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GREEK-LETTER ORGANIZATION MEMBERSHIP
AND SOCIALLY RESPONSIBLE LEADERSHIP:
A QUALITATIVE STUDY OF THE IMPACT OF
THE SIGMA ALPHA EPSILON
MEMBER-DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

By
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A DISSERTATION IN PRACTICE

Submitted to the faculty of the Graduate School of Creighton University in Partial
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Abstract

This qualitative case study focused on the impact of the Sigma Alpha Epsilon (SAE) fraternity member-development program enabling socially responsible leadership in its members. The aim of this study was to analyze the current SAE member-development program to provide recommendations for enhancement that instill and reinforce socially responsible leadership in its members, in order to strengthen individuals as well to enable the success of the SAE vision and mission. The study sample was comprised of 12 SAE members who graduated in academic years 2012 through 2016, with data gathered through interviews. The findings of the study revealed three main gaps: 1) a mismatch emerged between SAE's vision and its member-development program; 2) leaders were focused more on obligation requirements than on aspirational goals; and 3) lifelong membership in SAE did not equate with lifelong fulfillment opportunities. Analysis of the results of this study resulted in the overarching recommended solution: to revise the existing SAE member education program into a mission-focused, values-based, and aspirational goal-oriented program for lifelong development. Implementation of the recommendation would include using learning theory and leadership models such as the social change model (SCM) to revise the program. and expanding the program to support members more effectively in their postgraduate years. The results of this study directly affect individual members of SAE and the organization, but may also be useful to other Greek-letter organizations in their member development and leadership programs.

Keywords: Fraternity, social responsibility, leadership

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Background

Fraternity and sorority (hereafter referred to as Greek-letter organizations or GLO) members represent a subset of the larger undergraduate population on college and university campuses throughout the United States. GLOs provide their members with a social structure, service and philanthropy opportunities, and personal development programs as means for assimilation into the campus environment (Astin, 1993). Despite the positive aspects established for GLO members, reports in the media, movies, and throughout popular culture are replete with stories of negative behavior. Movies such as *Animal House* (Reitman & Simmons, 1978) and *Neighbors* (Goldberg & Rogen, 2014) may provide entertaining examples of GLO membership, but statistics on GLO-enabled risky behavior such as binge drinking and sexual assault are prevalent on host institution campuses (National Institute of Health, 2015) and run counter to the positive aspects of membership. Mitigating or eliminating these behaviors in GLO members mandates increased attention and action.

The impact of GLO on academic success, as measured by grade point averages and persistence to graduation, has shown some positive trends relative to non-GLO students (Astin, 1993). Astin further asserted, however, that broader learning beyond academics was critical to overall personal development in undergraduates. Achieving this development goal can occur through co-curricular activities. For example, Astin (1993) cited GLO membership as a primary potential contributor, along with athletics, student government, pre-professional societies, and other on-campus opportunities. Similarly, Barnhardt (2014) asserted that GLO membership could provide development

opportunities for members in the areas of philanthropy, community service, understanding, and respect for others. These opportunities create an environment in which members could establish and sustain a positive ideal of personal social responsibility and thus contribute to a larger community (Barnhardt, 2014).

Sigma Alpha Epsilon (SAE), a national male social fraternity, was the organization used in this study. SAE has a stated mission, vision, and values, all of which were updated in 2016 in a comprehensive strategic plan (SAE, 2016a). In addition to these foundational statements, SAE has a long history, traditions, a membership ritual, and an organizational creed entitled “The True Gentleman” (Appendix A; Wayland, 2012). At the time of this study, SAE used a universal member-development program to provide education and training on the basics of its mission, history, and ritual for its members. The program also contained modules on personal development, such as countering risky behaviors, applying basic leadership techniques, transitioning from collegiate to alumnus, and employing professional networking (SAE, 2015a). This study was designed to focus on how the SAE universal member-development program has enabled long-term socially responsible member behaviors, as measured after graduation. Recommendations for future enhancements to the program for implementation emerged from the findings.

Statement of the Problem

Greek-letter organization mission and core values statements often contain ideal behaviors focused on broad leadership categories such as trust, diversity, honor, and working toward the greater good (Biddix, Matney, Norman, & Martin, 2014). However, developing and implementing effective member-development programs to turn these

ideal behaviors into practice is a challenge (Dugan & Komives, 2007). Dugan (2008) noted that individual development opportunities during undergraduate years could drive personal social responsibility. This development approach does not specifically refer to leadership training; rather, development encompasses broader personal development through education, experience, and accountability. The approaches to planning and implementation of development programs can vary widely between employing strict, formal organizational training to a more individualized system that relies on personal initiative and self-reporting, with plenty of alternative options in between. This dissertation in practice focused on the perceptions of members of SAE, an organization that instituted a comprehensive initiative for personal development to translate organizational ideals into individual member actions.

Thousands of new members join GLOs every academic year and replace the thousands who graduate and enter the next phase of their lives (Biddix et al., 2014). SAE has been no exception, with over 3,500 new members initiating in academic year 2016–2017 alone (SAE, 2017). The organization has also experienced a steady annual change in volunteer and professional support staff. SAE uses a universal member development program that is common to all initiated men. Using the universal member-development program to maintain consistency between the stated organizational values of SAE and their implementation, despite membership fluctuations, has been important to the organization over its history. By design, the universal member-development program provided continuity and instills the basics of personal growth through responsible behavior. Ideally, the positive effects gained from learning and demonstrating personal responsibility from an effective member-development program could transcend SAE

members' undergraduate collegiate experience as they transition into broader society, thus developing individual members into productive socially responsible citizens and leaders in their families, communities, professional sectors, and nations.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to determine whether the Sigma Alpha Epsilon member-development program enabled socially responsible leadership in undergraduate members and to explore how that development translated into sustained action for members after graduation.

