, Pang and Frost (1968) found that Greek students who were engaged or seriously involved in a relationship indicated more satisfaction with their partners than non-Greek couples, "although the differences may be due in part to the more extensive social activities, dating, and prestige of Greek organizations on the local campus" (p. 1). For example, non-Greek students may take a date to dinner at a local restaurant and go home to watch a movie, whereas, Greek couples may go to an elite restaurant with a private showing of a movie with their date and the other

members of their chapter. Reiss (1965) found that Greek students chose their partner based on his/her involvement in a fraternity or sorority. Greek students might be attracted to other Greek students because of the social events that this type of involvement offers as well as the “prestige on campus” that Pang and Frost (1968) mentioned. While both of these articles discussed Greek student dating ideals, they are both outdated articles that should be researched again to see if the same idea holds true for millennial students who are now involved in Greek life. A more recent study conducted by Bartoli and Clark (2006) found that Greek students, particularly men, involved in a relationship had higher expectations for sexual intercourse on a date when compared to non-Greek students.

Goguen, Hiester, and Nordstorm (2010) found that having a trustworthy and loyal friend was associated with a higher GPA during the first college semester (p. 332). The friends made in college can become some students’ family during college as they will live together and celebrate holidays and birthdays together. College friendships could be made virtually anywhere, from the dorm room, to an intramural football team, to an organization. The common theme with these examples is that students need to become involved to establish themselves in the college atmosphere and make the friendships that will encourage students to persist to graduation.

Goguen et al., (2010) found that new college friendships did not make a difference in student persistence from a freshmen student’s fall to spring semester; however, these friendships did make a difference in student persistence between freshmen and sophomore year. For example, in the middle of sophomore year when

many students are experiencing the sophomore slump or homesickness, it is the friendships and organizations that students' are involved in that make many students want to persevere. One reason that there is such high retention among students who are involved in Greek organizations is due to the emphasis that is placed on meeting new people. For example, Johnson and Staton (1995) found that "Greek students perceive that they will meet people easily... "sororities and fraternities arrange special events to stimulate their members to meet new people" (p. 342). Student development occurs in part due to the social and academic engagement that being in college offers (Crawford, 2007, p. 124). Milem and Berger (1997) found that early involvement (6-7 weeks) is vital to student persistence at an institution. None of the other literature mentions when students should become involved. Often, the research just discusses the *need* for students to become involved.

Greek Involvement

Role of gender in involvement

Student involvement also depends on gender. Multiple studies conclude that there are differences in the involvement between males and females. Females have a higher rate of involvement (Crawford, 2007; Milem & Berger, 1997). Gilligan (1982) also suggests reasons for women being more involved in campus activities that relate to a woman's caring nature and need to connect with others.

Women's increased level of involvement compared to men's is a statement that can be generalized to the student population. Women students experienced "higher levels of early involvement with their peers" (Milem & Berger, 1997, p. 395).

Consequently, women are more likely than men to spend time at social gatherings with other students. Overall, Milem and Berger (1997) found that “there was a direct positive path between being a women and social integration” (p. 395). On the other hand, men were more likely to use alcohol as a way to “foster interpersonal relationships” (Capone, Wood, Borsari, & Laird, 2007, p. 317). Read (2002) also found that men were more likely to drink high levels of alcohol than women. Men use drinking as a way to “facilitate social contact” especially during the first year of college when many new friendships are forming (Borsari & Carey, 2006, p. 6). Conversely, women do not rely on alcohol as a way to form friendships (Borsari & Carey, 2006).

Pascarella et al. (1996) found that being involved with a sorority during a student’s first year of college negatively impacts cognitive development, but only significantly affects “reading comprehension and composite achievement” (p. 16). Returning to Gilligan’s (1982) research, one reason for women being more socially integrated into a university compared to men is a woman’s need to connect with and care for others. Ryan (2003) found a similar conclusion when interviewing members of the Rho Beta sorority as almost all of the members who were interviewed mentioned “being socially oriented” as one benefit of being involved (p. 91). Women who join sororities are looking to be involved with other members and make friends that will last a lifetime.

Greek *involvement* varies by gender as well. For example, Hayek, Carini, O’Day, and Kuh (2002) concluded that Greek men had 53 more minutes of

involvement per week compared to Greek women. According to Pascarella et al. (1996) joining a fraternity during a student's freshman year of college had a "negative impact on all four cognitive outcomes for men" (p. 16). The four cognitive outcomes Pascarella et al. (1996) used were "reading comprehension, mathematics, critical thinking, and composite achievement score" (p. 14). Greek men of color, on the other hand, experienced a "modest positive influence" on all four outcomes that were tested (p. 21) because men of color proved to have a "stronger connection to their academics" (Pascarella et al., 2003, p. 24). It is unlikely that the extra 53 minutes of involvement per week is the cause of men's lower cognitive development; however, the negative impact could relate to a man's maturity level when he begins college. The male students who are not involved with the Greek system might feel more pressure to develop and make positive gains in maturity.

Effects of Greek involvement

Students who are involved in Greek life have a positive perception of the "campus environment being more supportive compared to non-Greek students" perceptions (Pike, 2003, p. 374). One reason that students who are involved in a Greek chapter may view the campus to be a more supportive environment could be that Greek involvement offers support that students cannot find elsewhere on campus. Examples of these services include free tutoring and a brotherhood/sisterhood approach to friendships that new, first-year students do not have since many are living away from home for the first time. According to Tinto (1993), students who are associated with Greek life, along with other types of student involvement, feel

connected to their institution due to frequent interactions, which allow connections and friendships to be built. However, Tinto (1993) also found that students who are socially integrated into an institution could have more difficulty “meeting the minimum demands of the academic system” (p. 119). Greek students, as well as other involved students, must find the balance between their social life and their academic life in order to be successful.

Academic support

There are various effects of being involved with Greek life during college years. One effect includes the academic support services that members are provided. Johnson and Staton (1995) discussed the mandatory study hours of many Greek chapters. The fifteen hours that are logged weekly help create positive study habits for the rest of a student’s time in college. Since other members have the same requirement it would not be uncommon for study groups to form and members to go to the library or the lodge to study together. Ryan (2003) discussed members’ responses to academic support which included: 1.) having friends to go with to the library 2.) brothers/sisters who were in the same classes 3.) a network of people with whom members may discuss good and bad professors and 4.) test banks (pp. 102-103). One support system that Ryan (2003) did not mention that Johnson and Staton (1995) discussed is using the older students as a “major source of (academic) support” (p. 347). Greek students having test banks available to them to study is considered to be a form of academic support when it is actually another form of cheating.

Academic dishonesty

While the academic support services are prevalent, many students who are involved in Greek organizations are more likely to be academically dishonest than students who are not involved in Greek organizations (Storch & Storch, 2007; Pino & Smith, 2003). In fact, Storch and Storch found that “as participation in fraternal activities increased, rates of academic dishonesty also increased” (p. 247). The time that was spent attending Greek events could have been used to study for class, but since the student did not manage his/her time he/she chose to cheat on a test or assignment instead. The issue of academic dishonesty is not only prevalent in the Greek community, but campus wide as well (Pino & Smith, 2003; Haines, Diekhoff, LaBeff, Clark, 1986). Students who are involved in many activities often cannot adequately manage their time and therefore, may resort to cheating.

