

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-LA CROSSE

Graduate Studies

EXAMINING WHY UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS DO NOT SEEK

MEMBERSHIP OF SOCIAL GREEK ORGANIZATIONS:

A CORRELATIONAL STUDY AT THE

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-

LA CROSSE

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ABSTRACT

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This study explored why students are not joining social fraternities and sororities at the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse in larger numbers. A sample of 344 first semester college students responded to a 22-item online survey instrument. Based on responses, personal perceptions to likelihood of joining were analyzed along with involvement in student non-social Greek organizations. The survey concluded by exploring where respondents received their knowledge of social Greek organizations. The principal findings suggest students do not join social Greek organizations because they are unaware of their existence on campus. Implications for practice include that social Greek organizations must advertise their events to campus members. Current members must also learn about involvement oscillation for initiated members. Student affairs administrators, social Greek organization leaders and, social Greek organization advisors should learn how the stages of the Member Acquisition and Retention Model affect non-members and members.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Despite existing for almost 80 years, social Greek organizations have failed to gain a substantial member population at the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse (Gilkey, 1981; Slapak, 1975). Originally, all of UW-La Crosse's social Greek organizations were founded as local student organizations bearing a Greek moniker (Gilkey, 1981; Slapak, 1975). During the 1960s, 10 local organizations became affiliated with national or international Greek letter organizations. Of the 10, six were fraternities and four were sororities. By 1975, the final two local organizations (one fraternity and one sorority) affiliated with national organizations. Time has not been kind to these organizations; only four of the original 12 still exist. Those social Greek organizations still in existence today include two sororities and two fraternities.

Member-driven organizations rely on their membership for continual existence (Baird, 1991; Coffey & Gendron, 2007; Fouts, 2010; Kretovics & Zuckerman, 2003; Mattson & Orendi, 2006). During the early 1990s, fraternity membership nationwide was at a record high with more than 400,000 active men (Reisberg, 2000). At UW-La Crosse during the same time membership within social Greek organizations swelled well above 200 members. However, this success was short lived, both nationally and locally, as social Greek membership began to wane (Ross, 2000; Zacker, 2001). In a study of Greek membership at six different institutions, Ross (2000) found that membership

declined for both fraternities and sororities at every institution. During the 1990s, the national average chapter size decreased by ten members with an average chapter size amounting to fewer than 40 men (Ross, 2000). Researchers and Greek Life professionals alike have studied this decline for years and have studied potential factors for waning memberships.

Hazing, sexual assault, and controlled substances often overshadow the actions of members of social Greek organizations (Mathiasen, 2005; Reisberg, 2000; Zacker, 2001). For instance, in his 2002 book *Wrongs of Passage: Fraternities, Sororities, Hazing, and Binge Drinking*, Nuwer chronicles the actions of fraternities and sororities and shows a clear increase in hazing behavior. While fraternities and sororities are responsible for the majority of hazing related deaths, military organizations are also included in Nuwer's hazing death totals (Nuwer, 2002, 2011). By 1970, the number of nationwide total hazing deaths amounted to 50 (Nuwer, 2002). By 2010, this number had more than tripled with 154 reported hazing-related deaths (Nuwer, 2011). This number would be even larger had members of social Greek organizations and the campus community reported deaths as related to hazing, which is apparently not standard practice (Nuwer, 2002, 2011). The staggering death toll has caused fraternity and sorority headquarters, their respective governing bodies, and campuses to take action (Hebson, 1996). National fraternity and sorority headquarters have developed programs and supported organizations that focus on stopping hazing. By definition, hazing is any action that degrades or demeans an individual (Nuwer, 2002). Often, when hazing is mentioned in the news, it is due to a horrific death of a student (Lee, 2011; Linhorst, 2011). It makes sense that non-members and their families are apprehensive about joining a social Greek

organization given all the attention on hazing-related Greek behaviors, injuries, or even deaths of Greek-affiliated college students. Based on media reports and Hollywood movies, college students form opinions about Greek organizations that keep them from seeking membership.

UW-La Crosse has spent the past decade focusing on their foundational values as a social Greek community. With the direction of campus professionals, the membership began to transform into a values-focused community (Bureau, Schendel, & Veldkamp, 2006). Shifting focus back to foundational values, the Greek community positioned itself to offer an experience not found in other student organizations. A positive byproduct of this paradigm shift was decreased risk management concerns. As a Greek Life staff member, the Greek community as a whole at UW-La Crosse consistently earns higher average GPAs than the rest of the undergraduate population, logs hundreds of community service hours, and offers leadership development opportunities for its members. Considering these positive attributes of Greek Life, one would expect students to seek membership in a social Greek organization at UW-La Crosse. However, the membership data do not reflect this at the current time.

Studies focusing on fraternities and sororities have centered around risk management issues (Kuh, Pascarella, & Wechsler, 1996; Nuwer, 2002; Zacker, 2001), drinking behaviors (Elkins, Helms, & Pierson, 2003a; Kuh & Arnold, 1993; Maholchic-Nelson, 2010; Nuwer, 2002; Rhoads, 1995), predictors of grades (Binder, 1997; Maholchic-Nelson, 2010; Nelson, Halperin, Wasserman, & Smith, 2006), and foundational organization values (Bureau et al., 2006; Kimbrough, 1995; Zarvell, 1993). Despite the unsuccessful recruitment practices of new members and several issues

explained by extant literature, little empirical research exists on why students are not joining social Greek organizations. The only recent study that focused on this conundrum was conducted by Fouts (2010). Her study serves as a basis for the present investigation.

Fouts (2010) explored three distinct groups of students on two Midwestern campuses: (1) those who never participated in recruitment, (2) those who participated in Greek recruitment but did not receive a bid, and (3) those who ended up joining the Greek organization. Both institutions were public and predominantly White and both had nearly 20 different Greek chapters on campus. Results showed that over half of students who responded learned about fraternities or sororities from a Greek-affiliated family member or friend (Fouts, 2010). Nearly three quarters of students did not participate in recruitment because of stereotypes they held about Greek organizations, and perceptions of sexual promiscuity, overuse of alcohol, and academic dishonesty predominated.

A study on why students are not joining social Greek organizations is significant for several reasons. First, investigating how undergraduate students are spending their time outside of class can help campus professionals craft appropriate involvement opportunities. This understanding can extend past fraternity and sorority life; campus activities professionals and intermural coaches could modify how and when programs are offered. Second, this study will help campus professionals and fraternity and sorority officials nationwide to understand why students are overlooking social Greek organizations as involvement opportunities. This study also benefits the non-member by providing an opportunity for educational conversations based on non-member perceptions. Finally, as much as the results can be generalized to larger contexts, current

fraternity and sorority members and leaders, Greek Life staff members, and national Greek headquarters will understand why students are not joining. This in turn will help the organization modify their message to educate and excite students about its opportunities for college student engagement. By understanding the type of possible Greek membership at an institution, officers in social Greek organizations can better communicate membership requirements to their governing organizations and to campus professionals.

The purpose of this correlational study is to investigate why students are not joining fraternities or sororities at UW-La Crosse. The study will compare non-Greek first-year students' perceived likelihood of joining a social Greek organization against several metrics. Such metrics include perceptions of fraternities and sororities, involvement in non-student organizations, participation in recruitment activities, and sources of knowledge about Greek letter organizations. Further, the examination of demographic information is important because it aims to identify prior student characteristics and factors contributing to stagnant membership. By comparing demographic information against perceptions, a social Greek organization can better advertise and educate potential members. The analysis of the study will evaluate students' involvement in recruitment along with factors that would shift their interest in seeking membership within a social Greek organization. Finally, as the graduate assistant for the fraternity and sorority community and the principal investigator, I am interested to study why so few students are joining social Greek organizations.

Research Assumptions

The main question guiding this research centers around the low levels of membership of fraternities and sororities on the UW-La Crosse campus: Why are so few students joining fraternities or sororities at University of Wisconsin- La Crosse? Four assumptions can be derived from this central question:

- Students are entering this campus with preconceived negative beliefs about fraternities or sororities that keep them from considering membership in social Greek organizations.
- Students are joining other organizations and groups, which replace the fraternity and sorority experience.
- Fraternity and sorority members are missing critical opportunities to recruit interested students to join their organizations.
- Members of social Greek organizations are not publicizing their activities to the campus community, specifically, to non-members.

Definitions

An active member is a man/woman who has been initiated into lifelong membership of a fraternity/sorority and is currently enrolled in college. Alumnus/-ae is an initiated member of a fraternity or sorority who is no longer enrolled in college. A nonmember is any man or woman who is not and has never been a member of a recognized social, Greek-letter-society/fraternity or sorority. A bid is a formal invitation to join a fraternity/sorority issued in writing directly from the fraternity/sorority to a potential new member and confirmed by the appropriate governing council. The chapter is the local chartered unit of a national fraternity or sorority. Fraternity is an organization of a single

sex and mostly consistent of men, although some female fraternities exist. A grip is a handshake developed to identify membership within a specific fraternity or sorority. National organizations have a standardized grip. A Greek is a member of a fraternity or sorority. These organization and members are named such because they were founded at a time when Greek Society was heralded as the epitome of civilized life.

Hazing, as previously stated, is any action that degrades or demeans an individual (Nuwer, 2002). Initiation is a ceremony by which new members become active members of their fraternity/sorority. Membership recruitment is the period set aside for events, informational and membership selection during the first few weeks of fall semester. A new member/pledge is a man or woman who has gone through formal pin in ceremonies and is learning the history and purposes of his/her fraternity/sorority but has not yet been initiated into life-long membership. The recruitment/intake/rush is the process where fraternities and sororities seek non-members to join their organization. This is often manifested in events and activities with the current organization. Social Greek organizations are single-sex groups that have shared values with their members. Membership is not restricted to major, religion, hometown, or race. Sorority is a word invented by a professor of Latin in 1882 to mean sister (Appalachian State University, n.d.; Turk, 2004). Groups founded after 1882 used the term sorority to define their sisterhood. Today, sorority is a term commonly used to describe all female Greek organizations.

CHAPTER II
REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE
History of Fraternal Organizations

The history of both men's and women's Greek social organizations in the United States is as colorful and fascinating as the members recruited to join. Yet, few outside of the organization actually know this history (Baird, 1991; Syrett, 2009; Turk, 2004). This is due to the fact that both men's and women's social Greek organizations started out as secret societies. This secrecy ultimately aided in the growth of both men's and women's organizations. Men's fraternity history is drawn heavily from Syrett's (2009) book *The Company He Keeps. Bound by a Mighty Vow* (Turk, 2004) follows the women of Kappa Alpha Theta and other organizations as they grew to become a fixture on American college campuses.

Founding an American Brotherhood

In the mid-1700s, Greek letter fraternities were founded upon the ideals of Grecian society. Each secret society was a local group existing outside of the classroom. The members would claim that those who joined fraternities were stronger individuals and better scholars (Syrett, 2009). The first fraternity was founded at the College of William and Mary in December of 1776 (Baird, 1991).

These early groups were more secret literary societies than social organizations. In an action that would be imitated by women's groups, the men developing the idea of

fraternity imitated other organizations already in existence, namely honorary societies and literary societies boasting Greek names (Rudolph, 1990; Syrett, 2009). During meetings, fraternities would require brothers to recite essays to the entire membership. Pulling from their model societies, the men wanted to better themselves through the teachings of their brotherhood.

It was the secrecy and exclusivity that made fraternity membership increasingly coveted. By joining a secret society, such as fraternities, men could engage in activities that were prohibited by the college. Fraternity brothers often would drink alcohol and interact with local town women. On one such occasion at Princeton University, a fraternity brother was found to be intoxicated and upon learning about the transgression, campus faculty instructed him to immediately return home to his parents (Syrett, 2009).

Members were caught between childhood and manhood. Fraternities served to facilitate this transition. The fundamental structure of a fraternity was to foster feelings of belonging, support, and assistance. Many fraternity men can describe these feelings or can exhibit this brotherhood in the lifelong deep-bonded friendship developed with fellow fraternity men. The expectation was that once a young man joined a fraternity and spoke of his everlasting loyalty to the organization, he would be a member for life (Syrett, 2009).

Due to their increasing popularity, fraternities began spreading to other colleges. Men would share their stories of fraternities with friends from home or their male siblings. Until the mid-nineteenth century, a national governing body did not conjoin fraternities. Oblivious to the one another, some fraternities existed on multiple campuses sharing only their namesake (Syrett, 2009). This multiple iteration can be attributed to

two phenomena. First, these organizations were secret. Second, and more plausible, campuses were adamant in keeping fraternities off campus. In 1845, Princeton's president John MacLean, during a faculty meeting, publicly outlawed the existence of fraternities on his campus (Syrett, 2009). In the fall of 1858, the University of Alabama required all incoming students to sign a pledge stating they would not join a fraternity (Syrett, 2009). MacLean's policy at Princeton against fraternities only added to their appeal causing groups to grow in size, popularity, and influence (Baird, 1991; Syrett, 2009).