Research Question

New members bring their individual experiences, or inputs, into their undergraduate collegiate and SAE experiences. Family upbringing, faith, education, and personal values all form inputs into students' individual experiences prior to college matriculation. Effective recruitment of new members attracts individuals who exhibit interest in SAE's organizational ideals and membership offers. SAE publishes a membership manual, "The Phoenix," for men who accept the membership offer and become initiated members (SAE, 2012). "The Phoenix" lists a series of principles and outcomes of SAE membership, including fostering personal development, understanding diversity and change, and developing a sense of personal responsibility and service (SAE, 2012, p. 8). In this qualitative case study, SAE members in the first five years after their graduation provided their perceptions on whether the existing member-development program enabled personal growth and offered recommendations for program enhancements. The following research question guided the study:

Does the Sigma Alpha Epsilon undergraduate development program enable socially responsible leadership in its members that is sustained after graduation?

Aim of the Study

The aim of this study was to analyze the current SAE member-development program to provide recommendations for enhancement that instill and reinforce socially responsible leadership in its members, in order to strengthen individuals and enable the success of the SAE vision and mission.

Methodology

Previous quantitative studies have shown that socially responsible leadership increased during the first year of GLO membership within a specific population (Martin, Hevel, & Pascarella, 2012) but did not increase by any significant amount during the fourth year of membership (Hevel, Martin, & Pascarella, 2014). The methodology for this study was a qualitative case study approach that built on the results and recommendations of the previous quantitative studies (Hevel et al., 2014; Martin, et al., 2012). The sample for this qualitative study consisted of 12 SAE alumni who graduated in the years 2012–2016 from SAE chapters throughout the United States. The 12 alumni participated in focused interviews for data collection. The interview protocol appears in Appendix B.

Definitions of Relevant Terms

For this study, important terms are defined in the following paragraphs.

Greek letter organization (GLO): A GLO is a social organization of undergraduate students that is part of a larger national network. Membership is voluntary and based on an individual accepting an offer, or bid, from the current members to join. Sigma Alpha Epsilon (SAE) is a GLO that meets this definition. Additionally, SAE

maintains some aspects of membership that remain secret, known as ritual; ritual knowledge is confined to initiated members.

Members: Members are men who accepted a bid, initiated into the fraternity, and maintained active membership according to fraternity laws. SAE initiates members for life, so although a member graduates from college, he remains a member unless he is expelled under fraternity laws or he voluntarily resigns.

Chapter: The chapter is the local organization within a particular college or university campus that represents a GLO. In Sigma Alpha Epsilon, undergraduates operate the chapter based on a charter from the national organization. The charter mandates adherence to the national organization laws and rules, as well as those of the host institution—the college or university. Each chapter within SAE has an alumni advisor who is a member of SAE. Most chapters also have a member of the host institution faculty or staff as an additional advisor who is not necessarily an initiated member.

Member-development programs: These are structured education and training opportunities provided by the GLO to enhance member experiences. The SAE member-development program is the True Gentleman Experience (TGE), which consists of universal requirements for all members as well as multiple optional developmental programs available at the local, regional, and national levels (SAE, 2015a). Topics within the TGE include organization history, mission, vision, values, risk management, organization operations, substance abuse, sexual assault prevention, officer duties and responsibilities, and advanced ritual training. The program is locally administered at the chapter level. The program may be conducted in groups or individually and can be

administered by fellow undergraduates, alumni, local volunteer leaders, or national-level organizational staff.

Socially responsible leadership: Leadership that is focused on working toward a common solution, learned and adaptive to environmental conditions, and oriented on positive change (Dugan & Komives, 2007). Socially responsible leaders have knowledge and demonstrated application of behaviors consistent with the social change model (Astin, 1996; Astin & Astin, 2003; HERI, 1996). The model comprises the aspirational goal of social change toward a greater good, plus seven basic contributing attributes (consciousness of self, congruence, commitment, collaboration, common purpose, controversy with civility, and citizenship), discussed further in Chapter 2.

Limitations, Delimitations, and Personal Biases

The principal delimitation of this study was its specific focus on one organization, Sigma Alpha Epsilon. Interviewed participants were initiated members of SAE, and their member-development experiences for the purpose of this study involved only SAE programs. Perceptions and reflections of the participants were from a national cross-section of initiated members who graduated during the 2012–2016 academic years. The sample included 12 participants gained from an initial potential pool of 120 men. In addition to a national cross-section, the participants also represented both public and private undergraduate institutions. Focusing solely on SAE as one GLO within the broader fraternity/sorority community was a potential limitation in terms of transferability of results to other GLOs. The results discussed in the study, however, indicated significant opportunities for both generalizability and transferability to other GLOs and organizations outside the Greek-letter community.

The principal researcher in the study was both an initiated member of SAE and a senior executive within the philanthropic foundation that supports SAE. The bias of personal experience from both facts was an important consideration in study design and execution. Control for potential bias will be discussed further in Chapter 3.

The Role of Leadership in this Study

Translating personal development through GLO programs into socially responsible leadership is a lens that has been used in previous quantitative studies (Hevel et al., 2014; Martin et al., 2012). These foundational studies are discussed in detail in Chapter 2. Following the recommendations of previous researchers, this study used a qualitative approach to gain insights specific to SAE. Leadership theory and leadership in practice underpinned the rationale for this study and for the recommendations that might be implemented from the findings. Several leadership aspects and roles were relevant to this study.

Individual Leadership

Individual SAE members matriculate into college and university from their families, communities, secondary schools, and other formative entities. They bring values, beliefs, education, training, and experiences with them to campus, choose to become a SAE member if offered a bid, and initiate into the organization. From that point forward, the expectation is that they will exhibit behaviors consistent with their personal values and beliefs and those of SAE. SAE is a mission-focused, values-based organization (SAE, 2016a). Although not specifically designed or based on the concepts of the social change model (SCM; Astin, 1996; HERI, 1996), the currently published

SAE mission, vision, and values contained in the strategic plan (SAE, 2016a) are consistent with the tenets of the SCM model.