While cheating occurs campus-wide, students who have a high level of campus involvement and are active students were likely to cheat since they are so involved they “do not allow enough time to study and perhaps give studying a low priority” (Haines et al., 1986, p. 352). Furthermore, “students who are extremely active within their fraternal organization may be at higher risk to engage in academic dishonesty” (Storch & Storch, 2007). By combining the two sources (Haines et al. and Storch and Storch) more research is warranted to see if students who are involved in Greek organizations are highly involved students and if their over-involvement is the motivation to be academically dishonest due to their time constraints. Pino and Smith (2003) found that underclassmen cheat less than upperclassmen. Pino and Smith’s

article has limitations, such as not using any freshmen for their study, which degrades their findings since no underclassmen were actually used in the study. Students who spend time around other students that do not cheat or view cheating as an unacceptable practice will be less likely to cheat themselves (McCabe, Trevino, & Butterfield, 2002). If students surround themselves with others who believe in academic integrity, it is reasonable to assume that the reverse could also be true.

Social and moral development

As students become involved during college, Gellin (2003) found that students must exhibit greater gains with critical thinking when deciding which groups on-campus to become involved in. After becoming involved with a group, students must learn how to “successfully navigate their role” within particular clubs and organizations (p. 755). Gellin (2003) had inconclusive results on whether Greek involvement increased or decreased critical thinking skills. Pascarella and Terenzini (2005) found a “net positive impact on career-related skills” (p. 542). Pascarella and Terenzini’s research is undoubtedly reliable since the research is part of a thirty-year study on the various ways that college affects students.

Johnson and Staton (1995) used a student quote to describe just how busy Greek affiliated students can be, “Last week we had three parties in three days, followed by two meetings in two days, so there’s virtually something every night that has to be done” (p. 348). This involvement positively correlates to student retention since these students feel a connection to their institution. Furthermore, Hayek, et al. (2002) also concluded that Greek student involvement had an overall positive effect

on students. Pike (2003) found that Greek students reported “higher levels of personal gains” after joining a sorority or fraternity (p. 374). However, when comparing Greek students to non-Greek students the gains in personal development only accounted for one percent of the variance with Greek students feeling slightly more developed than the non-Greek students.

Ryan (2003) discussed an immediate connection to the institution that Greek women felt when they saw other members of their sorority on campus. Seeing people that you know on campus is a way to build a sense of connectedness to an institution and can be applied to students who are involved in other on-campus organizations. Hayek, et al. (2002) found that “Greek members appeared to be equally engaged in academically challenging tasks, active learning, student-faculty interaction, community service, diversity, satisfaction, and on learning and personal development gains” than their non-Greek counterparts (p. 643). Greek members could be more academically engaged depending on the requirements of their sorority or fraternity since each chapter has different requirements for visiting with a professor during their office hours, attending tutoring sessions, or completing a certain number of community service hours each semester in order to stay an “active” member. However, Tinto (1993) concluded that sometimes students who are heavily involved in extra-curricular activities could connect well socially, but also suffer with their academic relationships since so much time is spent with peers.

Greek students are more likely to volunteer and participate in community service projects than non-Greek students (Hayek et al., 2002). Phillips (2010)

concluded that the amount of community service that is completed by a student might not enhance their moral reasoning preferences. Philanthropy is one of the Greek founding principles along with academics, leadership, and brotherhood/sisterhood. These principles should create a solid foundation for students to develop good morals. However, much of the research suggests that being involved in a Greek organization actually inhibits moral development (Storch & Storch, 2007; Phillips, 2010; Mathiasen, 2003; Tripp, 1997). Furthermore, Phillips (2010) found that students who were *not* involved in Greek organizations tested “significantly higher” on moral reasoning preferences than those who were affiliated with Greek organizations on “pre and posttests” (p. 50). There was no correlation in the level of Greek involvement and a student’s moral reasoning preference.

Alcohol & drug use

One issue that many fraternities and sororities face on a daily basis is Greek students’ involvement with drugs and alcohol. In fact, McCabe et al. (2005) found that male college students who drank alcohol in high school were more likely to go through recruitment. The most commonly used substance by members in the Greek system was “alcohol, followed by cigarettes” (p. 515). Read et al. (2002) found that students who arrive at college and went through recruitment did not drink more than non-Greek students.

Impact of Greek involvement by year

Freshman

While the overall effects of Greek involvement help create an understanding of both positive and negative characteristics of being affiliated, there are different effects from year to year in college. In a study conducted by Sacerdote (2001) at Dartmouth University, students whose freshman college roommate joined a sorority or fraternity were eight percent more likely to become Greek themselves. Johnson and Staton (1995) found that some freshmen students who live together in the Greek house find it difficult never having time to be alone. Many colleges and universities have begun to offer freshman seminar courses that assist all freshman students in their transition. Tinto (1993) found that “virtually all students experience some difficulty in making the transition to college” (p. 98) and the way that students react to the stress of college affects whether they decide to persist to graduation or not. Greek students have a support system of older members and advisors that other freshman who are not involved in Greek life may not have. This support system could make the transition easier for freshman since they have someone who can relate to the issues they may be experiencing.

Sophomore & Junior

There are gaps in the research with the effects of Greek involvement during the sophomore and junior years of college. While freshman and senior students experience effects of being involved in a Greek organization, sophomore and junior students often begin their leadership development by becoming chapter officers,

putting on workshops for newer members, and planning socials. Research needs to be conducted on this group of Greek affiliated students since this could be an immense time of growth for students.

Senior

While a freshman student is learning what it means to be Greek, a senior has a different perspective on the organization. Students who were involved with a chapter their senior year of college were “significantly more involved” than senior students who were non-Greek (Pike, 2003, p. 277). One reason that Greeks are significantly more involved during their senior year could be that many non-Greek students work part-time and do not have as much time for on-campus involvement.

Theoretical Framework

Tinto’s theory of retention found that students need to be intellectually and socially developed (Tinto, 1993). Tinto and Astin’s theories work together to conclude that involvement = retention. Further research demonstrates that Greek life experiences lead chapter members to more campus opportunities allowing the university to feel smaller and the members feel more connected to the institution (Hebert, 2006). When students feel connected to an institution they will be more likely to persist to graduation (Gaskins, 2009, p. 12; Clounch, 2010). Theories of involvement and retention are useful frameworks through which to examine the issue of Greek life students and their experiences in higher education institutions. Tinto’s theory discusses the positive relationship between student involvement and retention. Tinto (1993) defines involvement as developing relationships with faculty members,

being involved in student organizations, and being an active member of the campus community. Tinto also found that students who were able to have social and intellectual support did better than students without this support. Both research questions relate to Tinto's theory of retention as student involvement will measure Greek student success. Similarly, Astin's theory of involvement states that the more involved a student is the more he/she will learn and develop (1999). Involvement outside of the classroom will allow a student a different avenue of learning and add to student success while in college. At the most basic level of Astin's theory, a student who is involved will be more likely to persist to graduation.