During the next few decades, college campuses began to release their ban on fraternities. Some colleges remained fraternity-free until after the American Civil War (Syrett, 2009). On some campuses, institutional leaders were former fraternity men who wanted to share the experiences with current students (Syrett, 2009). With the newly found acceptance, fraternities began to grow faster than ever before. Around the mid-nineteenth century, some of the more developed fraternities began entertaining requests of expansion (Syrett, 2009).

Early Women's Fraternities

Before they attended college, women had limited interactions with college men (Syrett, 2009). During this time a fraternity man would spend with a lady would be in town or at a local brothel. Due to this limited exposure to the other sex, men were unsure exactly how to act around women (Syrett, 2009; Turk, 2004).

One of the early adopters of a liberal coeducational campus was Asbury College in Greencastle, Indiana (Turk, 2004). A board of trustees' decision to open enrollment to women, spawned from decreased enrollment and was met with substantial opposition by

male students. During the fall semester of 1869, four women enrolled in Asbury College. Campus men did not greet their new classmates with open arms; instead, they protested the decision to allow women access and sought faculty support to overturn it. It was out of this opposition that women banded together to provide support for other women on campus. The first women at Asbury College knew that they were not only attending school for themselves, but for every woman who would ever attend (Turk, 2004). The women of Asbury College decided to start a women's fraternity that would bind them together to provide support to each other. The women decided to name their secret society Kappa Alpha Theta, a women's fraternity (Turk, 2004). The early members of Kappa Alpha Theta were as focused on redefining true womanhood as they were in upholding it. These early female Greek societies modeled themselves after men's fraternities (Baird, 1991; Syrett, 2009). During their first decade, the women developed elaborate rituals, member grips, and ornate badges (Baird, 1991; Turk, 2004). Initially, Kappa Alpha Theta was as much a support group as a secret society. The first members of the fraternity comprised of the entire female class of four at Asbury College (Baird, 1991; Turk, 2004). The women discussed scholastic endeavors and the bonds of womanhood. Each understood that she was merely a link in the chain of Kappa Alpha Theta, connected to each member through the next (Turk, 2004).

Going National

During a thirty-year span beginning in 1850, fraternity membership grew rapidly: from 1 in every 253 students in 1850 to 1 in every 107 by 1880 (Syrett, 2009). The newly established national fraternity offered something other organizations could not: connection to peers at other institutions. Most of the national organizations began

holding annual conventions in cities across the U.S. During these conventions, fraternity business and pleasure was conducted. Orders of national fraternity business included standardization of the grip, badges, and songs as well as ratification of a national constitution (Baird, 1991; Syrett, 2009). By the 1920s, fraternities were capitalizing on their presence and prestige across the country. They began a rapid state of expansion; over 800 chapters were established during this decade. During this time, national fraternity membership was viewed so highly that unaffiliated men worked tirelessly to affiliate (Syrett, 2009).

Standardization and socialization made prominent national fraternities much more esteemed and coveted. This allure only increased the desire to join a fraternal organization. Men attending Normal Schools - such as La Crosse State Normal School founded in 1909 - were no different. They wanted the same prestige bestowed to fraternity men. The head chapter typically denied these requests. Fraternities denied Normal School charters because the institution was too young and the institutional endowment was too meager (Syrett, 2009).

Almost at the same time yet completely in their own style, women's groups grew into national organizations (Baird, 1991; Turk, 2004). Women wishing to bring a women's fraternal organization to campus would write the organization requesting a charter (Turk, 2004). The women at the chapter would in turn write the deans of the college requesting for high performing scholastic women (Turk, 2004). If a satisfactory quantity of quality women existed, the organization would grant a charter. It is important to note, at this time the women's fraternities were focused more on scholastic betterment than social obligations.

Greek Letter Societies at University of Wisconsin-La Crosse

During the 1909 school year, the men at the La Crosse State Teachers College, later renamed to University of Wisconsin-La Crosse, yearned for a social fraternity experience that differed from the female organization (Slapak, 1975). As a normal school, no national organizations were interested in starting chapters on La Crosse's campus. Due to this, organizations with Greek monikers were locally affiliated only. The first of these Greek societies was the all-female Sapphonian Literary Society, later renamed Sigma Lambda Sigma focused on educating the women who joined (Slapak, 1975). During the subsequent years, several other academic focused sororities became established. It was not until 1924 that the first organization bearing a Greek letter name, Phi Sigma Chi, was established (Gilkey, 1981; Slapak, 1975).

The first male Greek letter society existed sixteen years after Sigma Lambda Sigma's founding. This male society was a professional fraternity, Phi Epsilon Kappa, which only accepted men within the Physical Education department (Gilkey, 1981; Slapak, 1975). The Nu chapter, meaning the thirteenth chapter, of Phi Epsilon Kappa, national fraternity, requested colonization for 13 years, but obstacles delayed the group from founding until 1926 ("Phy-ed fraternity installed here at christmas season," 1927).

Rooted in fear extracurricular activities would detract from the academic pursuits, the faculty council developed policies that hindered the founding of any social Greek letter society. When male students decided they wanted to begin a social fraternity, they realized they would need some powerful allies. They found support from English professor D. O. Coate as well as student advocate and history professor, Myrtle Trowbridge. The founding of Beta Sigma Chi went before the college faculty senate

during the fall of 1934. Many members objected, fearing adverse effects would become evident within the student body. Nevertheless, Ms. Trowbridge and Dr. Coate were able to persuade the college faculty senate in favor of the students. A newspaper article publicly announced that the La Crosse State Teachers College finally had its first social fraternity (“Beta Sigma Chi New Fraternity Organized Here,” 1934; Gilkey, 1981; Slapak, 1975).

From Beta Sigma Chi’s initial founding in 1934, other social Greek organizations planted their flag on UW-La Crosse’s campus. During the next 26 years a total of three fraternities and five sororities established chapters. Each represented a slightly different ideal, yet all were local organizations only existing on UW-La Crosse’s campus (Slapak, 1975).

Beginning during the 1960-1961 school year, two local fraternities merged with national organizations. The local organization, Alpha Delta Theta affiliated with Phi Sigma Epsilon as the Sigma Alpha Chapter. The other local organization to affiliate with a national fraternity and become known as the Beta Kappa Chapter of Sigma Tau Gamma was Lambda Tau Gamma. This trend continued until all of the local organizations affiliated with national fraternities or sororities. With the exception of Sigma Alpha Epsilon, founded in 2005, and Chi Phi, founded in 2011, all of the national fraternities and sororities started as local organizations before affiliating a national organization.

Table 1 depicts each of the national fraternities that have existed on UW-La Crosse’s campus. Of the groups that transitioned to national organizations, only two are currently active – Delta Sigma Phi and Sigma Tau Gamma. Beginning in the 1986 school year and continuing until the 1995 school year, Sigma Tau Gamma was inactive

on UW-La Crosse’s campus. Table 2 lists each of the nationally affiliated sororities established on campus. Currently, there are only two nationally affiliated chapters, Alpha Xi Delta and Alpha Phi. Both tables are completed with the help of Baird’s Manual of American College Fraternities (1991).

Table 1. Social Greek Fraternities Established on UW-La Crosse’s Campus

Organization	Local Founding	Date Inactive
Alpha Kappa Lambda	1962	Inactive, Date Unknown
Chi Phi	2011	
Delta Sigma Phi	1967	
Phi Beta Sigma	Unknown	Inactive, Date Unknown
Phi Sigma Kappa+	1960	1989
Sigma Alpha Epsilon	2005	
Sigma Pi	1971	1986
Sigma Tau Gamma	1960*	1986
Tau Kappa Epsilon	1962	1983

+Note: Phi Sigma Kappa merged with Phi Sigma Epsilon in 1985 (Baird, 1991).

*Note: Sigma Tau Gamma was reestablished on University of Wisconsin-La Crosse’s campus in 1997.

Table 2. Social Greek Sororities Established on UW-La Crosse’s Campus

Organization	Local Founding	Date Inactive
Alpha Omicron Pi	1961	1981
Alpha Phi	1963	
Alpha Xi Delta	1961	
Delta Zeta	1961	1986
Phi Mu	1975	1990

Organizational Challenges

A whole industry has emerged to help members of social Greek organizations get motivated, to recruit better members, or to be all around better members (Coffey & Gendron, 2007; Mattson & Orendi, 2006; Sullivan, 2011). Some of these programs offer clear attainable solutions and growth related to the problem.

T. J. Sullivan (2011) published a book to motivate apathetic members within student organizations. The principles he shared are applicable to social Greek organizations as well as many other groups. He divided organizational membership into thirds – a top, middle, and bottom third. Top third members are those who are always willing to help with an event or with running a meeting. Bottom third members are a part of the organization in name alone because they spend as little time affiliated with the organization as possible and avoid or are delinquent on membership dues. The majority of the book focused on the middle third, those who lack a zealous desire for the organization. Sullivan suggested that the overall Greek membership should develop minimum standards for all students to be considered members within the organization. Such requirements could include academic standards, philanthropic efforts, and attendance to retreats. Based on Sullivan's book, the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse appears to be a bottom-third community at varying times. Many organizational leaders complain of apathetic members.

Two additional books dedicated to bettering Greek membership is *Good Guys: The Eight Steps to Limitless Possibility for Fraternity Recruitment* (Mattson & Orendi, 2006) and its female companion *I Heart Recruitment: The Eight Steps to Limitless Possibility for Sororities* (Coffey & Gendron, 2007). These books coach social Greek organizations how to recruit the type of membership they want. The books suggest that members should get to know potential new members as people before asking them to join the organization. This style of recruiting is known as dynamic recruitment, proving successful today on many college campuses across the country. With much of the membership within social Greek organizations at University of Wisconsin-La Crosse

apathetic, recruiting becomes a challenge. Those affiliated with social Greek organizations that are not apathetic are confused about the process to recruit new individuals; both the confused member along with the apathetic member contribute to concerns about recruitment and membership at on UW-La Crosse.

Stereotypes of Social Greek Organizations

Social Greek organizations are challenged by many stereotypes. Many non-members believe such stereotypes hold true for all members across chapters on every college campus, specifically for fraternity men. Although many of these stereotypes are rooted in some truths in some members, the majority of both fraternity and sorority members are striving for a better community (Bureau et al., 2006; Fouts, 2010).

Academic Problems

Academics within social Greek organizations have been extensively studied (Ayres, 2007; Binder, 1997; Boling, 1996; Maholchic-Nelson, 2010; Pike, 2003; Willingham, 1962). Studies that examine how involvement within the fraternity or sorority can increase a member's GPA often find the opposite is true (Pike, 2003). Pike (2003) repeated a study conducted by Pascarella in the late 1990s. Controlling for differences in ability and background, both studies found that fraternity members reported significantly lower academic ability in mathematics and reading comprehension (Pike, 2003). Another study found that simply joining a fraternity adversely affected the grade point averages of members (Boling, 1996). Finally, studies suggest that prevalence of the consumption of alcohol causes fraternity members to have lower grade point averages than their non-affiliated counterparts (Maholchic-Nelson, 2010).

Hazing in Fraternal Organizations

Hazing has existed for many years and has been prevalent in the military and in universities (Nuwer, 2002, 2004; Syrett, 2009). Hazing behaviors can be classified into three different categories: physical (e.g. holding heavy objects), mental (e.g. dark room with strange noises and lights), and consumption (e.g. eating 50 boiled eggs). All three create different challenges for victims. Often hazing related to consumption centers around the consumption of alcohol (Nuwer, 2002, 2004; Syrett, 2009).

A climate of hazing existed when fraternities were founded on campuses across the U.S. (Rudolph, 1990; Syrett, 2009; Thelin, 2004). Upperclassmen would initiate or test new students when they arrived to campus. Although little is known about the incident, it is believed that the first hazing related death occurred at Cornell University in 1873 (Nuwer, 2004; Zacker, 2001).

Today, many institutions have adopted a similar hazing policy that was developed by the Fraternity Executives Association (Nuwer, 2002). This organization classifies hazing as “any action taken or situation created intentionally, whether on or off fraternity premises, to produce mental or physical discomfort, embarrassment, harassment or ridicule” (Nuwer, 2002, p.31). All but eight states have further defined hazing behaviors and outline criminal actions for those responsible (Zacker, 2001). With hazing behaviors engrained into many fraternal organizations, it is easy for non-members to believe such actions are ubiquitous. For campus administrators, it is often a challenge to learn about and prevent hazing behaviors until a major incident occurs. This is because fraternities and sororities operate under a cloud of secrecy (Nuwer, 2004). Members, including new members, share a belief that either you are a part of the group or you are an outsider who

is against the group (Nuwer, 2002). Such ideology prohibits pledges and members from sharing information about potential hazing behaviors or experiences. An individual who comes forward to report potential hazing behavior would break the bond of brotherhood or sisterhood of the chapter. More likely than not, once the chapter learns of such a report the member will be shunned from the organization.