For individual members who may not have come into SAE with strong personal values systems on which to build, immediately taking on the role of a social change leader could be difficult. The member-development program must adapt to the varied values systems of its members. Members, formal leaders, and advisors are responsible for tailoring the member-development program to each individual's needs in order to meet the organization's desired outcomes (SAE, 2014).

Chapter Leadership

Like individual leadership, chapter leadership is critical to successfully promoting and displaying social responsibility through behaviors. Chapter members elect leaders from among the active members such as president, recording secretary and treasurer among others, to form an Executive Board. These elected leaders face personal and organizational responsibilities, balancing their academic and social lives while ensuring the success of their chapters. Even more daunting is the fact that these undergraduate leaders, chosen from among their contemporaries, often face difficult decisions in ensuring health and safety and adhering to host institution and national organization rules while balancing the desire among members for the social and fraternal aspects of membership. Additionally, some informal leaders may not hold an elected chapter office but carry enormous credibility among members.

National Leadership

National leadership includes all the volunteer elected leaders of SAE at the highest level, as well as the supporting professional staff who provide strategic guidance,

administer the organization by promulgating and enforcing laws and rules, ensure fiscal responsibility, maintain adequate liability underwriting, and promote personal and leader development through provision of programs, scholarships, and awards. The national layer of leadership is critical to the direction, management, oversight, and exemplification of the organization's mission, vision, and values to the individual members. Members' understanding of the importance of responsible behaviors is exercised through leadership and adherence to the principles in action.

Institutional Leadership

SAE and its partner GLOs rely on the support of host institutions to remain and thrive as part of the overall college or university campus. Absent institutional support, local chapters generally do not survive, or at least do not survive well (Barnhardt, 2014; Martin et al, 2012). Institutional administrators who actively support the concept of GLOs and work to ensure that the values, aims, and actions of the GLOs remain consistent with their national organizations and the cultures of the host institutions provide the environment in which chapters can excel. Host institutions that embrace the principles of social responsibility and require their staff and faculty leaders to serve as examples in practice can help undergraduates develop personal social responsibility. Host institution administrators must recognize they are working with college student leaders who are still learning. Maintaining this understanding is critical to building and sustaining a relationship of mutual trust between institutional, chapter, and national leaders and understanding the institutional impact on social responsibility development of GLO member undergraduate students.

Researcher Leadership

During this study, the researcher applied personal experience with individual development gained as an SAE member, as a volunteer leader and executive with the SAE Foundation, and as a commissioned officer in the United States Army. Each of the researcher's development opportunities provided unique insights into all aspects of this study. An initiated SAE member for over 40 years, the researcher began his experience beginning with probationary membership (i.e., pledging), and served as both secretary and president of his chapter while a college undergraduate. The researcher later served as a trustee on the governing board of the SAE Foundation, the philanthropic arm of the fraternity, and now serves as its president and chief executive officer. As a U.S. Army general officer, the researcher served on active duty in leadership positions of successive size, levels of responsibility, and complexity throughout the world in operational and combat environments that required creative practical application of leader theory. Each of the aspects of personal development and leadership opportunities provided the researcher an experiential foundation for building and conducting this study.

Significance of the Study

Sigma Alpha Epsilon has published its mission, vision, and values, reflecting a direct link to the tenets of working toward a greater positive good (SAE, 2016a). The True Gentlemen Experience (TGE) is the SAE member-development program designed to instill and reinforce these ideal behaviors in action. Other GLOs have similar organizational aspirational statements and programs. The study was significant for its focus on discerning how well the SAE member-development program met the tenets of the mission, vision and values. Further, the study was significant for presenting

recommendations for modifications where appropriate. This study was directly aligned with the goals, objectives, and initiatives of the current SAE strategic plan published in 2016 (SAE, 2016a), discussed more fully in Chapter 2. Additionally, significant opportunities were discovered in program design and alignment where existing educational and developmental models—for example, the SCM—could be used more effectively to align program intent with program delivery to achieve desired outcomes.

Past studies have indicated the importance of co-curricular activities in the overall learning and development of college students (Astin & Astin, 2000; Astin, 1993). GLOs represent a significant opportunity to gain development through the membership experience. Astin (1993) stressed that the undergraduate environment was instrumental in using the inputs of a person's background to shape the ultimate outcome of graduation and beyond. Studies of the GLO experience have specifically reinforced this observation, although some limits have affected overall development beyond initial growth in personal social responsibility and slight increases in academic success, as measured by grade point averages and persistence to graduation within five years (Astin, 1993). Although grades and graduation rates are important metrics, a broader holistic view of learning should include experiential learning, a critical element toward building a healthy transition from undergraduate life to life after graduation (Astin, 1993).

GLO member-development programs are not the only solution or a panacea for every challenge an undergraduate member might face. However, they do provide a potential structure on which an individual could build a more balanced view of overall development, including the critical aspect of socially responsible leadership. This development could also lead to increased potential for academic, social, behavioral, and

financial success as an undergraduate, and by extension, support the success of the GLO and its host institution. In addition, if the principles were applied as life lessons during the transition from undergraduate to alumnus or alumna, the individual, family, and community could benefit as well.

Summary

This study focused on the potential impact of the SAE member-development program in instilling demonstrated competencies of socially responsible leadership, consistent with its stated vision of “True Gentlemen making our global community better” (SAE, 2016a, p. 2). Co-curricular activities in general, and GLO membership specifically, have been touted in many studies as a path for undergraduates to improve their overall learning experiences, avoid some of the negative aspects just highlighted, and gain deeper personal developmental (Astin & Astin, 2000; Astin, 1993, Barnhardt, 2014; Dugan, 2008). However, other studies have shown that although programs that support these high ideals and purposes may exist, they are not producing their stated desired outcomes among GLO members at graduation such as increased indicators of socially responsible leadership, (Hevel et al., 2014), potentially including SAE members.