Chapter Summary

Much of the literature agrees that student involvement positively impacts retention and student persistence. The research also agrees that students who are involved with the Greek system feel more connected to their campus, perform better academically, and are often more likely to persist to graduation. Throughout the literature review these themes were found in many different studies, however, they have not been compared to each other. Chapter III will outline the research design that will be utilized for this study, along with the data collection instrument. In addition, it contains a discussion of the statistical tools that will be used to address each research question.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

Chapter III describes the methodology to be used in answering the research questions of the study. The participants, instrumentation, data collection and data analysis are described in detail. As discussed in previous chapters, there is an immense gap in the research in Greek life over-involvement. This study focuses on the effects of involvement in Greek life, in relation to academic success and social integration at a public 4-year institution in the southwest. To better understand these issues, a quantitative methodology was utilized to address the problem identified. This chapter contains a description of the participants, the methodology instrumentation, data collection procedures, and the data analysis that was utilized for this study.

Working Hypotheses

This study examined the relationship between degree of involvement in Greek organizations in college and over-involvement, as measured by the sense of being overwhelmed among college students enrolled at a large, public institution in the southwest. The working hypotheses were 1) Students who participate in Greek Life feel connected to their university and feel like they matter. 2) The more a student is involved, the more he/she will feel connected to the institution. 3) Students who participate more extensively in Greek life and other student organizations, as indicated by the number of nonacademic experience they are involved with, will have higher levels of being overwhelmed than those who participate less extensively in student

life. 4) Students who are working will be more overwhelmed than students who are not working.

Research Hypotheses: Testable Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1: The level of involvement in Greek Life correlates with their sense of connectedness to the institution.

Hypothesis 2: The level of involvement in Greek Life correlates with their sense of academic success.

Hypothesis 3: The level of participation in Greek Life correlates with over-involvement.

Educational Context

This study was conducted at a large, public research university institution in the southwest. There was a total enrollment of 32,500 students in fall 2012. The majority of students are from southwestern states. All freshmen and transfer students are allowed to go through recruitment during their first semester at the institution. Approximately 17% of the student body is involved with Greek life. The two largest recruitment events are formal and semi-formal recruitment, however, new members may also join outside of these times. Formal recruitment takes place the week prior to the start of the semester and this is the largest time for recruitment of new members. There is also a semi-formal recruitment prior to the start of the spring semester. Each year, new members and old members must pay dues in order to stay “active” members of their chapter. The amount of money that is required for dues varies by chapter.

New member dues are typically about \$1,000 dollars during the first semester and range from \$400-\$600 each semester as an active member.

Description of Sample

This study was conducted at a 4-year public university in the southwest with an undergraduate enrollment of 32,500 students during fall 2012. The participants for this study were undergraduate college students who were enrolled at the institution. This student population made up approximately 17% of the enrolled student body. There were 2,323 men and 2,405 women involved in Greek life when this survey was conducted. Student classification ranged from freshmen to senior. There were no graduate students who completed this survey.

Research Questions

The research questions of the study were as follows:

1. What is the relationship between the background demographics of undergraduate students involved in Greek organizations and one's sense of over-involvement?
2. What is the relationship between academic background characteristics of undergraduate students involved in Greek organizations and one's sense of over-involvement?

Research Design

A quantitative methodology, survey research, was used to investigate the research questions. A researcher-designed cross-sectional, web-hosted survey, in which data was collected at one point in time (Creswell, 2009), was used to assess the

perceptions of students involved in Greek-letter organizations. Survey research is an ideal way to collect data as participants may complete the survey at their own leisure. Greek students are largely millennial students and more likely to respond to a survey if it is made easily available on the computer. Also, Greek students are busy and need to be able to complete a survey quickly instead of making a special trip to an office on-campus to complete the survey. The researcher believed that distributing the survey digitally would provide students easier access and in turn increase the amount of responses received. Surveys are also extremely cost effective since the researcher must only purchase a monthly membership to a survey collection tool such as Qualtrics or Survey Monkey. For the purposes of this study, the researcher utilized a quantitative approach for data collection. Quantitative collection is ideal since the researcher can outline specific questions and likert scales to create consistency with data collection from all respondents.

Measures

After carefully reviewing the literature on this research issue, it was determined that there was no survey that matched the researchers' needs for this study. Therefore, all survey components were created by the researcher. A survey would be used to collect data regarding Greek student over-engagement and Greek student involvement in relation to academic endeavors and social activities. Data was collected using a researcher-designed, 44 item, web-based survey. The survey questions include multiple-choice, multiple-response, likert scale questions, self-

reported questions, and opened-ended questions. The survey consisted of two sections: demographic and Greek Life Student Involvement Survey.

Demographics – Demographics were designed for the survey to obtain information such as age, gender, classification and Greek life council affiliation (see Appendix C). The demographics were designed to place participants into subgroups based on their experiences and make it easier for the researcher to identify themes of the subgroups.

Greek Life Student Involvement Survey – This survey was developed to assess student involvement in relation to academic success. Participants were asked questions such as “Did your involvement in Greek life help your transition from high school?” and “Have you ever felt overwhelmed due to student involvement in Greek life?” Some surveys included follow-up questions based on their response. These questions were used to identify themes in participant responses.

Data Collection

After receiving approval from the Institutional Review Board, an email was sent to the Greek life professional staff members that asked for the professional staff members’ permission to send emails to chapter officers on behalf of the researchers. Once permission was obtained by the professional staff, an email was sent out to all students involved with Greek life (see Appendix A). The chapter officers forwarded the email out to all of their members requesting that they complete the survey. There are several benefits to this system:

1. Researchers cannot obtain participants email addresses.

2. Participants were more likely to fill out a survey from their council advisor compared to a researcher that they do not know.
3. Chapter members want to comply with the request of their chapter officers and were more likely to complete the survey.

After the survey was been open for one week a follow up email was sent to participants (see Appendix B) which requested that they complete the survey. Data collection took place using the online survey tool, Qualtrics – a secure, web-based, survey design and dissemination website. Students were instructed to utilize the advertised link to participate in the survey. The online survey contained two questionnaires, which consisted of 44 questions.

After one week of the survey being open there were only thirteen responses. In an effort to increase the response rate, the Assistant Director of Greek Life called chapter Presidents and requested that they pick up printed copies of the surveys to distribute at their next chapter meetings.

Data Analysis

Survey results were analyzed using the SPSS PASW 20 statistical package. Descriptive statistics was used to analyze and describe the overall population, including ethnicity (African American/Black; Asian American/Pacific Islander; Caucasian/White; Hispanic American/Latino/Latina; Native American/American Indian; Other), age, Greek life affiliation (Multicultural Greek Council, Panhellenic Council, National Pan-Hellenic Council, Inter-fraternity Council), classification, and gender. Other questions were asked in order to create additional subgroups and

identify themes in these populations including the participant designating his/her transfer status, grade point average, work status, time of recruitment and the number of hours enrolled during the semester. The most appropriate tests to use were descriptive statistics and frequency counts since descriptive statistics provide basic information and a frequency count describes the number of times a particular variable occurred.