Alcohol Abuse

Unfortunately, the words alcohol and fraternity are too often viewed as synonymous. Several studies have explored why fraternity members drink substantially higher quantities compared to their non-member counterparts (Ayres, 2007; Elkins, Helms, & Pierson, 2003a, 2003b; Fouts, 2010; Hebson, 1996; Kuh & Arnold, 1993; Kuh et al., 1996; Montgomery & Haemmerlie, 1993; Nuwer, 2004; Rhoads, 1995; Zarvell, 1993). The prevalence of alcohol is not exclusive to a specific institutional type or location.

Explored in Kuh and Arnold's (1993) study, the culture of alcohol within a fraternity culture differed greatly from their publicly stated value as a local chapter and the values espoused by the national organization. The authors used a culture audit method, which included tours of the fraternity, interviews, and document review to get a sense of the culture of the fraternity. Upon joining the organization, new members were taught the culture of the specific organization by participating in 'pledgeship' experiences. This period of enculturation ensured complete acceptance of the fraternity by the new pledges. Members encouraged new pledges to consume alcohol, which in turn raised the pledges' esteem within the group. One such example was a dance where new members had to bring a date. During this event, a young man recalled, "I got pretty

sick . . . One of the PEs [Pledge Educators] had to take care of me [but] I wasn't close to death or anything" (Kuh & Arnold, 1993, p. 330).

Sexual Assault

At the core of fraternity culture is the objectification of women (Rhoads, 1995; Syrett, 2009). Similar to alcohol, this topic has been extensively studied and many of the findings suggest disheartening concerns (Elkins, Helms, & Pierson, 2003a; Fouts, 2010; Hebson, 1996; Rhoads, 1995). In one study, fraternity men openly discussed their latest female conquest with each other and the researchers (Rhoads, 1995; Syrett, 2009). These studies reported disturbing statistics, including high numbers of gang rapes have taken place during fraternity parties (Rhoads, 1995). On one campus, for example, more than 63% of the reported 54 sexual assaults were committed by members of a fraternity (Rhoads, 1995).

Stated in Rhoads (1995) research, it is easy to conclude that those who commit sexual assault are more likely to join a fraternity; however, some researchers postulated that the patriarchal nature of fraternity engrains into its members that women must be controlled (Fouts, 2010; Kuh & Arnold, 1993; Syrett, 2009). This indoctrination of members does not stop once students graduate from their universities. As alumni, older members can ensure fraternity culture lives on in misogynistic ways.

During Rhoads's (1995) research, a fraternity member shared his view on rape asserting his beliefs that women have the power to declare sex as rape: "You have to remember one thing-that girls can just say 'I was raped' and then they were raped. You know what I mean? Girls have that power. Women have that power" (p. 315).

Regrettably, this notion that women have the power to declare rape is all too apparent within many fraternity chapters.

Some researchers have focused on understanding and assisting first-generation students' matriculation and involvement on college campuses and have found their concerns related to social Greek membership heightened compared to their peers (Terenzini, Springer, & Yaeger, 1996). This could be due to the fact that first-generation students experience a disconnect between their expectations entering college and their actual experiences while at college (Fouts, 2010; Terenzini et al., 1996). Often first-generation college students are from families with a lower socioeconomic status; one reason they may be less likely to seek involvement in campus organizations (Terenzini et al., 1996).

Despite the challenges discussed, fraternities and sororities continue to exist. Students may join expecting to be hazed or forced to consume alcohol. Male students may fear the fraternity supports a culture of rape. Yet, fraternities and sororities offer personal growth and development to their members. These growth opportunities are based in various developmental theories, which further guide this study.

Theoretical Frameworks

Member Acquisition and Retention Model

Developed from author observations, Kretovics and Zuckerman (2003) designed a method to evaluate how students join organizations. The researchers focused on formally established organizations instead of informal organizations. Formal organizations were defined as a group of individuals with a constitution or bylaws to govern its activities and leadership. To join and remain a member of a formal organization an individual must

pass through four stages: awareness, attraction, affiliation, and retention. These stages are passed in timeframes specific to the organization and the individual with successful completion of each stage needed before advancement.

Nonmembers initially become aware of the group through passive interactions with the organization (Kretovics & Zuckerman, 2003). Such interactions need to happen through multiple avenues such as flyers, newspaper articles, or seeing members. During this stage, nonmembers are simply receiving information through observation or limited interactions with the group. For a nonmember to pass through the awareness stage, interactions should be frequent and varying. The greater the contact a group has with a nonmember the greater the opportunity for interest in the group. During this stage, member interactions with the nonmember are cast as a reflection of the organization. If the interactions with the organization are congruent with the nonmember, the nonmember will spend increasing amounts of time with the group.

During the attraction stage of the member acquisition, the potential member learns more about the organization. Individuals learn about the organization through formal and informal education processes that teach the potential member about the history, values, and culture of the organization. In this stage, the potential member evaluates if they fit in to the group. In addition to self-evaluation, potential members “try on” the reputation of the organization. During this stage, members build friendships with potential members. By accepting the members’ values, the potential member is accepting the values of the organization. At the conclusion of the attraction stage, potential members are asked to join the organization. In the fraternity and sorority recruitment processes, this stage would be considered new member education. Individuals are welcomed into the

organization, but have not formally joined. To move through this stage, an individual begins to interact with the organization's formal initiation.

As potential members become new members, they transition into the affiliation stage. Here, new members alternate between two stages: retention and acquisition. The new member begins to internalize the organization's values, reputation, and history through a more formal indoctrination process. Outwardly, the new member reflects their interaction with the organization. If enjoyable activities are available, the new member reflects a positive view of the organization. Alternatively, if negative activities exist, a decreased satisfaction with the organization is reflected. During affiliation, new members may substitute their personal values and reputation with that of the organization (Kretovics & Zuckerman, 2003).

When the personal values and reputation of the organization align with the member, membership is continued. During the final two stages of this model, the processing of the organization's values and reputation become increasingly internal (Kretovics & Zuckerman, 2003). Where external methods brought the individual to the organization initially, affiliation and retention are substantially internal. If an internal dissonance occurs, a member contemplates disaffiliation. As long as a member is affiliated with the organization, they loop between affiliation and retention.

Beginning with initial awareness and strengthening through affiliation, a psychological contract between the member and the organization is established (Kretovics & Zuckerman, 2003). Such a psychological contract includes spoken and unspoken obligations. An individual's psychological contract might include the enforcement of laws, respectful treatment, educational support, support and

acknowledgement of outside commitments, and so on. The contract will differ member to member and can change over time. During the affiliation stage, the psychological contract is put to the test. If an organizational activity violates the psychological contract, the member reevaluates their commitment to the organization (Kretovics & Zuckerman, 2003). If, during membership, a member enters into a relationship with an individual outside the organization the contract may be modified to spend time with this individual. Should the organization require attention and time that separates the member from the relationship, the member may disaffiliate.

The member acquisition and retention model provides a clear action oriented process depicting how individuals join social Greek organizations as well as remain involved throughout their colligate years (Kretovics & Zuckerman, 2003). If organizations are failing to provide a suitable environment for non-members during any of the four stages of this model, membership will decline. It is possible social Greek organizations at UW-La Crosse are failing to pass members effectively through this model.

Theory of Involvement

Researchers have been studying involvement and its effects on students for years. Astin (1984a, 1984b, 1985, 1993) published a substantial body of research relating to student involvement on college campuses. Unlike some student developmental frameworks, Astin's theory of involvement (1984) is comprised of the use of energy. The theory of involvement spans five conceptual areas. The first three cover students' intrinsic actions along with measurements while the last two relate directly to the academic mission of colleges. The five conceptual areas in Astin's (1984) theory are:

investment of energy, involvement continuum, personal development, and policies to increasing involvement.

The theory of involvement is based on the Freudian concept of cathexis (Astin, 1984, 1993). Cathexis assumed an individual invests energy in people and objects around them for a desired outcome (Astin, 1984). For example, an individual would place energy into a new relationship for it to flourish; conversely, energy would be reallocated away from the relationship if an individual wanted to discontinue it. Leaning on this concept, Astin concluded that academic involvement is directly related to the level of energy an individual places on their experiences.

Involvement exists within every college student at all times; however, the level of involvement fluctuates along a continuum. An individual may be highly involved in a particular activity while expressing little involvement in other activities. Furthermore, the involvement may oscillate during spans of time – academically, students may increase their involvement toward the end of the semester. Student involvement can be measured either qualitatively or quantitatively (Astin, 1984). For example, hours a student spends studying for a specific class is measured quantitatively while the comprehension of required texts is measured through qualitative instruments.

The final two constructs of involvement relate directly to the educational missions of college campuses. The first relates to learning. Learning is directly related to level of involvement within a specific program (Astin, 1984). This postulates that regardless of motivation, the more a student is involved with an activity the more they will learn and grow. Relative to fraternity and sorority membership, the more an individual is involved with the organization the greater they develop. In turn, the membership might seek them

out for leadership, even if they are not willing to seek such a role. Finally, Astin (1984) proposed that policies flourish when involvement is increased. This would charge students to take an active role in their holistic college experience. Policies that require students to advocate for themselves, such as seeking out tutors, increase their involvement in academics.

Through Astin's research, social Greek organizations and practitioners can understand how non-members exhibit involvement. For a crucible of involvement to happen on a college campus, substantial resources need to be allocated (Astin, 1984). Resources are defined as physical equipment, personnel, or financial access. Without adequate resources, involvement is crippled. This shortage of resources could be why so few students are joining social Greek organizations at UW-La Crosse.

Peer Group Socialization

Astin (1993) discussed the importance of a peer group to achieve positive student outcomes. Astin defined the peer group as individuals with similar views. An individual often seeks approval from this group of individuals to be seen as part of the group. Individuals can seek support from all different kinds of groups based on their identity: a specific major, political affiliation, gender, sexual orientation, and so on. Peer groups with the strongest ability to influence an individual are those that the individual strongly identifies or desires to identify with (Astin, 1993). For example, an individual might be joining a fraternity and believe women should not be degraded. If the fraternity peer group believes this, the young man may change or silence his views to fit in with the group.

Additionally, the impact a peer group has on an individual directly correlates to the extent the individual seeks acceptance (Astin, 1993). Continuing the previous example, if the young man seeking membership does not greatly desire membership, he will disaffiliate from the fraternity of asked to participate in actions that do not align with his views.

Exploring Why Students are Not Seeking Social Greek Membership

Fouts (2010) conducted a study in which she explored non-member perceptions of Greek organizations. Two developmental theories guided this study. The first was the Innovation-Decision Model (Rodgers, 1995), which postulated students travel through five stages during involvement in a given activity: knowledge, persuasion, decision, implementation, and confirmation (as cited in Fouts, 2010). The second model used in the Fouts study was the aforementioned Member Acquisition and Retention Model (Kretovics & Zuckerman, 2003).

Through this study, Fouts (2010) showed what pre-college perceptions exist as well as some of the sources of knowledge relating to social Greek organizations; both collimated into an individual deciding to participate in social Greek recruitment. Respondents expressed that clear obligations of membership would have positively shifted their participation in social Greek recruitment. Further, better advertisement of events, such as recruitment activities, would have shifted respondents' participation in social Greek organizations into joining (Fouts, 2010). For fraternities to remain relevant, Fouts argued that they must tailor their message to a wide variety of college students while clearly explaining the requirements and benefits of membership.

Understanding social Greek organizations' history, challenges, and applicable theoretical frameworks can begin to aid in answering why so few students are choosing to join fraternities or sororities at UW-La Crosse. The rich history of social Greek organizations' in the United States covers 200 years of successes and challenges. Early on, fraternity served as an exclusive club for only the richest white male students. When women entered higher education, men strongly objected their membership. As social Greek organizations spread to other campuses through the years, the foolish activities that now plague fraternities and sororities began to wax. Although many social Greek organizations have refocused their efforts on foundational values, the non-initiated public still views and judges social Greek members by their faults only. To aid in these perceptions, several companies and books have been published to recruit skeptical students. As students begin to explore participating in social Greek recruitment, the membership acquisition and retention model provides a clear framework to why an individual chooses to affiliate or remain unaffiliated in a given organization. Astin's (1984, 1993) theory of involvement and Fouts's (2010) study why students do not join Greek letter organizations provide additional models that explain the methods and factors of exploration of students considering joining a fraternity or sorority.