This study was designed to explore how the SAE member-development program has enabled men to exhibit the tenets of socially responsible leaders consistent with organizational vision and values. Using personal interviews with a sample of 12 recent graduates, the researcher focused on the problem of aligning program content with aspirational intent and solicited insights and recommendations from the participants for sustainment or improvement of the member-development program.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

The campus environment where students reside and study poses many challenges to personal development to students along with setting and enforcing the academic requirements they must meet for eventual graduation. The host institutions—colleges and universities—that provide the academic and development environment for students also offer curricular and co-curricular opportunities. Greek-letter organizations (GLOs) on college and university campuses in the United States are one example of a co-curricular activity for undergraduate students.

Most GLOs leaders at the national organizational level espouse their ideals and values through traits such as loyalty, honor, integrity, and friendship (Barnhardt, 2014). National-level leaders expect the members of local chapters on host institution campuses to exhibit behaviors reflecting the national ideals. GLOs use development programs for their members to instill and reinforce their organizational ideals, values, and traditions. However, authors of two quantitative studies on the impacts of GLO membership on member behaviors determined that among their sample populations, little positive gain was evident after four years of undergraduate membership, despite the resources applied to organizational member-development programs (Hevel et al., 2014; Martin et al., 2012).

This qualitative case study was designed to explore one specific GLO, Sigma Alpha Epsilon (SAE), which has an established universal member-development program, to determine whether the data collected in previous studies were consistent with the experiences of SAE members. Additionally, the researcher analyzed the alignment of the existing program with the SAE mission, vision, and values to discern whether the

program enabled SAE members to develop their personal application of the fraternity's ideals and actively exhibit these ideals as undergraduates and alumni.

In this review, the researcher first examines the general environment on college and university campuses where SAE chapters reside and describes the challenges facing all students, including SAE members. This discussion is followed by a summary of applicable individual behavior development theories to clarify how individuals learn within their environments, including literature on "millennial" generation learning. Previous foundational studies on the effects of environment on GLO members in instilling or reinforcing social responsibility are reviewed; two of which provided the basis for initiating this study (Hevel et al., 2014; Martin et al., 2012). Because the focus of the study was on SAE, it was important to frame the analysis with a general understanding of the organization's history and structure, as well as its existing member-development programs and other policies and governing documents. The chapter continues with an examination of applicable leadership theories and practices involving personal and organizational development and concludes with themes that support the need for the research in this study.

Purpose and Aim of the Study

Purpose. The purpose of this case study was to determine whether the Sigma Alpha Epsilon member-development program enabled socially responsible leadership in undergraduate members and to explore how that development translated into sustained action for members after graduation.

Aim. The aim of this study was to analyze the current SAE member-development program to provide recommendations for enhancement that instill and reinforce socially

responsible leadership in its members, in order to strengthen individuals and enable the success of the SAE vision and mission.

Environmental Impacts

As mentioned earlier, SAE is a GLO hosted on over 230 campuses throughout the United States and Canada. College and university campuses provide the host environment for GLOs, whose members matriculate and graduate after earning the requisite number of academic credit hours. Astin (1993) cited the positive effects gained by student involvement in co-curricular activities at the undergraduate level. Astin (1993) identified GLO membership as a co-curricular option and potential positive contributor to individual development. Attending co-curricular activities in addition to required academic activities may produce a more holistically developed individual upon undergraduate graduation.

The environment influencing or shaping undergraduate college students affects their overall development. Factors such as precollege experience, family and home life, socioeconomic status, health, and others represent shaping experiences (Astin, 1993). Experiences and external factors such as academic pressures, peer relationships, and organizational membership during students' college years also provide developmental opportunities.

The input-environment-output model. Astin (1993) developed a construct to describe the potential for student development entitled the input-environment-output (I-E-O) model. Researchers have cited this model in academic studies as a useful tool for analyzing the effects of various programs and stimuli on individual students (Astin & Astin, 2000; Dugan, 2008; Dugan & Komives, 2007). The basic premise of the model is

that students arrive with certain background values, traits, and experiences (inputs; Astin, 1993). Students' undergraduate exposure to the campus and various experiences becomes their new milieu (environment; Astin, 1993). The combination of inputs and environment further shapes the individual during the undergraduate experience and beyond graduation into the remainder of life (outputs; Astin, 1993).

Collegiate environmental challenges. In general, undergraduate students come from diverse parts of society. Without establishing any additional controls on the student population, a generalized view is that the norms carried by students, and for the purposes of this study, SAE members as a subset of all students, would therefore become inputs in the model. The environmental stimuli that affect students, in addition to academic pressures, include their family situations, faiths, behavioral health issues, and risky behavior choices, including substance abuse and sexual assault. In addition, the potential impact of co-curricular activities such as GLO membership is an environmental factor and the focus of this study.

Family and faith. Family situations and faith affiliation are examples of factors that shape individual development. Livingston (2014) determined that the percentage of children living in a "traditional" family, defined as two parents married for the first time, decreased from 73% in 1960 to 43% by 2013. In contrast, by 2013, 34% of children lived in single-parent homes, and 5% lived in homes with no parents (Livingston, 2014). Regarding religious affiliation and faith among all people in the United States, a decrease occurred from 2007 to 2014 in individuals identifying themselves as Catholic or Protestant by 7.8% and 3.1%, respectively, and only a modest 1.2% increase occurred in non-Christian faiths (Pew Research Center, 2015). Additionally, those who self-reported

as unaffiliated, agnostic, atheist, or no faith in particular increased from 6.7% to 22.8% of all participants during the same period (Pew Research Center, 2015).