Both Analysis of Variance (ANOVAs) and Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVAs) were used to analyze the data collected. ANOVAs were used to analyze the independent variables (race, gender, classification and Greek council affiliation) against the dependent variables (amount of involvement, sense of connectedness, feeling of over-engagement) to determine differences among groups. MANOVAs allow researchers to view all of the dependent variables at one time, rather than running individual tests which could cause Type I errors.

Chapter Summary

The literature has shown that Greek student involvement positively impacts retention and student connectedness to an institution, but few studies have examined the relationship between Greek student over-involvement and its impact on a Greek student's academic success. This quantitative study was designed to assess Greek over-involvement through a 44 question researcher-developed survey. The purpose of this study was to understand how Greek life involvement affects students. The results of this study will help higher education administrators understand the possible barriers experienced by those students who are over-involved in student organizations. A

description of the process and survey instruments was provided in this chapter.

Presentation of the results, including a descriptive profile of the participants, will be provided in chapter IV.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

Introduction

The primary purpose of this study was to investigate Greek life college students' level of involvement, and more specifically, the level to which these students are over-involved. Chapter IV contains the results and analysis of data that was collected during the study. An in-depth description of the survey respondents, their level of involvement and their connectedness to the institution are examined. The statistical procedures used in the analyses were correlation, regression, analysis of variance (ANOVA) and multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA). Data analyses were conducted using SPSS PASW 20 statistical package. The results presented are based on the analysis of 193 undergraduate college students involved in Greek-letter organizations.

Review of the Research Questions

The following research questions were examined:

1. What is the relationship between the background demographics of undergraduate students involved in Greek organizations and one's sense of Over-involvement?
2. What is the relationship between academic background characteristics of undergraduate students involved in Greek organizations and one's sense of Over-involvement?

Participants and Respondents

The institution where research was conducted had an undergraduate student enrollment of approximately 32,500 students at the time that the study was performed. Of the total undergraduate enrollment population, approximately 5,000 students were involved in Greek life. Of the 5,000 students involved in Greek life, 193 students completed the online survey. Therefore, this sample was a convenience sample with 193 respondents who completed the survey, for a completed response rate of 3.5% of the total Greek life student population. Since not all of the questions in the survey required responses, all 193 participants did not answer every question.

Demographic Data

Descriptive statistics were calculated for the general characteristics of the sample. Table 4.1 illustrates the demographic information that was collected from all of the participants who completed the survey. The majority of the participants were from the Inter-fraternity Council (66%) and the participants were between the ages of 19-21 (44.2%). Since there was a large majority of participants from Inter-fraternity Council, there was also a large male participation rate at 73% compared to females who participated in the study at 27%. No graduate students participated in this survey. The racial demographics are fairly similar ratios to that of the institution where research was conducted, however, it should be noted that three students did not disclose their race. Table 4.1 also displays the academic demographics of the survey participants. Pertinent information about this study that was collected including the

number of hours enrolled, GPA, transfer student status and recruitment status. Of the 175 participants that chose to disclose the number of hours they were enrolled, 69% were taking 13-16 hours. The large majority of participants went through recruitment prior to the start of their first semester at college (61%). Also, only 14% of participants were transfer students who completed the survey. Table 4.3 contains the sample means, standard deviations, and ranges for several of the study variables. It is important to note that members from the Inter-fraternity Council accounted for 66% of all survey respondents due to poor planning of the researcher. The heavy IFC response rate also accounted for the heavy male completion rate of the survey.

Table 4.1

Respondent Demographic Information-Background

Variable	N=193	%
Greek Life Affiliation		
Panhellenic Council	34	18%
Inter-fraternity Council	127	66%
Religious Fraternity/Sorority	2	1%
Multicultural Greek Council	20	10%
National Pan-Hellenic Council	5	3%
Other	3	2%
Total	191	100%
Age		
18-19	45	23%

Table 4.1. Continued

Respondent Demographic Information-Background

20-21	122	64%
22 or older	25	13%
Total	192	100%
Classification		
Freshman (0-29 credits)	9	5%
Sophomore (30-59 credits)	55	29%
Junior (60-89 credits)	70	37%
Senior (90+ credits)	56	29%
Total	190	100%
Gender		
Male	140	73%
Female	53	27%
Total	193	100%
What is your racial/ethnic identification?		
African American/Black	2	1%
Asian American/Asian	5	3%
Hispanic/Latino	30	16%
Native American/American Indian	1	1%
White/Caucasian	155	81%
Biracial/Multiracial	1	1%

Table 4.1. Continued

Respondent Demographic Information-Background

Other	4	2%
Total	198	105%
How many hours are you enrolled in this semester?		
9-12 hours	48	27%
13-16 hours	121	69%
17+ hours	6	3%
Total	175	99%
What is your GPA?		
4.0	5	3%
3.5-3.9	48	25%
3.0-3.4	77	40%
2.5-2.9	52	27%
2.4 or below	4	2%
Decline to answer	5	3%
Total	191	100%
When did you go through recruitment?		
Before first semester of college	115	61%
After first semester of college	29	15%
Beginning of sophomore year	18	10%
Middle of sophomore year or after	27	14%

Table 4.1. Continued

Respondent Demographic Information-Background		
Total	189	100%
Are you a transfer student?		
Yes	26	14%
No	166	86%
Total	192	100%

Means, Standard Deviations, and Ranges

Overall the means, standard deviations, and ranges of the participants on the Greek Life Student Involvement survey measures used in this study can be found in table 4.2. Table 4.2 displays the results with participants mean of 4.15 (units of what?) being ($p = .786$) “agree” or “strongly agree” with the statement, “I make emotionally, socially, and physically healthy choices during college” and a range of 4 (units of what?). Participants mean of 4.35 ($p = .796$) signifies that most participants “agree” or “strongly agree” with the statement, “I feel connected to the university” and a range of 3. Furthermore, a mean of 3.9 participants ($p = 1.028$) with a range of 4 “agree” or “strongly agree” with the statement, “I feel that I matter to the university”.

Analysis

Pearson correlation coefficients were calculated for the study variables. The relationships among the study’s variables are presented in table 4.3. Several significant relationships were found in this study including that students who are

involved in Greek life feel a connection to the university. Other significant findings relate to relationships made while involved with Greek life. These findings also include students' involvement being a positive influence on their college experience. Two research questions were addressed in this study. The following section addresses the findings related to each question.

Sense of Connectedness

Table 4.4 displays the results with participants sense of connectedness to the institution. The mean of 4.15 being ($p = .786$) “agree” or “strongly agree” with the statement, “I make emotionally, socially, and physically healthy choices during college” and a range of 4. Participants mean of 4.35 ($p = .796$) signifies that most participants “agree” or “strongly agree” with the statement, “I feel connected to the university” and a range of 3. Furthermore, a mean of 3.9 participants ($p = 1.028$) with a range of 4 “agree” or “strongly agree” with the statement, “I feel that I matter to the university”.