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHODS

Overview of Design

To understand why students attending the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse are not joining social fraternities or sororities, a quantitative instrument was developed and distributed. With permission, the instrument was modified from an initial study conducted by Fouts (2010). In addition, the instrument in the present study utilized the Membership Acquisition and Retention Model developed by Kretovics and Zuckerman (2003). Respondents received the instrument electronically designed and distributed by Qualtrics®, a survey software platform.

Research Site

As one of the thirteen state-assisted Wisconsin System schools, the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse has grown into a public four-year liberal arts campus with a selective admissions process during its more than 100 years of existence. The most recent data available to conceptualize the research site stem from the institution's 2010-2011 academic year fact book. As shown in Table 3, total undergraduate enrollment amounts to slightly less than 9,000 students with 90% attending fulltime. The campus is predominantly White/European American, with only 7% of students who identify coming from a racially diverse background.

Table 3. Fall 2010 University of Wisconsin-La Crosse Campus Enrollment

Class Standing	Men	Women	Enrollment
Freshmen	1,051	1,345	2,396
Sophomores	841	1,126	1,967
Juniors	795	1,029	1,824
Seniors	1,014	1,383	2,397
Graduate	300	703	1,003
Total	4,001	5,586	9,587

Students admitted to UW-La Crosse are academically driven. The average ACT score is 25 with 60% of all students holding a score between 24-29. During the 2010-2011 academic year, almost 7,000 applications were received for 1,800 available first-year spaces, resulting in 61% of applicants not gaining admittance. During the 2011 fall semester, the all-undergraduate cumulative GPA was 2.74 with men holding a 2.60 and women holding a 2.89.

Opportunities outside of the classroom exist for students to get involved. Almost 200 recognized student organizations exist. The organizational offerings includes 20 sports clubs, 48 academically affiliated organizations (e.g., American Marketing Association, Psychology Club, Student Physical Therapy Club), 13 diversity focused groups (e.g., Black Student Unity, Hmong Organization Promoting Education, Rainbow Unity: People Advocating Unity and Love), 28 special interest groups (e.g., Environmental Council, Returning Adult Student Organization, Students Protecting Environment and Animal Kinships), 13 focused on recognition (e.g., Golden Key International Honor Society, National Residence Hall Honorary, Beta Gamma Sigma), 10 devoted to service (e.g., Autism Speaks U, Habitat for Humanity, Volunteering Within), and 13 spiritual organizations (e.g., Campus Crusade for Christ, Diamond Way Buddhist

Club, Hillel). The remaining student organizations are classified as governance groups (e.g., Interfraternity Council, Student Association, Residence Hall Association Council) or programming (e.g., Leadership and Involvement, Campus Activities Board, Dining Services Committee). In addition to student organizations, students can participate in 19 NCAA Division III varsity athletic teams or one of 18 intermural teams. More students participate in intermural sports than any other cocurricular activity on campus (University of Wisconsin-La Crosse, 2012).

Campus Environment

The majority of students attending the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse are from within a 3-hour driving distance. As a result, many students attend UW-La Crosse with peers they know from the same hometown, which aids in strong peer groups once on campus. Furthermore, a large population of the campus is comprised of first generation college students. These students likely have no one in their family who encourage them to consider seeking involvement in fraternities or sororities. Additionally, many students are financially responsible their academic experiences and work on or off campus, making it difficult for many to afford dues for social Greek organizations.

Fraternity and Sorority Involvement

The most relevant organizations relative to the present study are those under the auspices of Greek Life. Currently six nationally and internationally affiliated social fraternities and sororities are recognized on campus, including Alpha Phi (ΑΦ), Alpha Xi Delta (ΑΞΔ), Chi Phi (ΧΦ), Delta Sigma Phi (ΔΣΦ), Sigma Alpha Epsilon (ΣΑΕ), and Sigma Tau Gamma (ΣΤΓ). During the six-year window shown in Figure 1, one fraternity closed while two new fraternities colonized. Membership during this time has increased,

but individual chapter membership remains small. As illustrated in Figure 1, the total membership for Fall 2011 was 187 students, which results in a social Greek population of 2.18% on UW-La Crosse's campus. Few campuses publish their community sizes; this trend is continued with the National Panhellenic Council (NPC) and North-American Interfraternity Conference (NIC). The NPC does publish total statistics relating to collegiate members (285,543), new members (105,617), total initiated members (4,292,824), and number of chapters (3,031) (National Panhellenic Conference, 2011).

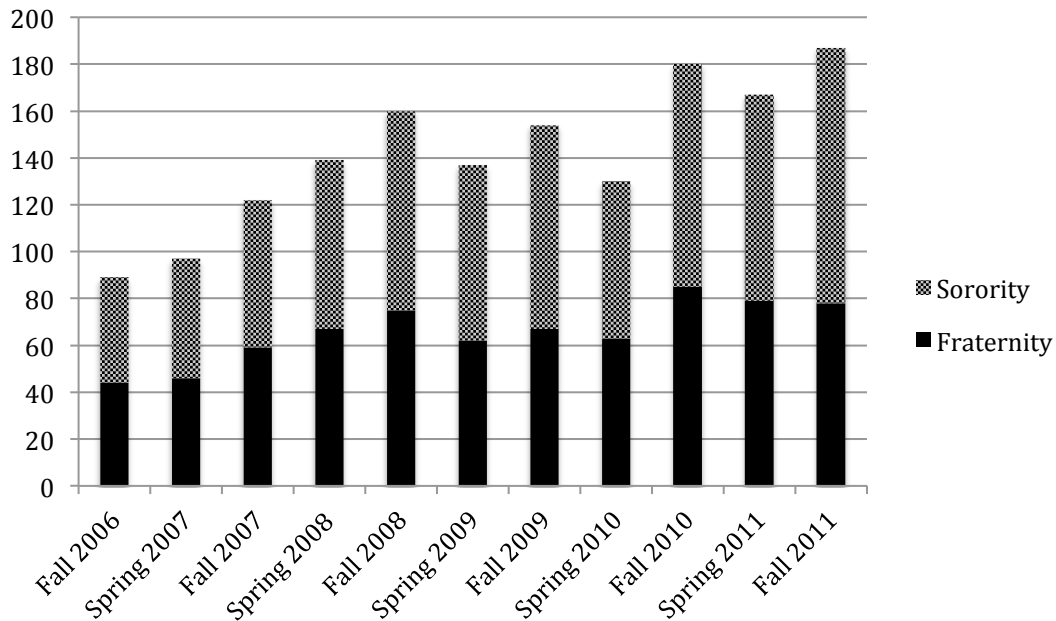


Figure 1. Membership of Greek Social Organizations

Unlike most of the student organizations, fraternities and sororities at UW-La Crosse are served by a fulltime student affairs professional staff member at the assistant director level and a graduate assistant (the author of this masters thesis) enrolled in the masters preparation program in the Student Affairs Administration Department for support. Both individuals assist the chapters with internal operations, growth, and strategic planning. Outside of institutional support, each group has at least one volunteer

advisor affiliated with the organization with many groups utilizing multiple advisors. Some of the advisors are within driving distance of La Crosse while others remotely advise across the country.

Instrument

Adapted with permission from the original survey by Fouts (2010), the Student Organization Perception Instrument (SOPI) explores why relatively few students are choosing to engage in social Greek organizations at UW-La Crosse. The instrument was refined with the assistance of campus professionals and the researcher's master's thesis committee and it underwent several iterations before distribution

Due to the potential confusion and negative connotations associated with social Greek organizations, the instrument went through a rebranding process. The literature suggested that the naming scheme avoid blatantly associating the instrument with social Greek organizations. This is because unaffiliated students often have an acute awareness of the negative aspects of social Greek organizations (Ayres, 2007). The SOPI is a 22-question, multi-track instrument that explores undergraduate student engagement in cocurricular activities. All participants responded to five demographic items including sex, race, class standing, major, and GPA. Then, the SOPI prompted participants to respond to questions relating to their interest in joining a social Greek organization along with their perceptions of social Greek organizations on UW-La Crosse's campus and nationally. After collecting information regarding perceptions and interest, the SOPI prompted students to share the ways in which they were involved on campus. Respondents then answered if they had ever participated in social Greek organization recruitment. A series of questions provided additional information such as recruitment

activities participated in, if an offer for membership was extended, and if an offer of membership was withdrew after extending. Finally, the SOPI asked respondents to select the primary influencing factor for their attitude toward social Greek organizations. Possible answers included media, family or friends, current or former fraternity/sorority members, cost, stories of hazing, and stories of alcohol abuse. Based on the responses, survey logic was employed to ask subsequent questions to provide further insight. Most participants did not see all of the SOPI's 22 questions. A graphic depiction of the SOPI and the logic placed on the questions can be found in Appendix F.

Description of Sample

After receiving IRB approval to conduct the study, the researcher contacted the Director of Institutional Research to gather a sample of participants. From all students who graduated high school in the spring of 2011, a randomly selected sample of 1,500 was drawn. Because most members of Greek life joined during their first semester, the researcher assumed students who would seek involvement in a fraternity, sorority, or student organization would come from this sample.

At the conclusion of the SOPI, 26% ($n=388$) of the sample at least started the instrument. Of those who started the instrument, 89% ($n=345$) of the responses were usable, for a total response rate of 23%. Men and minorities were underrepresented in the respondents of the SOPI. UW-La Crosse has almost 42% males where only 20% of the SOPI respondents were male. Students of a diverse background, represent only 8.6% of all students at UW-La Crosse while only 5.6% of respondents of the SOPI identified as minorities.

Most of the respondents identified as female ($n= 273$). Racially the respondents were extremely homogeneous: 95% ($n=326$) identified as White, 3% ($n=11$) identified as Asian, and less than one percent as each Hispanic ($n=3$), African American ($n=2$), and Native American ($n=2$). Over half ($n=180$) of the students have a major within College of Sciences and Health, 31% ($n=111$) within the College of Liberal Studies, 12% ($n=42$) within College of Business Administration. The top ten majors of respondents are Biology ($n=64$), Psychology ($n=34$), Exercise and Sport Science ($n=26$), Radiation Therapy ($n=21$), Marketing ($n=17$), Communication Studies ($n=13$), Therapeutic Recreation ($n=13$), Athletic Training ($n=11$), Early Childhood-Middle Childhood Education ($n=10$), and Accountancy ($n=9$).

Data Collection

Students received an invitation to participate in the SOPI via the Qualtrics interface. Participants were informed of the benefits and potential risks for participating in the study and provided an individual link to the instrument. Participants were reminded that participation in the SOPI was voluntary and all responses would remain anonymous. To foster a stronger response rate, the Interfraternity Council and the Panhellenic Council at the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse donated \$100 for three gift cards in varying amounts. To be eligible for the incentive, participants needed to fully complete the survey and were invited to submit their email address at the conclusion of the instrument. A copy of the original participant solicitation email can be found in Appendix B.

The initial email was sent out on a Friday afternoon. Two reminder emails were sent to participants; one seven days after the initial survey went live, and one four days

before closing the instrument. Overall, the survey remained open for 14 days. After completion, participants who submitted their email address for the incentive received an email outlining the process for selecting and notifying winners. All communication from the researcher to the participants was completed anonymously through the Qualtrics® software system. Copies of all three emails can be found in Appendices C, D, and E.

Data Analysis

Preliminary data analysis and organization was completed within Microsoft Excel. After initial organization, data were imported into Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 20 for statistical analysis. A Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient was conducted between all variables identified in the study. Dependent variables were correlated against independent variables. This study correlated the dependent variable of an individual's likelihood of joining against several independent variables. Such independent variables included: sources of knowledge, perceptions of social Greek organizations, and student involvement. Correlations of importance were flagged for further analysis. The researcher then performed a crosstab analysis of flagged correlations. Both the dependent and independent variables are discussed in detail in the next chapter.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

This chapter presents the results of descriptive and inferential analysis conducted on the SOPI dataset, including percentages, means, and significant correlations between variables. For this study, the dependent variable was an individual's likelihood of joining a social Greek organization at UW-La Crosse. The research questions provide the structure for this chapter. The overall research question focused on why undergraduate students at UW-La Crosse do not seem to join social Greek organizations.

Research Assumption One

The researcher assumed that students enter UW-La Crosse's campus with preconceived negative beliefs regarding fraternities or sororities and that the researcher operated under the assumption that the more knowledge an individual gained about a Greek organization, the greater their likelihood of joining.

To begin with, an overwhelming 91% of the SOPI respondents indicated their likelihood of joining a Greek organization ranged between "undecided" and "very unlikely. Comparing the frequencies of likelihood for men and women in the sample (see Table 4) suggests that only 11% of men and 12% of women expressed interest in joining a social Greek organization. In addition, males reported stronger feelings against joining social Greek organizations (69%) than women (63%). Comparing knowledge of a social Greek organization with the likelihood of joining suggested that individuals least likely to

join know the least about social Greek organizations, representing intuitive findings. Nearly half of the respondents ($n=165$) stated they knew little about a social Greek organization and did not plan to join. Even the 83 respondents who showed between some and extensive knowledge of social Greek organizations did not plan to join either, a contradiction to the Membership Acquisition model (Kretovics & Zuckerman, 2003). The model asserts that the more an individual knows about an organization the more likely they are to seek affiliation. Only 43 individuals (12%) stated interest in joining a social Greek organization, with 39 of those individuals (11%) show little to no knowledge of fraternities or sororities.