Behavioral health. Actual observed individual behaviors, however, may provide better insight into the lived experiences brought to campus by undergraduates in general, and by extension, by the subset of students who are also SAE members. Researchers at the American Psychological Association studied 125,000 undergraduates from over 150 colleges and universities and reported that over one third felt they had difficulty functioning because of depression, and half suffered overwhelming anxiety (Novotney, 2013). For those who used psychological services at their schools or other counseling services, 32.9% reported taking medication for behavioral health concerns (Novotney, 2014). Suicide has been one of the leading causes of undergraduate death in the United States (Suicide Prevention & Resource Center, 2012)—in 2012, up to 7.5% of students across several studies have considered killing themselves; 1.2% attempted suicide, and an average of almost 7 out of 100,000 students succeeded (Suicide Prevention & Resource Center, 2012). Although this number is lower than the reported national average, suicide remains a major concern on college and university campuses.

Risky behaviors. Many undergraduate students may choose risky behaviors such as substance abuse as a way to deal with pressure; these behaviors may stem from environmental influences. In a recent study from the National Institute of Health (NIH, 2015), almost 4 of 5 undergraduates reported drinking alcohol, and half of those who drank admitted they binge-drank or drank to excess in a short time. Excessive drinking also contributed directly to suicidal ideations or attempts and loss of academic motivation, and directly led to over 690,000 physical assaults, including 97,000 sexual

assaults (NIH, 2015). Researchers at the American Association of Universities determined almost 48% of undergraduate students experienced some form of sexual harassment in 2014, and 11.7% reported sexual assault because of physical force or incapacitation (AAU, 2015).

GLO impact. Approximately 12% of undergraduates become GLO members annually, including over 3,500 new initiates into SAE during the 2016–2017 academic year (Biddix et al., 2014; SAE, 2017). New undergraduate members often matriculate into higher education with strong records of secondary education academic achievement, leadership position experience, a predisposition for co-curricular activities, and athletic team participation (Biddix et al., 2014). Although these inputs are important considerations, the central focus of the study was the environment generated by the shaping experiences of SAE member-development programs and their impact on producing an output of personally and socially responsible leaders.

Learning Models

Individual responses to environmental stimuli can be physical, emotional, or behavioral. These responses influence an individual's development through learning (McLeod, 2016). How and why individuals learn is as important as the concept that people learn based on their experiences (Adler, 1924; Bandura, 1977; Kolb, 1983). In addition to an immediate reflexive response, mediating or mitigating factors within the learning environment may promote deeper positive individual development.

Ethics-based learning. Virtue ethics is a broad term used to describe the category of theories that place emphasis on the role of character and virtue in philosophy and action (Athanasoulis, 2017). Virtue ethics derive from Aristotelian/Socratic ideals that

hold that a person's actions should not be judged directly on outcomes but on whether the person acted in accordance with established and recognized values or virtues (Sachs, 2017). The proper application of virtues provides an individual with the ideal example of the choice of actions between the two extreme poles of optional behavior, good and bad (Sachs, 2017). Balancing knowledge with natural emotions to maintain conduct within the options of good or bad behavior provides a way to strive toward a purposeful, meaningful life (Sachs, 2017).

The history of most GLOs in the United States has reflected the impact of Greek philosophy in their founding principles, evidenced most directly by the adoption of Greek letters for identification. Phi Beta Kappa, the oldest GLO in the United States, was originally founded as a literary debating and social society (Hasting, 1965). The Greek letters of its name translate to *philosophy for the guide of life* (Hasting, 1965). SAE began as both a social and scholarly society, founded on the Greek academic traditions; SAE leaders used "topoi" or rhetorical arguments based on Aristotle's *Rhetoric* to outline proclamations and documents on programs, law changes, and individual member activities (Levere, 1926; Rapp, 2010).

Alfred Adler developed a concept termed *individual psychology* to explain in practical modern terms a person's actions aimed at striving toward a goal or purpose (Adler, 1924, deVries, 1951). *Individual psychology*, similar to the concept of virtue ethics, presumed that an individual is comprised of many innate and environmental elements, comprising a whole that cannot be logically distinguished by its individual parts (Adler, 1924). What an individual chooses to do serves a purpose or has meaning; actions over time relate to the purpose, and the environment in which the individual

exists complements the power of the individual (Adler, 1924, deVries, 1951). People are social beings; thus, groups such as family, friends, and community shape the individual's personal experience.

Social learning. Adler (1924) posited that every individual has the capacity for learning as a means to connect to his or her respective social group that must be consciously developed. Development, according to Adler (1924), included experimentation and experience that resulted in greater connection to the group and contentedness. Social learning theory extended Adler's concepts to show the relationships among people's actions within their environments (Bandura, 1977; McLeod, 2016). Bandura's theory followed a behaviorist view that people react to environmental stimuli in various ways; however, Bandura differed from other theorists in his view of how the reactions are developed. Bandura (1977) espoused the idea that environmental stimuli trigger a cognitive or mediational process in an individual wherein determinations such as reward/punishment, right/wrong, and honor/shame are considered; but the resultant behavior is an individual decision output. In this mediational process, the individual's personal traits are at the center of the input into any given situation, and environmental factors shape the decisions that lead to actions and outputs. Although the stimuli may change over time given changes in an individual's environment, the potential growth provided by previous experiences such as a personal or leader development program might better inform the cognitive/mediational process and produce a more holistically developed person as an outcome.

Learning in action. Kolb (1984) developed a model to describe and analyze how the introduction of stimuli may affect individual learning. Kolb's learning cycle model

followed four stages, each building on the previous one: (a) having the experience, (b) reflecting on the experience, (c) conceptualizing its cause and effect, and (d) testing responses based on the experience to apply in future situations (Figure 1).