When asked if participants agreed with the statement, “I feel connected to the university” the female participants felt more connected than the male participants with a mean of 4.69 compared to the men with a mean of 4.43. Table 4.4 presents the Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) pertaining to the differences in Greek affiliation, classification, gender, and race in the participants' sense of connectedness to the institution. Women were more likely to feel connected to the institution than men but not at a significant rate ($p = .124$). The women felt as though they mattered to the university more so than the men with women having a 4.21 mean and men having a

3.78 mean. There were no significant relationships between Greek affiliation and a student's sense of connectedness ($p = .339$), proving that no matter which chapter you are affiliated with there is no correlation with connectedness. A student's race did not provide any significant differences in connectedness ($p = .959$). There were also not significant findings on the participants classifications ($p = .236$).

Sense of Academic Success

Table 4.5 displays the participants' sense of success. Both males (mean - 3.78) and females (mean - 4.21) felt as though they mattered to the university with women feeling as though they mattered to the university at a higher rate than male participants. Students felt academically successful with gender providing a significant relationship ($p = .011$), the women felt more academically successful than the men. There was a mean of 1.02 women who felt like they could adequately contribute to their chapter and a mean of 1.03 men who felt like they could adequately contribute to their chapter while still being a successful college student. Therefore, there is not a significant difference in male and female perceptions of their contributions to their chapter. The data agrees that Greek students feel academically successful, 100% of students surveyed in Panhellenic said that their involvement in Greek life is making them feel successful, along with 98% of all students surveyed in IFC, 100% in MGC, 100% in NPHC. Overall, 190 of the 193 Greek students surveyed said that their involvement in Greek life was helping them to feel successful. There were no significant correlations with Greek affiliation ($p = .963$), gender ($p = 2.85$),

classification ($p = 1.489$) or race ($p = .977$) when participants were asked if their involvement makes them feel successful.

Sense of Overengagement

The main finding of this study is the number of men and women who were overwhelmed due to their involvement in Greek Life. As shown in table 4.6 there were significant correlations with students' Greek affiliation ($p = .000$) and gender ($p = .000$) when compared to the students' feelings of being overwhelmed. The mean of participants 1.66 ($p = .0476$) said that they felt overwhelmed due to their student involvement in Greek life. The sense of being overwhelmed was also significant by classification ($p = .000$) with sophomore and junior students feeling the most overwhelmed. There was a mean of 2.49 females who were overwhelmed compared to the 1.49 males who felt overwhelmed; men were more likely to be involved with 1 other organization compared to women. Women were more likely to be involved in two or more other campus organizations. Participants were allowed to check as many activities that they participated in, therefore, percentages did not equal 100%. Furthermore, 50% of all people who said they were overwhelmed in Greek life were working and 39% of those who said they were over-involved were involved in two other organizations along with their sorority/fraternity.

Chapter Summary

Chapter IV presented the findings of the study. This study attempted to address both questions. The correlations that were found were significant and positive

correlations. The final chapter will discuss conclusions, results, implications, and recommendations for future research of the quantitative data collected.

Table 4.2

Descriptive Statistics

As a current student, I make emotionally, socially, and physically healthy choices during college.			
N	M	p	Range
193	4.15	.786	4
As current student involved in Greek Life, I feel connected to the university.			
N	M	p	Range
193	4.35	.057	3
As a current student I feel that I matter to the university.			
N	M	p	Range
192	3.90	.074	3
I feel I am academically successful.			
N	M	p	Range
193	4.14	.053	3
My involvement in Greek life has positively impacted my college experience.			
N	M	p	Range
192	4.63	.882	4
My social transition from high school was easy.			
N	M	p	Range
192	4.33	.882	4
My academic transition from high school was easy.			
N	M	p	Range
193	3.90	.968	4
Has being involved in Greek life helped you meet other students?			
N	M	p	Range
193	4.74	.557	3

Table 4.3

Pearson Correlations

		I feel connected to the university.	I feel that I matter to the university.	I feel I am academically successful.
Greek Life Affiliation:	Pearson Correlation	.009	-.008	-.056
	<i>p</i>	.903	.908	.441
	N	191	190	191
Age:	Pearson Correlation	.120	-.126	-.027**
	<i>p</i>	.097	.083	.714
	N	192	191	192
Classification:	Pearson Correlation	.108	-.075**	.095
	<i>p</i>	.137	.307	.193
	N	190	189	190
Gender:	Pearson Correlation	.111	.188	.182*
	<i>p</i>	.124	.009	.011
	N	193	192	193
What is your racial/ethnic identification?	Pearson Correlation	.005**	-.029	-.074
	<i>p</i>	.944	.693	.307
	N	190	189	190
How many hours are you enrolled in this semester?	Pearson Correlation	.062	.074	.067
	<i>p</i>	.417	.332	.377
	N	175	174	175
What is your GPA?	Pearson Correlation	.014*	-.060	-.418
	<i>p</i>	.850	.414	.000
	N	191	190	191

Table 4.4

Sense of Connectedness

As a current student, I feel connected to the university.

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	<i>p</i>
Greek Affiliation	3.479	5	.696	1.143	.339
Gender	1.503	1	13503	2.387	.124
Race	.667	5	.133	.207	.959
Classification	2.655	3	.885	1.428	.236

Table 4.5

Sense of Academic Success

I feel I am academically successful.

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	<i>p</i>
Greek Affiliation	5.367	5	1.073	2.015	.078
Gender	3.491	1	3.491	6.555	.011
Race	1.815	5	.363	.651	.661
Classification	1.489	3	.496	.913	.436

Is your involvement making you feel successful?

Greek Affiliation	.011	5	.002	.198	.963
Gender	.018	1	.018	1.149	2.85
Race	.013	5	.003	.158	.977
Classification	.028	3	.009	.593	.621

Table 4.6

Sense of Over-engagement

Have you ever felt overwhelmed due to involvement in Greek Life?					
	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	<i>p</i>
Greek Affiliation	5.970	5	1.194	5.934	.000
Gender	5.756	1	5.756	29.181	.000
Race	1.503	5	.301	1.341	.249
Classification	4.186	3	1.395	6.727	.000

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

Research indicates a positive relationship with college students who are involved and their retention rates (Astin, 1999; Clounch, 2010; Gaskins, 2009; Chickering & Reisser, 1993; Crawford, 2007; Lounsbury & DeNeui, 1996; Tinto, 1993). The research also indicates that students will perform better in situations that provide academic and social support (Tinto, 1993). Greek life is one type of student involvement that allows students to feel connected to their institution while still having an academic and social support system. Studies found that Greek involvement negatively impacts academic performance (Grubbs, 2006; Baker, 2008; Pascarella et al., 1996). Grubbs (2006), for example, found that students who were involved with Greek life had a 1-2 percent lower GPA. This finding does not allow for the student development and leadership skills that Greek life students have been exposed to due to their on-campus involvement. On the other hand, Pascarella and Terenzini (2005) discussed Greek involvement positively impacting students' networking skills. For example, students who are involved have not only had the brothers/sisters in their chapter to network with, but also have networking connections with successful alumni.

The purpose of the current study was to examine Greek life student over-engagement. The final chapter summarizes the entire study and formulates conclusions based on the results. This chapter will include a brief overview of the

study, major findings, implications for practice, recommendations for future research and conclusions.