Table 4. Likelihood of Joining by Sex

Likelihood	Male	Female	Total
Very Unlikely	29	110	139
Unlikely	15	46	61
Somewhat Unlikely	5	15	20
Undecided	14	65	79
Somewhat Likely	4	16	20
Likely	2	6	8
Very Likely	2	13	15
Total	71	271	342

To explore where individuals learned about social Greek organizations, the SOPI asked a follow up question. The survey prompted respondents to mark all that contributed to their knowledge of fraternities and sororities. Possible answers included UW-La Crosse marketing materials, television shows or films, newspaper or other written media, social media, Greek-affiliated family or friends, and non-Greek affiliated family or friends. The researcher assumed the more sources an individual checked, the greater the likelihood an individual would join a social Greek organization, or at least the

greater their knowledge about Greek organizations. The opposite held true. Most participants received information from one source ($n=180$). Of those only 11% ($n=21$) were likely to join a fraternity or sorority. This trend continued across the other sources and each is depicted in Figure 2. Only 22 individuals (12%) who learned about fraternities and sororities from two or more sources were interested in joining a social Greek organization. The sources of knowledge that had the greatest influence on respondents to not seek membership were popular media/television ($n=146$) and social media ($n=46$).

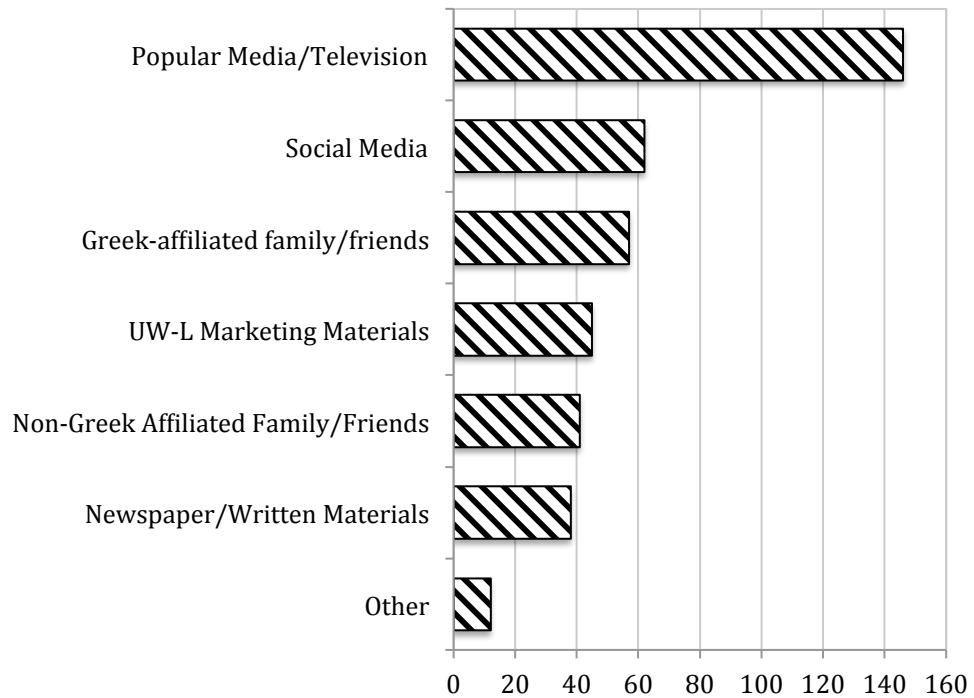


Figure 2. Influencing Factors That Cause Members to Not Seek Membership

To ensure respondents knew what a social Greek organization was, a definition was provided at the beginning of the instrument. This definition read: “A Greek social organization is a single-sex (only male or female) group that has shared values with its members. On UW-La Crosse’s campus, these organizations are not associated with a

specific major, race, ethnicity, or religion. Membership is open to anyone interested in joining; fraternities are specifically for men while sororities are for women.” To study the respondents’ knowledge of current UW-La Crosse social Greek organizations, the SOPI included an open-ended item for participants to include all Greek organizations of which they were aware. Most of the respondents either left the box blank ($n=165$; 38%) or stated they were unaware social Greek organizations ($n=143$; 33%) existed on UW-La Crosse’s campus. The remainder of participants listed the organizations reflected in Table 5. Only four of the organizations listed here are actually social Greek organizations at UW-La Crosse – Alpha Phi, Delta Sigma Phi, Alpha Xi Delta, and Sigma Alpha Epsilon. Delta Sigma Pi and Gamma Sigma Sigma are academic major related student organizations, not social Greek organizations. Delta Sig and Sig Tau are colloquial names for their recognized counterparts – Delta Sigma Phi and Sigma Tau Gamma, respectively. Alpha Pi and Alpha Xi are neither social Greek organizations nor student organizations.

Table 5. Top Answers Provided as ‘Social Greek Organizations’

Social Greek	Responses
Alpha Phi	33
Delta Sigma Pi	17
Gamma Sigma Sigma	11
Alpha Xi Delta	11
Delta Sigma Phi	7
Alpha Pi	5
Sigma Alpha Epsilon	4
Delta Sig	3
Sig Tau	3
Alpha Xi	2

Research Assumption Two

The second assumption stated that students were joining another student organization in the place of social Greek organizations. To explore this issue, the dependent variable was compared with involvement in non-social Greek organizations. In the SOPI, a filtering question asked students to list the number of non-social Greek student organizations they were involved in ('none', '1-3', '4-6', '7-9', or '10 or more'). Shown in Table 6 only 26 individuals (7%) who were involved in one or more non-Greek student organizations expressed any likelihood in joining a fraternity or sorority, compared to 17 respondents (5%) who showed interest in joining a fraternity or sorority but were not involved in any student organizations.

Table 6. Student Organization Involvement Compared to Likelihood of Joining a Social Greek Organization

Likelihood	None	1-3	4-6
Very Unlikely	62	74	3
Unlikely	22	36	2
Somewhat Unlikely	9	10	1
Undecided	39	37	2
Somewhat Likely	8	11	1
Likely	2	5	1
Very Likely	7	7	1
Total	149	180	11

Note: The choices of '7-9' and '10 or more' received no responses and were omitted from this table.

As a follow up item to student organization involvement, individuals who stated they were involved in one or more organizations were asked what benefits they hoped to gain from membership with that organization(s). Possible answers included: "I liked the people in the organization," "I wanted to build my resume," "I liked the values of the organization," "The members told me how I would grow as a leader," "The members told

me how I would benefit academically,” “The members told me how I would benefit socially,” and “The members told me how I would benefit after college.” Similar to other questions in the SOPI, respondents could select multiple answers. One hundred and ten participants joined a non-Greek student organization because of the people within the organization, 68% ($n=130$) stated they join to benefit their resume, and 66% ($n=127$) joined because their values aligned with the organization. Unlike benefits often listed for social Greek organizations, 64% of respondents stated they chose not to join a student organization for the alumni involvement ($n=122$), 75% did not join for the academic benefits ($n=148$), and 68% did not join for the leadership possibilities ($n=129$). Members joined for multiple reasons; 85% of all respondents ($n=162$) joined for five or fewer reasons with all respondents listing at least one reason for joining.

Research Assumptions Three and Four

The third assumption focused on the apparent lack of recruitment on the part of UW-La Crosse Greek organizations to recruit interested individuals. To directly answer this question, an evaluation of the retention of social Greek organization members would be needed. However, the SOPI sample only included non-affiliated first-year students. Nevertheless, evaluating factors of influence along with previously stated information provided a rather accurate picture of member interest. The fourth research assumption stated that social Greek organizations at UW-La Crosse were not sharing organizational accomplishments with the campus community. Factors of influence were collected from participants who have not participated in recruitment. Such factors included “more information about recruitment,” “more information about obligations of membership,” “better communication with family members,” “values-based programs,” “less alcohol at

events,” “positive publicity about fraternities and sororities,” “benefits of membership,” and “nothing could change my mind.”

Nearly half ($n=180$) of the respondents stated that more information about fraternity or sorority recruitment events and activities would be helpful; 87% ($n=158$) of those individuals self-identified as undecided or very unlikely in joining a social Greek organization. Respondents ($n=167$) felt that more information about the obligations and requirements for membership would have changed their mind on joining a social Greek organization. Of these, 87% ($n=145$) indicated joining a Greek organization fell between very unlikely and undecided.

Respondents indicated several areas would not change their views on social Greek organizations. Those areas included: family communication ($n=262$), decreased focus on alcohol ($n=240$), values based organizations ($n=236$), positive publicity ($n=208$), and the benefits of membership ($n=194$). Only 23% ($n=72$) stated nothing could persuade their view on social Greek organizations to be more positive.

Significant Correlations

Beyond analyzing descriptive statistics and frequencies, the researcher examined correlations between the dependent variable of likelihood and a variety of other variables for statistical significance ($p<0.01$). At that level only eight correlations were significant, as listed in Table 7.

A medium-sized negative correlation ($p= -0.41$) existed between likelihood and participation in recruitment. The variable likelihood is an internal measure of interest while participation in recruitment is a physical action. This correlation indicates three possible interpretations. First, as individuals become more interested in joining a social

Greek organization they have a decreased level of participation in recruitment.

Alternatively, individuals participating in recruitment have a low likelihood of seeking membership, for instance, some individuals are participating in events for the free food or gifts. Finally, this negative correlation could be interpreted as the more an individual learns about the obligations of membership (e.g., membership cost, academic standards, volunteer hours, etc.) the less likely they are to join.

Table 7. Correlation Between The Dependent Variable of Likelihood and Corresponding Variables, Listed as SOPI Items

Instrument Question	Correlation
Have you ever participated in a fraternity or sorority recruitment process at the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse?	-0.409
What is your perception of social Greek fraternities at UW-La Crosse in relation to student success?	0.322
What is your perception of social Greek fraternities nationally at colleges and universities in relation to student success?	0.230
What is your perception of social Greek sororities at UW-La Crosse in relation to student success?	0.342
What is your perception of social Greek sororities nationally at colleges and universities in relation to student success?	0.286
Why did you join student organizations that are not social Greek organizations? [Checked answer] I wanted to build my résumé.	0.217
Why did you join student organizations that are not social Greek organizations? [Checked answer] The members told me how I would benefit after college.	0.222
Why did you join student organizations that are not social Greek organizations? Total checked answers	0.241

Further, the dependent variable correlated mildly with joining a student organization specifically to build the resume ($r= 0.22$) or with joining to gain access to organizational alumni ($r= 0.22$). An analysis of all selected answers showed a positive correlation. To compute this, each selected answer was tallied and compared against likelihood of joining a social Greek organization. A small positive correlation ($r= 0.24$)

was found with respondents join an organization for any reason and their increased likelihood in joining social Greek organizations.

Correlating the dependent variable with perceptions of student success within sororities and fraternities both nationally and at UW-La Crosse’s campus yielded somewhat predictable results. Each group (fraternities and sororities; nationally and at UW-La Crosse’s campus) had varying levels of correlation to likelihood; however, all displayed a positive medium correlation. Respondents who had an increased likelihood to joining a social Greek organization had an increased positive view on fraternities nationally ($r= 0.230$) and on UW-La Crosse’s campus ($r= 0.32$).

Table 8. Correlations Between Fraternities and Sororities on UW-La Crosse’s campus and Nationally

	Fraternities at UW-La Crosse	Sororities at UW-La Crosse	Fraternities Nationally	Sororities Nationally
Fraternities at UW-La Crosse		0.83	0.47	0.45
Sororities at UW-La Crosse	0.83		0.38	0.48
Fraternities Nationally	0.47	0.38		0.84
Sororities Nationally	0.45	0.48	0.84	

When evaluating sororities, a similar positive medium correlation exists. Table 8 depicts the relationship between the four groups. Respondents with an increased positive view on sororities nationally ($r= 0.29$) and on UWL’s campus ($r= 0.34$) had an increased likelihood in joining a Greek organization. In exploring the correlation between fraternities and sororities at UW-La Crosse a strong positive correlation exists ($r= 0.83$). An equally positive and strong ($r= 0.84$) correlation exists between fraternities and sororities nationally. Both of these indicate that a positive affinity to one of the groups

studied (fraternities or sororities; nationally or at UWL's campus) creates a strong positive affinity to the other.

The following chapter will provide a detailed interpretation of the results from the SOPI dataset. Additionally, Chapter V will provide a discussion on how these results compare to the extant literature. Finally, the researcher will offer several recommendations for student affairs practice.