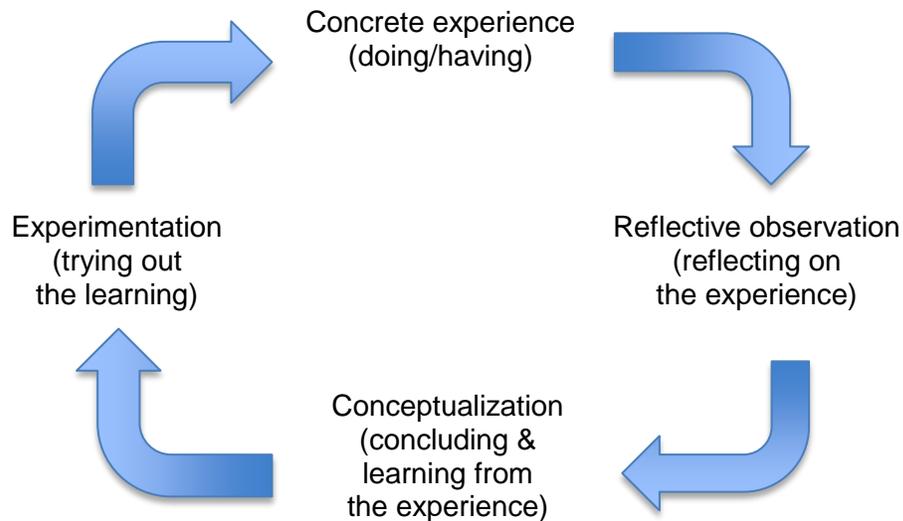


Figure 1. Kolb learning cycle.

Note. Adapted from *Experiential learning: Experience as the source of learning and development* (Vol. 1) by D. A. Kolb, 1984, Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, p. 21. Used with permission of Pearson.

Experiential learning is influenced by an individual’s preferred learning style. The preferred learning style is determined by how the person processes the learning tasks along a processing axis and a perception axis (Kolb, 1984). Figure 2 depicts the processing axis and the associated relationship of *doing* or *watching* with the learning cycle phases of *experimentation* and *reflective observation* respectively (Kolb, 1984). Figure 2 also depicts and the perception axis and its associated relationship of *feeling* and *thinking* with the learning cycle phases of *concrete experience* and *conceptualization* (Kolb, 1984).

Kolb (1984) further posited that an individual cannot perform both variables from the same axis simultaneously, but instead combines two traits from each axis together to form four basic learning styles: *accommodating*, *diverging*, *assimilating*, and *converging* as depicted in Figure 2. Observing, analyzing, and understanding individual learners’ styles could foster the development of scalable education and development programs with measurable outcomes based on defined objectives.

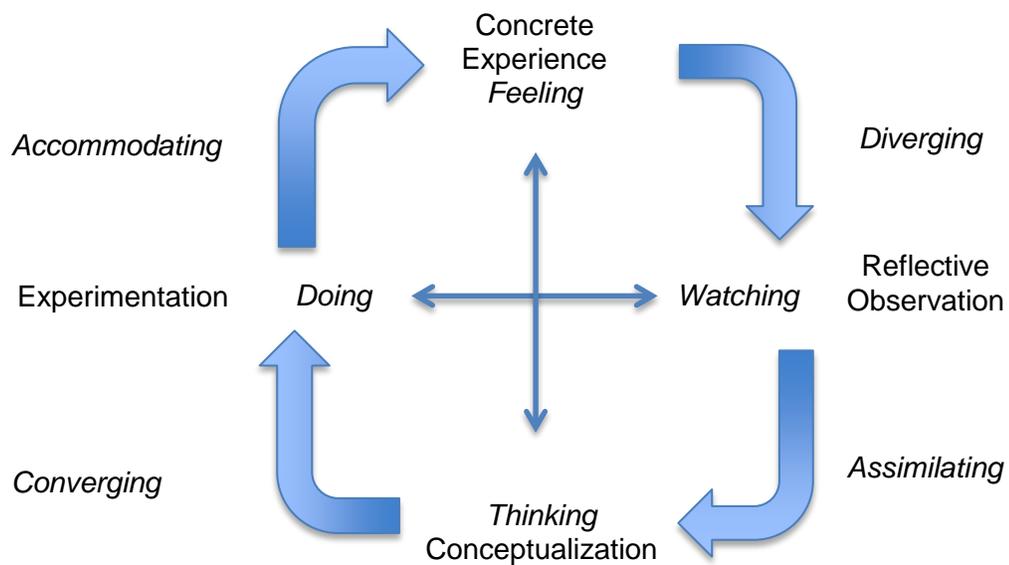


Figure 2. Kolb learning styles.

Note. Adapted from *Experiential learning: Experience as the source of learning and development* (Vol. 1) by D. A. Kolb, 1984, Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, p. 42. Used with permission of Pearson.

Millennial learning. Translating theory into the practical challenge of providing meaningful content and presentation methods into current member-development programs requires an understanding of the generational aspects of people and generalized tenets of how they learn. The overarching term *millennial* describes those born between 1982 and 2000 (Sharma, 2016); this group comprises most of the current population of

college undergraduates, including SAE members. Several studies of millennial learning and talent development have shown that organizations achieved better results with collaborative, experiential, and vision-based programs using mobile information technology tools such as smartphones and tablets (Schulz, 2015; Sharma, 2016).

Millennial learners who engaged in active micro-learning environments in which teachers presented learning objectives in small situations that required creative problem solving tended to gain and retain lessons more effectively (Dede, 2004). Additionally, effective mentoring and coaching helped develop millennial individuals by providing consistent feedback and thus building trust in the organization (Sickler, 2009).

Foundational Studies

As discussed earlier, quantitative studies on the impact of GLO membership on individual development have shown little measurable increase after four years of undergraduate collegiate experience (Hevel et al., 2014; Martin et al., 2012). The rationale for beginning this study stemmed from the recommendations for further qualitative research in Hevel et al. (2014). The use of the social change model (SCM; Astin, 1996), an existing recognized model for analyzing membership impact used in the quantitative studies, provided a bridge to this qualitative case study. Additionally, the researcher's access to SAE as senior leader and recent opportunities emerging from decisions made by SAE leadership such as the updated strategic plan (SAE, 2016a) underscored the rationale for this study.