Summary of the Study

This study examined Greek student over-involvement. If Greek students are over-involved, then how are they managing their time, and how do they cope with the stress of being involved in several activities. Participants were asked questions relating to time management, involvement in other activities, and how their involvement in Greek life has made an impact. Many of the likert scale questions were similar to other questions in the survey and these questions were used to check for consistency in participant responses. The following research questions guided the study:

1. What is the relationship between the background demographics of undergraduate students involved in Greek organizations and one's sense of Over-involvement?
2. What is the relationship between academic background characteristics of undergraduate students involved in Greek organizations and one's sense of Over-involvement?

Discussion & Implications for Practice

Students change throughout the college experience (Pritchard, 2003). Students spend hours attending meetings, classes, and social events (Lau, 2003). In order for college students to be more successful, they must understand the relationship their involvement, and sometimes over-involvement, has on their grades (House, 2000).

Masters (2005) offered seven tips for students who are challenged with balancing challenging coursework and a full extracurricular schedule. 1) Do not let your schedule control you; time management skills are essential to college and career life. Learn how to schedule your time appropriately and stick to that schedule. 2) Use the resources that are provided to you as a student. 3) Prioritize your tasks; academics must always come first while in college. The point of higher education is to receive a degree. 4) Stop procrastinating early in your college career; stick to set deadlines and do what needs to be done before the last minute. 5) Attend class, in order to maximize learning you must be in class. 6) Find a mentor; everyone needs someone else to look up to and to be able to call for advice. 7) Have fun while you are a college student; memories will be made outside of the classroom that will stay with you forever, but balance is key. Students must limit the number of organizations he/she is participating in on a regular basis. From the extracurricular activities a student is involved in, he or she must decide where to focus his/her leadership. Once an organization has been chosen and time is dedicated to be an active member and/or leader, the student should successfully maintain that participation throughout his or her college career.

When a student is involved in extracurricular activities at an institution, skills are learned that may not have been learned inside the classroom. These skills will likely be transferable upon graduation (McCluskey-Titus, 2003). One may argue that although students that are involved in multiple extracurricular activities will have lower academic success, they are learning as much outside of the classroom as they are inside the classroom (Fry, 2006; Holland & Andre, 1987). Institutions should

encourage students to be involved in extracurricular activities and stay in those organizations until graduation. The results of the current study indicate that students need assistance in balancing their involvement. The current study was designed to explore the relationship between Greek students and their level of involvement. More specifically, the study examined at Greek student over-involvement. The following is a summary of the major findings for each research hypothesis.

H₁. The current study did find a statistically significant correlation between the Greek Life involvement and their sense of connectedness to the institution. The results of the study found a mean of 4.69 female participants feeling connected and a mean of 4.43 male participants feeling connected of a highest possible score of 5. There are no significant findings based on gender, classification, Greek Life affiliation, or race. Therefore, H₁ is accepted.

H₂. The current study revealed a statistically significant correlation between Greek Life involvement and their sense of academic success. Students felt academically successful with gender providing a significant relationship ($p = .011$), the women felt more academically successful than the men.

H₃. The current study revealed a statistically significant correlation between level of involvement and over-involvement. Greek affiliation, gender, and classification all provided significant findings ($p = .00$). There was a mean of 2.49 females feeling overwhelmed compared to the 1.49 males who felt overwhelmed. The male participants were more likely to be involved with 1 other organization compared

to women. Women were more likely to be involved in two or more other campus organizations. Therefore, H₃ is accepted.

The participants in this study were largely full-time, traditional-aged students who had gone through recruitment prior to their first semester at the university. Typically, at the university where the research was conducted students will go through recruitment before beginning their first semester. There were no significant findings.

Sense of Connectedness

Greek life students as a group felt connected to the university even though there were no significant findings between the groups (race, classification, Greek life affiliation, or gender). The findings prove that the more a student is involved the more that student feels connected to the institution. This is a significant finding for Greek life offices in being aware of their impact on potential student retention numbers. This finding is also important for institutions to know one way to increase a sense of connectedness in order to increase retention at the institution. Allen (2008) found that social connectedness had minimal effects on students continuing at the institution compared to first-year academic performance. Therefore, while Greek students are feeling a sense of connectedness to the institution, more programming should be developed for first-year Greek students in order to ensure that they are doing well socially and academically. Other research states that student connectedness has a strong positive correlation in retention rates (Hambley & McClanahan, 2004; Kuh, 2007).

The data indicates that female participants felt more connected than the male participants with a mean of 4.69 compared to the men's mean of 4.43 with responses to the statement "I feel connected to the university", but this sense of connection was not found to be significant ($p = .124$). One participant discussed how his involvement has made him feel connected by meeting new people and making friends as a transfer student:

Having transferred from a smaller town, I did not have many friends at [university] at the time of my transfer. Since then I've made many friends and many who I would consider to be my best friends. I could not imagine having tried to get involved without having joined a fraternity all those years ago.

Another student expressed his gratitude toward this type of student involvement "[Greek life] helped me get involved with Student Government, Chancellor's Ambassadors, Student Alumni Board, Business Ambassadors, and more. I've met some of the greatest people on the planet, and created lifelong friendships". Throughout the responses to questions in the survey, as well as the comments that students provided, there was a feeling of connectedness to the institution through getting involved with other organizations. All of the comments were positive when participants discussed their involvement in Greek life. It should be noted that Greek life students would likely not have disclosed negative comments to avoid shedding a negative light on Greek life. One way to provide balance to students and increase their sense of connectedness is through one-on-one meetings.

One-on-One Meetings

Greek life retention could be increased by focusing on the sophomore and junior level students who are feeling the most overwhelmed. These students are feeling more overwhelmed than freshmen and seniors in their involvement because typically involvement peaks as sophomore and juniors begin to take on leadership roles. Chapter advisors should schedule one-on-one meetings with each officer as he/she will likely fall in this peak involvement phase of second and third year students. One-on-one meetings will allow the busiest members the opportunity to vent about their involvement which could be a form of stress relief for the members. These meetings will, more importantly, allow the chapter advisor to see any “red flags” (such as difficulty with school work, sudden changes in mood or behavior, and increased levels of stress) which could easily be overlooked if advisors are not maintaining one on one contact with the most involved members. Once “red flags” are noticed, advisors can work with each student individually to find the root of the stress. It may have nothing to do with Greek life or it may be all about his/her Greek life involvement. These one-on-one meetings allow relationships to be built with students who will often confide in their issues in hopes of their advisor helping to find a solution on a case by case basis. No two students will handle stress the same and these meetings will allow advisors to work with each student to meet his/her needs in order to be successful.

Sense of Success

There is a strong positive correlation between Greek life involvement and feeling successful. Success is defined differently to everyone; participants are likely defining success as academically, socially, and/or emotionally. Participants wished they had more time to work out (18%) and sleep (11%). While many Greek students may not feel over-involved; they still cannot do everything that they would like to do in order to feel balanced in their lives. Therefore, while Greek students define themselves as successful, there is still improvement needed to balance all of the tasks that need to be completed. One student discussed how his involvement has impacted his success:

The fraternity which I am part of rewards our members who perform well in their classes and, thus, encourages us to go to class and study hard. Not only that but we are provided with an alternative place to study outside of my house and the university library, along with help from my fraternity brothers who may be more knowledgeable in certain areas of study than I am.