CHAPTER V

**DISCUSSION, IMPLICATIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS, LIMITATIONS &
SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH, AND CONCLUSIONS**

Discussion

The SOPI results indicate several salient findings. Results hold both positive and actionable implications for social Greek organizations and their advisors as well as general student affairs administrators, faculty, and other campus educators. The discussion examines the four main findings based on the research assumptions in the context of the relevant literature.

Affiliation with Greek Organizations

The first major finding showed that students on UW-L's campus are not seeking affiliation with social Greek organizations as suggested by the negative correlation between likelihood to join a Greek organization and participation in social Greek recruitment. One interpretation of this is that non-members at UW-L attend social Greek recruitment events strictly for the favors (e.g., free food, t-shirts, hats, etc.). An alternative interpretation is that non-members interested in joining social Greek organizations are not attending recruitment events. Failure to participate could be attributed to a non-member's peer group influence or through social Greek organizations' failure to advertise events.

Astin (1993) stated that an individual's peer group has the strongest effects in influencing an individual to join a particular organization. Focusing this discussion on the negative correlation between likelihood to join a social Greek organization and participation in a recruitment event raises some speculations. A regulation of the University of Wisconsin System requires all first year students to live on campus. Within the first few weeks, strong peer groups form in UW-L residence halls. Does this residential peer group exhibit stereotypical views of social Greek organizations? Do residential staff members, viewed as peer group influencers; only highlight student engagement in activities other than social Greek organizations? Further analysis of this negative correlation shows that social Greek organizations are not operating as peer groups. If students were seeking a peer group from a social Greek organization, we would expect a positive correlation between likelihood of joining and participation in recruitment activities.

Focusing this correlation on the member acquisition and retention model (Kretovics & Zuckerman, 2003) shows the first stage in the model fails in this sample of students at UW-L. As stated in Chapter II, each stage of the model needs to be passed sequentially. The first stage is non-member awareness; for this to fail an individual would need to be unaware of the organization's existence. For an individual to pass through the awareness stage of the model, a positive correlation between likelihood and recruitment would likely exist. In other words, if an individual learned about the organization and had an increased likelihood in joining, their participation in social Greek recruitment activities would increase. In this sample, and more than likely on UW-L's campus, this is not the case. Students' participation in social Greek recruitment activities

decreased as their interest grew in seeking membership. It is possible the activities are not upholding expectations of non-members or interested students are unaware of recruitment events.

Comparing Fouts's (2010) findings to this major finding shows some similarities. Respondents in both studies stated more information relating to recruitment activities would have changed their level of participation (Fouts, 2010). In the present study, almost half of all respondents stated better information relating to the obligations of membership would have increased their likelihood of joining a social Greek organization, compared to 40% in Fouts's study.

Knowledge of Greek Organizations

The second major finding of this study relates to the knowledge non-members have relating to social Greek organizations. Respondents were asked about their source of knowledge about social Greek organizations. An overwhelming number of respondents stated their knowledge of social Greek organizations came from popular media (e.g., television or movies). The stereotyping inherent in these sources seems to have a strong and uncontrollable influence on students in the SOPI sample likely resulting in misperceptions about social Greek organizations at UW-La Crosse. The second and third most popular response about from which source students receive knowledge included social media and Greek-affiliated friends/family, respectively. These two sources of knowledge are controllable. Affiliated members can decide what information to share on popular social media websites as well as how to represent social Greek organizations to friends. Affiliated Greek members choose to uphold stereotypes rather than challenge non-members' views. As discussed in the literature Greek-affiliated

individuals control how they share images of academics (Boling, 1996), hazing (Nuwer, 2002, 2004), alcohol abuse (Kuh & Arnold, 1993), and sexual assault (Rhoads, 1995) in fraternities to new members. For individuals who know little about social Greek organizations, the fallacies become fact causing the perpetuation of a negative image. It is also possible that members of social Greek organizations continue to spread stereotypes because of their own lack of knowledge or a sense of apathy. Some members might feel it is easier to disconnect themselves from the stereotypes and ignore the misconceptions non-affiliated students have. It is also possible that members, specifically on UW-La Crosse's campus, are apathetic and are not engaged with the campus. This interpretation would confirm Sullivan's (2011) work that found students who join organizations become apathetic and unengaged.

The SOPI also prompted respondents to identify, in an open-ended survey item, as many social Greek organizations on UW-La Crosse's campus as they knew. A very small minority of participants correctly named only one social Greek organization at UW-La Crosse. Most respondents either stated Greek organizations that do not exist on UW-La Crosse's campus or left the question blank. It is likely that most first-year students on a college campus would have difficulties identifying its Greek chapters; however, this directly speaks to implications for what local Greek chapters must do to market themselves to incoming students right away. One interpretation for why this is not the case at UW-La Crosse is that social Greek organizations are not active enough in the college community, or that its members are too apathetic. Discussed by Sullivan (2011), apathetic members do little to interact or promote their organization. If social

Greek organizations were promoting their existence to the campus community, more students would be aware of social Greek organizations regardless of likelihood of joining.

The lack of knowledge of UW-La Crosse students of social Greek organizations does not confirm the member acquisition and retention model's (Kretovics & Zuckerman, 2004) first stage. Social Greek organizations are not providing opportunities for non-members to pass through the awareness stage of the model. Due to this failure, non-members never learn social Greek organizations exist and do not seek membership.

Fouts (2010) found that the majority of respondents gained information about social Greek organizations from Greek-affiliated friends and family members. This finding differs from the present study; fewer respondents to the SOPI indicated they received knowledge from Greek affiliated friends and family. The difference in responses could be attributed to the campus itself. Both institutions in Fouts's (2010) study had higher student participation in social Greek organizations than at UW-La Crosse. In Fouts's study, one explanation is that alumni of each institution encourage their children to attend their alma mater as well as affiliate with a social Greek organization. At University of Wisconsin-La Crosse this is not the case.

Campus Involvement in Non-Greek Student Organizations

The third major finding focused on campus involvement. Nearly half of the SOPI respondents who stated they joined a student organization ($n=110$) joined because they liked the members confirming Mattson and Orendi (2006) who showed that individuals join because of an innate connection to those within the organization. SOPI respondents also indicated they joined non-Greek organizations to benefit their resume. A statistically significant but small correlation existed between the likelihood of joining and benefits

listed on the respondents' resume. This indicates that UW-La Crosse students may be interested in joining Greek organizations primarily for utilitarian reasons. This presents concerns for those trying to recruit new social Greek members as well as those who advise these organizations in student affairs units. More potential member education ought to ensure that new members look beyond the benefits of professional development or networking in joining fraternities or sororities.

SOPI respondents did not seem to join non-Greek student organizations because of the benefits of access to alumni, assistance with academic success, and leadership possibilities. This suggests that UW-La Crosse undergraduate students join student organizations primarily because they are interested in the topic or because they know others who are joining or who are already members. Moreover, these findings indicate that social Greek organizations should promote such benefits to potential members.

The data show that at least half of the respondents participate in at least one student organization. Evaluating involvement through resource access, Astin (1984) postulated that for increased involvement individuals need substantial access to resources. UW-La Crosse provides several resources for recognized student organizations. Some of those resources include: grants, printing, and publicity. These resources are available to social Greek organizations in addition to access to a fulltime student affairs professional staff member and a graduate assistant enrolled in the Student Affairs Administration program and nominal funding throughout the fiscal year.

With access to fewer resources, student organizations are able to find students for membership. Yet, access to the same resources does not provide the same results for social Greek organizations. This could be because social Greek organizations have

negative stereotypes associated with them. Discussed in the literature (Binder, 1997; Elkins, Helms, & Pierson, 2003; Kuh & Arnold, 1993; Nuwer, 2002, 2004; Rhoads, 1995; Syrett, 2009) and reaffirmed through the SOPI results, stereotypes cast a negative view on social Greek organizations. These views non-members hold create an extra hurdle for social Greek organizations to overcome. It is clear that for social Greek organizations to provide better opportunities for involvement greater resources need to be allocated. An assumption many student affairs professionals are making and noted in Kretoivics and Zuckerman's (2003) model, is that students are joining student organizations because more opportunities exist for them compared to twenty years ago. As sample opportunities for engagement exist for students, fewer would join social Greek organizations.

Public Relations

The fourth and final major finding focused on public relations. The data showed that almost all respondents would have been more interested in joining a social Greek organization had they been provided more information and known specifically their obligations for membership. This finding suggests that UW-La Crosse Greek Life organizations and the student affairs leadership in Greek affairs do not do enough to market what membership in social Greek organizations is about to potential undergraduate student members. Greek organizations must be keenly aware what expectations non-members have when participating in activities held by the fraternity or sorority or what questions they have about the level of commitment, the cost, and the amount of time required after joining.

The member acquisition and retention model discussed a psychological contract developed with a non-member (Kretovics & Zuckerman, 2003). This contract is unique to the individual and the organization. For individuals to remain active in a social Greek organization a psychological contract needs to be strengthened with the interested non-member early on. To accomplish this and appease the need for more information, social Greek organizations need to clearly identify the organization's values and obligations. First developing these core values and requirements, and then sharing them on marketing materials allows for a non-member to begin building a psychological contract with the organization from the initial contact. This kind of bond between the Greek organization and the student seems only a remote possibility at this point at UW-La Crosse.

For potential members to join, Fouts (2010) found that a clear direct stream of communication must exist from social Greek organizations to the unaffiliated individual. This finding is reaffirmed by SOPI data as well as the literature. Kretovics and Zuckerman (2003) discussed that information needs to be present in multiple places around campus as to educate the non-member on multiple facets of the organization. However, since SOPI data showed that non-member students at UW-La Crosse are vastly unaware of social Greek organizations, this potential new member education does not seem to be occurring as well as it should.

Recommendations

The following recommendations have been derived from the SOPI findings as well as the existing literature. These recommendations each have a common goal: to increase the likelihood an undergraduate student at UW-La Crosse seeks membership in a

social Greek organization. The four recommendations each require varying amounts of time and financial resources.

First, the findings suggest that respondents do not know enough about Greek Life at UW-La Crosse and that they would be more interested in joining if they knew more. This implies that immediate targeted marketing of Greek organizations and their events to all students, but specifically to incoming ones, is in order. This includes sharing their recruitment schedules and plans with non-members, active members, student affairs administrators, and faculty members. Pulling from the member acquisition and retention model (Kretovics & Zuckerman, 2003), this information needs to exist in multiple formats. Strategies to share this information include the campus calendar, chapter webpage, posters, handouts, campus newspaper, member Facebook pages, and sidewalk chalk. Individual Greek organizations as well as the Interfraternity Council/Panhellenic Council leadership councils ought to create a new membership recruitment campaign that outlines the organizational highlights, the obligations of membership, and the benefits of membership for undergraduate students.

Only with a concerted, overlapping effort will students who are unlikely to join, such as UW-La Crosse undergraduates, even consider membership. Once non-members show interest, social Greek organizations need to be transparent with the obligations of membership. A good way to do this is develop a video clearly explaining the requirements to become a member and the obligations to maintain membership in a fun positive manner. Sharing this same information on a chapter website and Facebook page provides yet another way for non-members to learn this information.

Moreover, developing a video series on the misconceptions of fraternities and sororities can help address the false information shared via popular media. To start the series could include three videos; if they were successful, more could be developed. A video would start with a popular media clip depicting a detrimental stereotype (e.g., sexual assault or hazing) of social Greek organizations. The video would then transition to members dispelling that stereotype. This campaign can have further impact through photography with keywords pulled from each video. Current members of social Greek organizations would promote these videos through online social media outlets as well as develop a print flyer to spark interest.

Second, access to resources is a challenge. UW-La Crosse provides recognized social Greek organizations with access to resources; however, increased access to funding is a major challenge as the state's and the institutional financial landscape has changed drastically in recent years. Increased funding is needed for greater awareness along with greater benefits of student organizations. Social Greek organizations have two options for increased funding; they could increase membership dues or apply for grants.

The UW-La Crosse Student Association annually provides recognized student organization grants in varying amounts determined each year. At the beginning of each year, organization presidents are contacted with the appropriate paperwork to complete a grant. The requirements for funding are rather broad; UW-La Crosse's Student Association does require some benefit for the campus community through the grant. If each social Greek organization received grant funding, the money could be used for a substantial marketing campaign to promote their specific organization.