Membership impacts. In a study of first-year undergraduates, Martin et al. (2012) found that GLO membership “can be effective in promoting development along transformative conceptions of leadership” (p. 20). Martin et al. (2012) recommended that

leader development programs focus on holistic leadership education over leader position-specific training as a means to sustain the positive trends noted in the study results.

Hevel et al. (2014) compared the results from the initial study by Martin et al. (2012) to determine whether GLO membership, programs, and experiences enhanced socially responsible leadership for graduating seniors. The results of Hevel et al. (2014) did not reinforce the results of the first study: GLO membership did not markedly enhance socially responsible leadership (p. 17). To reconcile the purported aims and goal of the organization with the actions and perceptions of members, Hevel et al. (2014) recommended that future researchers might employ a qualitative study to determine the reasons for the divergence from the first year to fourth year and to discover recommended actions for GLOs to take to correct the deficiency.

Social change model (SCM). Central to the foundational studies and past researchers' assessments of measures of effectiveness were the theoretical underpinnings of why and how environments affected participants. The premise in SCM is that every individual in an organization is a potential leader capable of producing substantive and positive change (Astin, 1996). Eight attributes comprise the basis of SCM: consciousness of self, congruence, commitment, collaboration, common purpose, controversy with civility, citizenship, and change (Table 1). The model emphasizes mutually defined purposes among members of group, and a commitment to positive change as the result. Hevel et al. (2014) and Martin et al. (2012) conducted longitudinal studies using SCM.

Tyree (1998) developed a measurement tool for assessing students' personal social responsibility named the Socially Responsible Leadership Scale (SRLS). The SRLS supports academic work through metrics that assess the key components of each

attribute within SCM (HERI, 1996). Authors of subsequent studies using SRLS have concluded that purposeful developmental programs reinforcing member behaviors, such as SCM, have a positive impact in the higher education environment (Dugan & Komives, 2007; Wagner, Ostick, & Komives, 2011).

Table 1

Social Change Model Attributes

Individual Values	
Consciousness of Self	Being self-aware of the beliefs, values, attitudes, and emotions that motivate you to take action. Be mindful or aware of your current emotional state, behavior, and perceptual lenses.
Congruence	Acting in ways consistent with your values and beliefs. Thinking, feeling, and behaving with consistency, genuineness, authenticity, and honesty toward others.
Commitment	Having significant investment in an idea or person in terms of intensity and duration. Having the energy to serve the group and its goals. Can originate from within but others can create the environment that supports individual passions.
Group Values	
Collaboration	Working with others in a common effort, sharing responsibility, authority, and accountability. Multiplying group effectiveness by capitalizing on various perspectives and talents, and on the power of diversity to generate creative solutions and actions.
Common Purpose	Having shared aims and values. Involving others in building group's vision and purpose.
Controversy with Civility	Recognizing two fundamental realities of creative effort that differing viewpoints are inevitable, and that differences must be aired openly but with civility and respect.
Community Values	
Citizenship	Believing in a process where an individual and/or group become connected to the community/society through activity. Members of communities are interdependent, and individuals and groups have responsibility for the welfare of others.

Change—the ultimate goal of leadership is positive social change

Believing in the importance of making a better world and society. Individuals, groups, and communities work together to make change.

Note. Adapted from “Leadership for social change,” by H. S. Astin, 1996, *About Campus*, 1(3), pp.6-7; *A social change model of leadership, developmental guidebook* (Version 3), by Higher Education Research Institute, 1996, The National Clearinghouse of Leadership Programs (NCLP), p. 21; *Designing an instrument to measure the socially responsible leadership using the social change model of leadership development* (Doctoral dissertation), by T. Tyree, 1998, University of Maryland, College Park, MD, p. 176. Used with permission of NCLP.

Additional research and insights on the SCM have shown the utility of applying holistic individual development processes focused on fostering positive change in institutions or organizations from the perspectives of individual, group, and society, with a focus on actions related to each category (HERI, 1996). Gaps between theory and practice in individual development as well as inconsistency in application of programs have driven the idea of adopting a standard set of attributes for developing curricula and measuring outcomes (Dugan & Komives, 2007). The SCM provides a consistent model and the SRLS provides a standard measurement tool to fill this gap. Some key findings from studies on developing leadership capacity in college students based on SCM have included involving undergraduates in co-curricular activities or organizations, conducting purposeful developmental programs, mentoring, and focusing on all members rather than solely on positional leaders (Astin & Astin, 2000; Dugan & Komives, 2007).

Subsequently, texts and guidebooks for SCM-based development programs that also incorporate the use of the learning cycle and learning styles outlined by Kolb (1984) that are specifically focused on undergraduate collegiate students have been developed and implemented on campuses throughout the United States (Wagner, Ostick, & Komives, 2011).

Summary

The campus environment provides both challenges and opportunities to students and host institutions. Astin (1993) posited that co-curricular activities represented a means for undergraduate collegiate students to experience holistic development in this environment. Learning theories and models have supported this position and provided tools for consistent measurement. Co-curricular activities such as GLOs provide statements of ideals, leadership structures, and universal member-development programs. However, previous researchers have determined that despite the presence of necessary conditions, GLOs provide no significant positive impact on developing sustained socially responsible leadership. This case study was developed from previous researchers' recommendations to determine whether the findings would be consistent within one specific GLO—SAE, for this study—based on the perceptions of members who were recent college graduates and who are now alumni.

SAE Background

History and Structure

Sigma Alpha Epsilon (SAE) was founded in 1856 at the University of Alabama (Levere, 1924). Similar to other social debating and literary societies on campuses in this period in the United States SAE began as a small group of friends from common backgrounds and academic pursuits who adopted a set of governing rules for membership and ritual (Levere, 1924). Since its inception SAE has expanded and maintained a continuous presence on campuses in 46 of 50 states, as well as a small presence in Canada (SAE, 2017). Approximately 230 chapters exist consisting of those fully chartered and those in probation preparing for full chartering by the national organization

(SAE, 2017). Chapters vary in member size ranging from around 20 active members to over 200 in a few of the older, more established chapters (SAE, 2017).