There were no significant correlations between men and women's sense of adequate chapter contribution. When participants were asked what they wished they had more time and energy to do, 30 of the 165 who provided responses (18%) answered "work-out" and 11 of 165 participants answered "sleep". Greek students are not fully balanced in all areas of their lives. Overall, 191 of the 193 (99%) Greek students surveyed said that their involvement in Greek life was helping them to feel successful. Greek students feel like they are successful and their involvement in

Greek life either does not affect their success or it positively affects their success.

Moreover, one student discussed her experience with her sorority:

I feel that Greek life is often viewed in a very bad light. I am aware that there are negatives in some chapters, but I believe that for the most part Greek life is extremely beneficial. I have been able to make lifelong friendships, extraordinary connections, expand upon my leadership skills, and am always encouraged to do my best in school and present myself as the best possible person I can be. Greek life at [university] has definitely changed my college experience for the better, and I feel that my level of success today would be nowhere near where it currently stands without the help of my sorority.

The ANOVA found significant correlations with a student's sense of academic success in relation to gender ($p=.011$) with women feeling more academically successful than men. This finding relates since women feel more academically successful, yet they also feel more overwhelmed. Women could feel a greater sense of pressure in multiple areas of life, creating this overwhelming feeling.

Academic Support Systems

In order to decrease students' overwhelming feelings, academic support systems should be increased and streamlined. The chapters that do not provide study halls are doing a disservice to their members. Survey participants discussed ways that their chapter provides them with academic support including studying together, scholarship incentives, GPA requirements for members, mentor-mentee relationships where older members of the same major are paired with new members of the same

major, requiring study halls, and providing tutoring for members. Greek life offices should provide as many of these academic support systems as possible since the ultimate goal is to have members graduate.

Sense of Overengagement

There was a mean of 2.49 females who were overwhelmed compared to the 1.49 males who felt overwhelmed. Much of the research states that, in general, females are more likely to be stressed than males (Adlaf et al., 2001; Brougham, 2009; Hudd et al., 2000; Hall, 2006; Lindsey, 2011; Misra, 2000). The results of this study support the research in that women were significantly more likely to feel overwhelmed compared to men ($p = .000$). While the results from the current study found that women are more stressed than men, Brougham's (2009) study provided variables for why women are more stressed than men. These variables included that women were more likely to be stressed about daily hassles, social activities, finances and family responsibilities compared to men (Brougham, 2009). This research question was supported, as some Greek life college students are overengaged. However, the findings proved that there is a difference in the level of stress felt between men and women. Greek women are more likely to be involved in other activities, which could also be a contributor to why they feel overwhelmed more often than Greek men. A student's type of stress varies depending on his/her classification (Lindsey, 2011). For example, the current study found that sophomore and junior level students were more likely to feel overwhelmed in their Greek life activities. This finding could be due to the fact that it is often sophomores and juniors that are heavily involved in their

organizations as officers and active members. There were a higher percentage of participants who were working and feeling overwhelmed. There were no significant differences in the number of men working compared to the number of women working. The participants who felt overwhelmed were more likely to be involved in other activities including, but not limited to: 2 other organizations on campus, 3 or more organizations on campus, attending a religious service weekly and other activities not specified. It is likely that students who are feeling overwhelmed in Greek life are more likely to be involved in other activities. Greek life involvement is not the sole activity that is creating this feeling of being overwhelmed.

Overall, the results of this study provided multiple significant indications that Greek life students are successful. Studies have also found that after students became involved in Greek life they experienced personal gains (Hayek, et al., 2002; Pike, 2003). The participants of this study felt successful whether that success is personal, academic, physical or emotional. While some Greek life students are over-engaged, women are more likely to be over-engaged compared to men.

Women who felt a sense over over-engagement demonstrate higher levels of involvement in their chapter. The survey results found that women were more likely to have higher levels of involvement in their chapter or in other student organizations on campus. There have been no previous findings in Greek life research that indicate that women members may be more overwhelmed than men. However, there is an abundance of other research showing that, in general, women often feel more

overwhelmed than men (Adlaf et al., 2001; Brougham, 2009; Hudd et al., 2000; Hall, 2006; Lindsey, 2011; Misra, 2000).

Greek life students do not have balance in their lives as many students wished they had the time to relax, sleep, or work out. Therefore, this study's results support the findings of other research. All of these factors are contributors to student success. For example, research shows that students who do not get enough sleep will likely have lower GPAs (Gaultney, 2010), which in turn will affect students' academic progress and retention rates. If Greek life students were taught more efficient ways to manage their time, then they would be able to create better balance in their lives and have more time to sleep, relax, or work out. This will give Greek life students' the balance that they are currently missing.

Greek students feel connected to the institution which could largely be due to the fact that these students are involved not only in Greek life, but other student organizations, and/or have a job that is on-campus. Student connectedness has a strong positive correlation in retention rates (Hambley & McClanahan, 2004; Kuh, 2007). There is a direct correlation with a student's involvement and a student's sense of connectedness to the institution. The results of the study concluded that more women are overwhelmed compared to men. This finding could be due to the fact that the women are more involved in additional activities than men. Since connectedness correlates with retention—including in this study—Greek life students are more likely to be retained due to their involvement. In an effort to provide balance to students, stress relief programming should be provided.

Stress Relief Programming

The results of this study found that Greek life students are feeling overwhelmed—women being more overwhelmed than men. Misra (2000) found that men benefited from more leisure activities. When men participants were asked what they wish they had more time to do responses were similar to the findings in Misra's (2000) study with responses such as: hang out with friends, work out/exercise, hunt/fish, and participate in intramural sports. In order to alleviate stress for men, Greek life offices should provide more activities that allow the men to work out or watch a football game—whatever can be done to relax. Women members' also should be provided more opportunities to be active as one way to provide stress relief, 8 of the 27 (29%) responses provided included working out more. The more programming that is created for students to relax and ease stress, the more likely members may look to these activities to release stress, even after their involvement in Greek life has ceased. Misra (2000) found that even though women had better time management strategies they still experienced higher levels of stress. Panhellenic members' need programming that will create more balance in their lives, such as work-out socials and sessions on time management. The council advisor should inform potential members of the high levels of involvement that is required in Greek life. In addition to informing students of the high levels of involvement, council and chapter advisors should look at limiting involvement of their students to increase success.

Limit Involvement

One-on-one meetings will give chapter advisors the ability to help each student individually, but it is also a good idea to set standards for the entire group to adhere to. Greek life chapters need to address the issue of over-involvement by placing rules on exactly how involved a student is allowed to be. For example, chapter advisors could create stipulations such as not allowing students to be involved in more than two other organizations or requiring a higher GPA for students who wish to become officers. By limiting a student's involvement, he/she will have more time to commit to each organization and be more successful in fewer organizations compared to mediocre involvement and a sense of being overwhelmed in more organizations. Limiting involvement should be done on a chapter by chapter basis or a council by council basis at an institution. This is recommended since each chapter and/or council has different levels of involvement and in order to create a successful policy, the policy must work well for the group that it applies to.