Third, the literature suggests members of social Greek organizations oscillate through levels of commitment (Astin, 1984; Kretovics & Zuckerman, 2003). Based on the data and analysis, social Greek organizations are failing to appropriately pass members through the member acquisition and retention model (Kretovics & Zuckerman, 2003). Understanding this varying commitment and supporting members as they ebb and flow will benefit the organization as a whole. To aid in this support, UW-La Crosse's Fraternity and Sorority Life office should develop and implement a program that informs students of the four stages of the member acquisition and retention model. This presentation should focus on the last two stages of the model – primarily retention (Kretovics & Zuckerman, 2003). This presentation should last no longer than an hour with several activities. These activities could include demonstrations of members waning in commitment. It is important to focus the conversation on recognizing an individual who is losing commitment and how to recapture their interest with the organization. The first two stages of the member acquisition and retention model are addressed through marketing social Greek organizations and meeting potential members. When chapter members understand the stages and how an individual moves from one stage to the next, leadership will be able to start conversations when a member is exhibiting signs of disaffiliating with the organization.

Fourth, future researchers could develop the Student Organization Perception Instrument to follow a group of students through their entire academic pursuits. Through this approach, researchers will learn when students become interested in social Greek organizations at the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse's and follow the development of this interest for their entire educational career on campus. Researchers would also be

able to explore participation in recruitment activities and interest. A benefit of following a group of students through their academic pursuits is that researchers can tabulate when likelihood to join a social Greek organization changes. Understanding when likelihood changes, in comparison to outside influencers (e.g., peer group, student organization involvement, academic rigor, etc.) can provide direct implications to student affairs practitioners.

Limitations

This study has several limitations. While the sample size was informative, studying a broader spectrum of the campus population, including students other than freshmen, would have likely yielded richer results. Third-semester students have experienced an entire year on campus and have established a support system within the institution. Additionally, sampling only upperclassmen would yield informative results. Since some of the members recruited to Greek organizations are in their third semester or beyond, modifying the sample would align closer with actual recruitment practices. Only 22% of the potential participants pulled by institutional research participated in the SOPI. Administering the SOPI again during a different time of the year, could provide a greater response rate. When the SOPI was administered, the fall semester was nearing its end, which may have caused the invitation to go unnoticed by students. Better timing may have ensured an improved response rate.

Another limitation may be due to campus cultural characteristics. On UW-La Crosse's campus, residence halls aim to offer experiences similar to social Greek organizations. Due to the requirement of on campus housing for first year students, residence life dominates community building of first-year students. Policies further

hinder non-residence life organizations from interacting with residents in residence halls. This creates challenges for social Greek organizations to recruit first year students. I recommend that the leaders of Greek Life and Residence Life collaborate on new policies to explore the facilitation of Greek recruitment within residence halls. There may be ways in which RAs and Hall Directors can work with Greek Life to help get the word out about a continued form of involvement for UW-La Crosse students beyond the first year. Further, the SOPI itself had limitations. It prompted respondents early in the instrument to provide all social Greek organizations on UW-La Crosse's campus they knew. This could have misled respondents who confused major-related student organizations (e.g. Delta Sigma Pi, a business organization) with social Greek organizations. By confusing these, respondents could have adjusted their likelihood toward unlikely for the reason that joining such organizations requires switching majors. During another iteration of the SOPI, this question should follow the main dependent and independent variable items, not precede them.

Perhaps the greatest limitation rests within the research site. Involvement in social Greek organizations comprises fewer than 200 students of a possible more than 9,000. Repeating the study on a campus where social Greek involvement amounts to more than 2% of the general student population would likely provide more varied results.

Suggestions for Further Research

SOPI's focus rested only on current non-members of Greek organizations. Additional research should be conducted to study members within social Greek organizations instead of non-members. Rather than exploring why non-members do not

join, this design could study why members join. This would complement the current design of the SOPI. Studying members would also likely yield a higher response rate.

In addition, developing a study to qualitatively explore why members are not joining or joining and remaining affiliated with their social Greek organization would be beneficial. Studying such a topic with qualitative methods lets stories and narratives emerge of the Greek experience that quantitative studies cannot provide. Such stories not only present the positive lived experiences of members to counteract the stereotyping of Greek chapters, but they can also be used in marketing campaigns on posters or in social media.

Conclusion

The findings of the Student Organization Perception Instrument provide a realistic picture of students' perceptions toward social Greek organizations at UW-La Crosse and why non-members are not joining fraternities or sororities in higher numbers. Data analysis pointed to four main results: affiliation with Greek organizations, knowledge of Greek organizations, campus involvement in non-Greek student organizations, and public relations. Evaluating each of these findings showed that students are incredibly unaware of social Greek organizations on UW-La Crosse's campus.

To the SOPI respondents, social Greek organizations are how they are depicted in the popular media. These stereotypical views of social Greek organizations hinder students from seeking further information to challenge these beliefs. Members and student affairs administrators must continue to work to educate students on the reality of social Greek organizations and benefits of joining. Theorized in the membership acquisition and retention model (Kretovics & Zuckerman, 2003), non-members cast

beliefs on an entire population based on the interactions with a few. UW-L educators must continue to dialogue with members of social Greek organizations about how they represent their organization at all times and how small missteps by members may have detrimental effects on a group of undergraduates who are already skeptical of fraternities and sororities.

Further analysis of the data showed that students are amenable to joining social Greek organizations if they were marketed better. Chapter leaders can use these data to modify and improve their practices to alleviate non-member concerns about joining and to recruit new members. Concerns could be mitigated by a variety of educational strategies, including handouts, specific conversations, and educational videos about the recruitment process. Members of social Greek organizations on UW-L's campus need to diligently work in marketing their existence and sharing their accomplishments with the campus community. Focusing time and energy into marketing will aid in recruiting more members as well as educated non-members.

Continuing to study the social Greek population of UW-La Crosse will provide salient results as members improve their recruitment practices. Modifying policies and practices based on these findings can only improve the overall social Greek experience. The development of social Greek organizations at the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse is a worthwhile undertaking that should join campus administrators, faculty, members and alumni, as well as potential undergraduate members to bring Greek Life at this institution back to the prominence it once had as a tremendous asset to the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse and the local community.

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APPENDIX A

STUDENT ORGANIZATION PERCEPTION INSTRUMENT

Thank you for agreeing to complete the Student Organization Perception Instrument. A Greek social organization is a single-sex (only male or female) group that has shared values with its members. On UW-L's campus, these organizations are not associated with a specific major, race, ethnicity, or religion. Membership is open to anyone interested in joining; fraternities are specifically for men while sororities are for women. You are now going to be asked to respond to a series of questions about your experiences at the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse (UW-L). Please make sure to include your e-mail in the last question if you want to have a chance to win one of the three incentives. The survey should take less than 10 minutes to complete. Thank you for your participation.

Your participation is entirely voluntary and your answers will be treated confidentially at all times. Your consent is given by filling out this survey. All responses will be stored on a secure server. I do not foresee any risks to you as you participate. Should you have any questions, please contact Collin A. Zimmerman at zimmerma.coll@uwlax.edu.

1. Sex
 - a. Male
 - b. Female
2. Race
 - a. White/Caucasian
 - b. African American
 - c. Hispanic
 - d. Asian
 - e. Native American
 - f. Pacific Islander
 - g. Other
3. What is your class standing?
 - a. Freshman
 - b. Sophomore
4. College and Major
 - a. Drill down list generated from UW-L website.
5. Approximate Cumulative GPA (range)
 - a. I don't yet have a cumulative GPA
 - b. 4.0 – 3.5
 - c. 3.4 – 3.0
 - d. 2.9 – 2.5
 - e. Below a 2.5 [Go to question 20]

6. Please list the social Greek organizations at UW-L that you know or have heard of.
7. What is the likelihood of you joining a social Greek organization at UW-L? (1-7 Likert scale)
8. What is your perception of social Greek organizations at colleges and universities in relation to student success?

	Negative			Neutral			Positive
Fraternities at UW-L	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Sororities at UW-L	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Fraternities Nationally	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Sororities Nationally	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

9. Before arriving at UW-L, which of the following represents your knowledge of fraternities and sororities?
 - Extensive knowledge: I know a lot about the Greek alphabet, the history of many groups, and their values.
 - No knowledge: I don't understand anything about fraternities or sororities.
 - a. (1-7 Likert scale from Extensive knowledge to no knowledge)
10. Based on your answer to the prior question, what is the source of your knowledge or understanding of fraternities and sororities? Please mark all that apply.
 - a. UW-La Crosse marketing materials
 - b. Television shows or films/movies
 - c. Newspaper or other written media
 - d. Social media (Facebook, Twitter, MySpace, etc.)
 - e. Greek-affiliated family or friends
 - f. Non-Greek affiliated family or friends
 - g. I have no knowledge of fraternities or sororities
 - h. Other
11. How many organizations are you involved that are non-Greek organizations? (e.g., Student Association, RHAC, NRHH, Progressives, ASO, etc.)
 - a. None
 - b. 1-3
 - c. 4-6
 - d. 7-9
 - e. 10 or more
12. [If anything other than 'a' for question 8] Why did you join these organizations? Please mark all that apply
 - a. I liked the people in the organization.
 - b. I wanted to build my resume.
 - c. I liked the values of the organization.
 - d. The members told me how I would grow as a leader.
 - e. The members told me how I would benefit academically.

- f. The members told me how I would benefit socially.
 - g. The members told me how I would benefit after college.
 - h. Other, please specify.
13. Have you ever participated in a fraternity or sorority recruitment process at the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse?
- a. Yes [Participants will continue to answer questions 11-16, and 19 only]
 - b. No [Participants will continue to answer questions 17-19 only]
 - c. No, I am a member of a fraternity or sorority on another campus. [Go to question 20]
14. What was your reason for participating in a fraternity or sorority recruitment process? Please mark all that apply.
- a. My parents/family encouraged me to participate
 - b. I saw or heard information about fraternities/sororities and was interested in getting involved
 - c. I had friends who were planning to participate in fraternity/sorority recruitment
 - d. I had friends already in a fraternity or sorority who encouraged me to participate
 - e. Other
15. What interested you most about the prospect of becoming a fraternity or sorority member? Please mark only your top answer.
- a. Social scene (parties, drinking, etc.)
 - b. Community service opportunities
 - c. Making new friends
 - d. Sisterhood or brotherhood
 - e. Networking opportunities with alumni
 - f. Benefits outside of college, internships and jobs
 - g. Leadership potential, getting involved on campus
 - h. Academic support
 - i. Elite status on campus
 - j. Other, please specify
16. What was the result of your experience in a fraternity or sorority recruitment activity/process?
- a. Received an invitation/bid to join the organization (Go to question 14)
 - b. Completed the recruitment or intake activity/process but did not receive an invitation/bid (Go to question 15)
 - c. Voluntarily withdrew from the recruitment or intake activity/process prior to its end (Go to question 16)
17. [If 'a' selected in #13] What was the result of the invitation/bid?
- a. I accepted the invitation/bid to join the organization
 - b. I declined the invitation/bid to join the organization
 - c. I voluntarily ended my membership during the new member or intake period
 - d. I voluntarily ended my membership after initiation
 - e. My membership was suspended or ended from the organization before or after initiation

18. [if 'b' selected in #13] What was your decision following not receiving a bid to join a fraternity or sorority chapter?
- I joined a fraternity or sorority at a later time [Go to question 20]
 - I participated in recruitment or intake activities/processes again, but did not join a chapter
 - I did not consider joining a fraternity or sorority again
 - Other, please specify
19. [If 'c' selected in #13] What was your top reason for withdrawing from the event/activity? Please mark all that apply.
- Time commitment required was not possible
 - Financial obligations to the organization were not feasible
 - Concerned about my academic future in the organization
 - Did not feel comfortable with members of the chapter
 - Organization's values or activities did not match my own interests
 - Family or friends pressured me to not continue
 - I was concerned about hazing in the organization
 - Did not feel comfortable with the recruitment process
 - Did not have enough time to make a confident decision
 - Did not receive an invitation from the chapter I particularly wanted
 - Other, please specify
20. Please rank the following which influenced your decision not to seek membership in a fraternity or sorority. Please mark all that apply.
- Financial obligations of membership
 - Time commitment/obligations of membership
 - Influence from non-Greek family or friends
 - Concerned that my academic goals would not be met
 - Concerns about hazing
 - Personal values conflict with perceived values of fraternities/sororities
 - Concerned about pressure to participate in parties or other alcohol-related events
 - Did not see or hear any information about recruitment events/activities
 - Do not believe membership would benefit me in any way
 - Do not care for certain stereotypes associated with fraternities and sororities
21. Please indicate if any of the following factors could have changed your decision not to seek membership in a fraternity or sorority? Please mark all that apply.
- More/better information about fraternity or sorority recruitment events/activities (advertisements, notification, etc.)
 - More/better information about obligations and requirements for membership
 - More/better communication with my family about fraternity or sorority membership
 - If the programs and support the chapter offers were more clearly values-based
 - If alcohol was less of a focus in social and other types of chapter events
 - If there was more positive publicity/press about fraternities and sororities

- g. If chapters more clearly conveyed the benefits of membership
 - h. Nothing would have changed my decision
 - i. Other, please specify
22. Which of the following is the primary influence on your attitude toward fraternities and sororities?
- a. Media, negative publicity in general
 - b. Cases/stories about hazing and other physical abuse
 - c. Cases/stories about alcohol and other drug abuse
 - d. Family or friends' attitudes
 - e. Stories told to me by people in fraternities or sororities
 - f. Little to no perceived personal benefit
 - g. Monetary cost of membership
 - h. Neutral-it's just not for me
 - i. Other, please specify

[End of survey]

Thank you for taking your time to complete the Student Organization Perception Instrument. Your input is greatly appreciated and will be used to better shape this campus. The Interfraternity Council and the Panhellenic Council have graciously supplied the gift cards. Those who complete the survey in the first 48 hours will be entered to win a \$50.00 gift card. Individuals completing the survey within the first two weeks will be entered into a drawing for the remaining two gift cards of \$25.00. Below is a box to enter your UW-L email address. To be entered into the drawing, you must submit your email address. After the survey closes, I will send an email to those selected for the gift cards.