Recommendations for Future Research

Based on the limited responses from Panhellenic, Multicultural Greek Council, and National Pan-Hellenic Council this study could be replicated and redistributed to those groups. Emailing students directly instead of relying on the chapter President to forward the message may increase participation as chapter Presidents are tasked with many different obligations and forwarding a survey to all members may not be at the top of a President's priority list. Also, in order to increase responses print the survey or have participants meet in a computer lab for a meeting since these students are more

likely to complete the survey when it is made as easy and accessible to them as possible.

Since 99% of students feel successful, there is minimal that can be done to increase that percentage to 100%. However, programs could be developed that allow students to feel successful in multiple ways such as academic, social, physical, and emotional. This would require future research in order to determine where these students feel they could be more successful and which areas Greek students identify as already being successful.

Other recommendations for future research include: looking into the gender stress issue in Greek life and the different ways that stress can be decreased for women and men; asking participants what specifically about being involved in Greek life is stressful; and getting exact retention numbers from institutions to see the effect of retention on Greek life students compared to non-Greek students and the reasons why those retention numbers could be different. It would be beneficial to see a comparison between an institution that allows students to go through recruitment their first semester of college compared to an institution that requires students attend the institution for one semester or one year prior to being allowed to go through recruitment.

Chapter Summary

The purpose of this study was to examine Greek life over-involvement and how involvement relates to retention, student connectedness, and student success. Many of the results were significant and several conclusions were able to be drawn

from the study. However, further research with more participants from each council at multiple institutions is needed to confirm results.

Greek life students are over-involved; however, involvement in Greek life also makes students feel successful. Women are more likely to feel the stress of involvement compared to men. This could be due to the fact that women were more involved in other activities. There is little, if any, research on Greek student over-involvement and while there is much more research to be done, this study will decrease the current gap and allow Greek life offices across the nation to make changes to their chapters. Greek life offices will be able to use this study to holistically strengthen Greek life students' college experiences by creating emotionally and academically sound students upon graduation from the institution. Instead of looking at over-involvement, another area to research would be how the different types of involvement (work, on-campus organizations, Greek life, attending religious services weekly) impacts the student and how these types of involvement can be used to decrease stress in today's busy college students.

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APPENDIX A

INITIAL EMAIL TO PARTICIPANTS VIA GREEK LIFE OFFICES

Dear Greek Life Student,

You are receiving this email because you are a student who is involved in Greek Life system at Texas Tech University for Fall 2012. In the following days, you will receive an email from the Greek Life office with an opportunity to participate in a research study. This study is investigating how involvement in Greek life affects academic success.

Jennifer Nesloney, a master's candidate in the College of Education at Texas Tech University, will be conducting this study under the supervision of the primary investigator, Dr. Colette Taylor. If you have any questions or concerns, if you would like to know more about the study, or if you would like to participate in the study, please contact Jennifer Nesloney via telephone at 806-742-5433 or via email at jennifer.nesloney@ttu.edu. Dr. Colette Taylor, Assistant Professor of Higher Education at Texas Tech University can be reached via telephone at 806-742-1997 extension 266 or via email at colette.taylor@ttu.edu.

This study has been approved by the Texas Tech University, Human Research Protection Program. If you have questions about your rights as a participant, please contact the Texas Tech University Human Research Protection Program, Office of Research Services, Texas Tech University, via telephone at (806) 742-2064. Participation is voluntary.

Thank you in advance for supporting his research efforts and considering participation.

APPENDIX B

FOLLOW UP EMAIL TO PARTICIPANTS VIA GREEK LIFE OFFICES

Dear Texas Tech Greek Life Member,

This email is being sent by Greek Life office on behalf of Jennifer Nesloney, a master candidate in the College of Education at Texas Tech University. She is conducting research involving Greek life involvement and its influence on academic success.

Dear Greek Member,

Thank you to the Greek Life office for sending this email to you on my behalf. This research study is seeking current students involved in Greek life to participate in a research study titled “Over-engagement of Greek life college students.” The purpose of this study is to investigate student involvement, particularly in Greek life, and understand how this type of involvement impacts a student’s grades and overall college experience.

Participants in this study shall be required to take a short online survey, which consists of 44 questions, and will take approximately 15-20 minutes to complete. Survey questions ask about the student involvement of the participants and their academic experiences. Your answers will be anonymous.

Your participation in this study is voluntary, and you may stop at any time without penalty or consequence. There is no compensation for completing the survey.

If you are interested in participating, please click on the link below to login.

LINK

Thank you for your assistance with this research.

APPENDIX C

GREEK LIFE DEMOGRAPHICS

This questionnaire asks about different types of student involvement and how being involved can affect a student's GPA and academic success. Please be sure to answer each question carefully and respond honestly. Honest responses to these questions will provide us with a greater understanding the time commitment of being involved with Greek Life, as well as other student organizations, affects your ability to succeed academically.

Demographics

1. Greek Life Affiliation:
 - a. Panhellenic Council
 - b. Inter-fraternity Council
 - c. Religious Fraternity/Sorority
 - d. Multicultural Greek Council
 - e. National Pan-Hellenic Council
 - f. Other
2. Age (write in):

3. Classification:
 - a. Freshman
 - b. Sophomore
 - c. Junior
 - d. Senior
4. Gender:
 - a. Male

b. Female

5. Race:

Mark one or more boxes to indicate what you consider your race to be.

How would you describe yourself? (Choose one or more from the following racial groups)

a. American Indian or Alaska Native

(A person having origins in any of the original peoples of North and South America (including Central America), and who maintains a tribal affiliation or community attachment.)

b. Asian

(A person having origins in any of the original peoples of the Far East, Southeast Asia, or the Indian subcontinent including, for example, Cambodia, China, India, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Pakistan, the Philippine Islands, Thailand, and Vietnam.)

c. Black or African American

(A person having origins in any of the Black racial groups of Africa – includes Caribbean Islanders and other of African origin.)

d. Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander

(A person having origins in any of the original peoples of Hawaii, Guam, Samoa, or other Pacific Islands.)

e. White

(A person having origins in any of the original peoples of Europe, the Middle East, or North Africa.)

6. How many hours are you enrolled in this semester?

7. What is your GPA?

f. 4.0

g. 3.5-3.9

h. 3.0-3.4

- i. 2.5-2.9
 - j. 2.4 or below
 - k. Decline to answer
8. When did you go through recruitment?
- a. Before first semester at college
 - b. After first semester
 - c. Beginning of Sophomore year
 - d. Middle of sophomore year or after
9. Are you a transfer student?
- a. Yes
 - b. No
 - i. If yes, then how did your Greek life involvement help your transition to a new institution?
10. Do you work while attending school?
- a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. Decline to answer
11. If are working, how many hours per week are you employed?
- a. Not applicable
 - b. ____
 - i. Is your job on campus?
 - 1. Yes
 - 2. No