Please enter your e-mail address if you would like to participate in the random drawing of three gift cards.

APPENDIX B

STUDENT ORGANIZATION PERCEPTION INSTRUMENT PARTICIPANT

SOLICITATION EMAIL

Subject: Incentive to Share Your Perceptions on UW-L!
Body:

Dear Student:

You are cordially invited to participate in the Student Organization Perception Instrument administered to undergraduate students above graduated high school in 2011 at the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse. The survey should take less than 10 minutes to complete. Your participation matters significantly as your answers will help people better understand the perceptions on UW-L's campus and help me to complete my master's thesis research. The principal investigator is Collin A. Zimmerman, Graduate Student in Student Affairs Administration. The Student Organization Perception Instrument has been adapted from a survey created by Fouts (2010).

As a thank you for completing the instrument within the first two weeks, you will have the chance to participate in a random drawing for three gift cards to Best Buy. The gift cards have been graciously supplied by the Interfraternity Council and Panhellenic Council. Those who complete the survey in the first 48 hours will be entered to win a \$50.00 gift card. Individuals completing the survey within the first two weeks will be entered into a drawing for the remaining two gift cards of \$25.00. After completion of the survey, you will be prompted to enter your UW-L email address. To be entered into the drawing, you must submit your email address. After the survey closes, I will send an email to those selected for the gift cards.

Your participation is entirely voluntary and your answers will be treated confidentially at all times. Your consent is given by filling out this survey. All responses will be stored on a secure server. I do not foresee any risks to you as you participate.

Please follow the link below to the survey:

[Qualtrics link to be entered]

This link is uniquely tied to this survey and your email address, please do not forward this message.

If you have questions or concerns about this study, you may contact Collin A. Zimmerman at (608) 561-2014 or by email at zimmerma.coll@uwlax.edu. You may also contact my thesis chair Dr. Jörg Vianden at (608) 785-6870 or by e-mail at vianden.jorg@uwlax.edu. For questions or concerns about your rights as a research participant, please contact irb@uwlax.edu.

I appreciate your interest and thank you for participating.

Sincerely,
Collin A. Zimmerman

APPENDIX C

STUDENT ORGANIZATION PERCEPTION INSTRUMENT PARTICIPANT

REMINDER EMAIL

A few days ago, I sent out an email inviting you to participate in the Student Organization Perception Instrument. **Please take a moment to complete the survey. You could win one of two remaining gift cards!**

You are cordially invited to participate in the Student Organization Perception Instrument administered to undergraduate students above graduated high school in 2011 at the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse. The survey should take less than 10 minutes to complete. Your participation matters significantly as your answers will help people better understand the perceptions on UW-L's campus and help me to complete my master's thesis research. The principal investigator is Collin A. Zimmerman, Graduate Student in Student Affairs Administration. The Student Organization Perception Instrument has been adapted from a survey created by Fouts (2010).

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Your participation is entirely voluntary and your answers will be treated confidentially at all times. Your consent is given by filling out this survey. All responses will be stored on a secure server. I do not foresee any risks to you as you participate.

Please follow the link to the survey: [Qualtrics link]
Or copy and paste the URL into your internet browser: [Qualtrics link]

This link is uniquely tied to this survey and your email address, please do not forward this message.

If you have questions or concerns about this study, you may contact Collin A. Zimmerman at (608) 561-2014 or by email at zimmerma.coll@uwlax.edu. You may also contact my thesis chair Dr. Jörg Vianden at (608) 785-6870 or by e-mail at vianden.jorg@uwlax.edu. For questions or concerns about your rights as a research participant, please contact irb@uwlax.edu.

I appreciate your interest and thank you for participating.

Sincerely,
Collin A. Zimmerman

APPENDIX D

STUDENT ORGANIZATION PERCEPTION INSTRUMENT PARTICIPANT

FINAL REMINDER EMAIL

This is your last chance to take the Student Organization Perception Instrument and win one of two remaining gift cards! The survey will close Saturday, December 3, 2011 at noon.

You are cordially invited to participate in the Student Organization Perception Instrument administered to undergraduate students above graduated high school in 2011 at the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse. The survey should take less than 10 minutes to complete. Your participation matters significantly as your answers will help people better understand the perceptions on UW-L's campus and help me to complete my master's thesis research. The principal investigator is Collin A. Zimmerman, Graduate Student in Student Affairs Administration. The Student Organization Perception Instrument has been adapted from a survey created by Fouts (2010).

As a thank you for completing the instrument within the first two weeks, you will have the chance to participate in a random drawing for three gift cards to Best Buy. The gift cards have been graciously supplied by the Interfraternity Council and Panhellenic Council. Those who complete the survey in the first 48 hours will be entered to win a \$50.00 gift card. Individuals completing the survey within the first two weeks will be entered into a drawing for the remaining two gift cards of \$25.00. After completion of the survey, you will be prompted to enter your UW-L email address. To be entered into the drawing, you must submit your email address. After the survey closes, I will send an email to those selected for the gift cards.

Your participation is entirely voluntary and your answers will be treated confidentially at all times. Your consent is given by filling out this survey. All responses will be stored on a secure server. I do not foresee any risks to you as you participate.

Please follow the link to the survey: [Qualtrics link] Or copy and paste the URL into your internet browser: [Qualtrics link]

This link is uniquely tied to this survey and your email address, please do not forward this message.

If you have questions or concerns about this study, you may contact Collin A. Zimmerman at (608) 561-2014 or by email at zimmerma.coll@uwlax.edu. You may also contact my thesis chair Dr. Jörg Vianden at (608) 785-6870 or by e-mail at vianden.jorg@uwlax.edu. For questions or concerns about your rights as a research participant, please contact irb@uwlax.edu.

I appreciate your interest and thank you for participating.

Sincerely,
Collin A. Zimmerman

APPENDIX E

STUDENT ORGANIZATION PERCEPTION INSTRUMENT THANK YOU

EMAIL AND INSTRUCTIONS FOR INCENTIVE

Thank you for taking your time to complete the Student Organization Perception Instrument. Your input is greatly appreciated and will be used to better shape this campus. If you entered your UW-L email address at the end of the survey, you will be placed into the drawing to win one of three Best Buy gift cards. The drawing for all three-gift cards will take place at the conclusion of the study. Winners will be contacted on or before December 5, 2011.

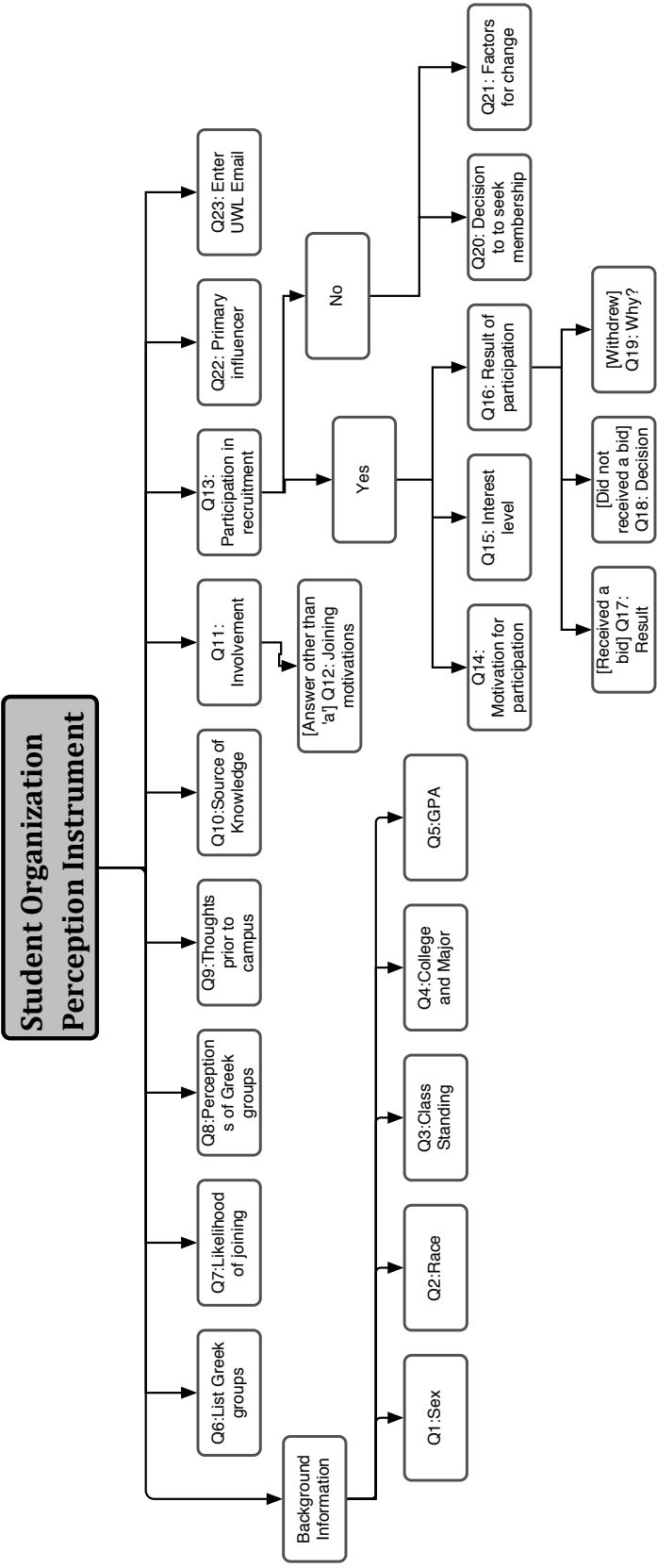
If you have questions or concerns about this study, you may contact Collin A. Zimmerman at (608) 561-2014 or by email at zimmerma.coll@uwlax.edu. You may also contact my thesis chair Dr. Jörg Vianden at (608) 785-6870 or by e-mail at vianden.jorg@uwlax.edu. For questions or concerns about your rights as a research participant, please contact irb@uwlax.edu.

I appreciate your interest and thank you again for participating!

Sincerely,

Collin A. Zimmerman

APPENDIX F
STUDENT ORGANIZATION PERCEPTION INSTRUMENT RESPONDENT
LOGIC DIAGRAM



APPENDIX G

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL

UNIVERSITY of WISCONSIN
LA CROSSE

To: Collin A. Zimmerman

From: Bart Van Voorhis, Coordinator
Institutional Review Board (IRB) for the
Protection of Human Subjects
bvanvoorhis@uwlax.edu
5-6892

Date: November 17, 2011

Re: **RESEARCH PROTOCOL SUBMITTED TO IRB**

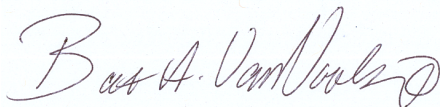
The IRB Committee has reviewed your proposed research project: *“Student Social Greek Involvement”*

Because your research protocol will place human subjects at minimal risk, it **has been approved under the expedited review category in accordance with 45CFR46, 46.110(a)(b)**. Also, a waiver of signed consent has been granted in accordance with **46.117(c)(1)(2)**.

Since you are not seeking federal funding for this research, the review process is complete and you may proceed with your project. Remember to provide participants a copy of the consent form and to keep a copy for your records. Consent documentation and IRB records should be retained for at least 3 years after completion of the project.

Please note that this approval is for a one year period only, from the date of this letter. **If the project continues for more than 12 months, an IRB renewal must be requested using Attachment C on the IRB website. Please submit Attachment C one month prior to the date on this letter. Continued data collection beyond this date will place your project in non-compliance. The IRB is required to report instances of noncompliance to the Federal Office of Human Research Protections.**

Good luck with your project!



cc: IRB File
Jorg Vianden, Faculty Advisor

Graduate Studies and Research & Sponsored Program
220 Morris Hall, University of Wisconsin-La Crosse
1725 State Street, La Crosse, WI 54601

Phone (608)785-8124 and (608) 785-8007
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