SAE initiates members for life and currently comprises approximately 14,000 undergraduate members and over 190,000 living alumni (SAE, 2017). Chapter members elect a slate of officers from among undergraduate members to administer rules, procedures, and ritual at the local level. About 2,500 volunteers support and oversee undergraduate leaders at every level, from the local chapter through the national organization (SAE, 2017). The volunteer leadership structure includes approximately 100 nonmembers who often serve as chapter or faculty advisors selected from host institution faculty and staff (SAE, 2017). A small professional staff maintains the overall daily administration of SAE, which involves managing finances, legal counsel, member and alumni support, education, and communications (SAE, 2017). Field staff work directly in support of the regional and chapter leaders (SAE, 2017). Additionally, SAE has a supporting national housing corporation that assists in property development and management and a philanthropic foundation that raises and disburses funds as awards in excess of \$200,000 annually for scholarship and leader development activities (SAE, 2017).

Organizational Challenges

SAE leaders, at the national level, respond to actions of local chapters and members. SAE has been mentioned negatively in national publications—for example, “Confessions of an Ivy League Frat Boy” in *Rolling Stone* (Reitman, 2012). SAE was called America’s “deadliest” fraternity (Hechinger & Glovin, 2013, 6). In 2015, some members in a local chapter engaged in a racist chant on a bus going to a social event.

Someone captured the chant on video and posted it to social media, viewable to an international audience (Kingkade, 2015). The episode resulted in suspension of the entire chapter, expulsion of two students from their host institution, and a significant internal review of the entire national organization (CBS, 2015; SAE, 2016c).

An additional important challenge for SAE has been the liability incurred by a chapter from individual members' behaviors. Insurance requirements and their associated rates are assigned to each chapter at a baseline rate per individual member; with additional percentage surcharges or reductions based on chapter and member behaviors (SAE, 2017). For example, chapters facing liability claims are assessed higher fees than are chapters without claims. Similarly, an alcohol-free house pays lower fees than one that permits alcohol (SAE, 2016b). Member attendance at national leader development events, as well as the presence of a trained alumni chapter advisor, can also reduce liability insurance rates (SAE, 2016b). Sustained elevated insurance rates threaten a chapter's ability to remain operational.

SAE adopted policies and programs intended to help local SAE leaders take action to counter challenges. In 2014, SAE national leaders instituted a ban on pledging; pledges are a subordinate class of probationary members, who "pledge" for an extended period prior to full initiation (SAE, 2014). In place of probationary membership, SAE instituted a 96-hour bid-to-initiation rule for new members. The purposes of the change, unique within the GLO world, were (a) to recruit new members who best exemplified organizational ideals, (b) to enforce an institutional no-hazing policy in contrast to the activities in probationary membership periods at other GLOs, and (c) to accept new members immediately into full membership (SAE, 2014). These actions have encouraged

positive behaviors and personal responsibility, exemplified through positive leadership (SAE, 2014).

Strategic Plan 2016–2018

In September 2015 SAE began a comprehensive strategic plan review and update, resulting in an approved document for execution in April 2016 (SAE, 2016a). The planning committee included members from alumni volunteers, undergraduates, and professional staff (SAE, 2016a). The published plan included revised mission and vision statements, as well as updated values built on the existing fraternity ritual and the True Gentlemen creed (SAE, 2016a). The approved, published mission, vision, and values statements are:

- **Mission.** Advancing the highest standards of friendship, scholarship, leadership, and service for our members throughout life.
- **Vision.** True Gentlemen making our global community better.
- **Values:** Trust, integrity, loyalty, honor, inclusivity (SAE, 2016a, p.2).

The plan contains four major goals, each of which has a number of supporting objectives and strategic initiatives:

1. Engage and retain alumni throughout life;
2. Increase relevance and reputation by better connecting members to the mission;
3. Live the True Gentleman creed to provide a safe experience for members and guests; and
4. Prioritize fraternity resources to implement the strategic initiatives (SAE, 2016a, p.3).

Embedded in Goal 2, and directly related to this study, is the objective to “introduce and invigorate mission-focused programming” to support member development during college and throughout alumni life (SAE, 2016a, p.4). The two supporting strategic initiatives to this objective are (a) to assess member and alumni education and training needs, and (b) to develop and implement a program based on the needs assessment and review of current programming. Although not chartered by SAE, this case study and its results may provide additional data for SAE leaders to use in both the assessment and development initiatives in the strategic plan.

Individual Development

SAE has used a new-member education program since inception, focused on history, traditions, and governance, with a focus on its True Gentleman creed, authored by Wayland (Appendix A; SAE, 2012). Although published at the national level, the program is administered at the local level and has often included unique chapter-level events and traditions.

True Gentleman Initiative. In 2011, SAE established a comprehensive personal development plan, the True Gentleman Initiative (TGI) to standardize education and complement leader development programs (SAE, 2011). The TGI’s stated goal was to align member actions with national organization ideals and expectations as a principal means to promote personal responsibility, and by extension, to reduce or eliminate members’ substandard or risky behaviors (SAE, 2011). TGI has included numerous modules and subprograms largely focused on managing risk, clarifying bystander intervention, and countering risky behaviors, in addition to teaching SAE history, traditions, and ritual (SAE, 2011; SAE, 2012). In addition, TGI provided a transcript used

to assess individual progress for both members and chapter leaders to measure behaviors, and take proactive measures for those who might lag (SAE, 2011). This program includes learning tracks for volunteer leaders at the chapter level, such as the chapter advisor, to educate and inform them on the national organization's expectations of individual undergraduate members. TGI modules are available online, largely self-administered.

True Gentleman Experience. To reinforce the intent of the TGI and to maintain consistency with its founding principles and history, SAE instituted a new program termed the *True Gentleman Experience* (TGE; SAE, 2015a). TGE has reinforced the earlier TGI through an enhanced education program that included specific guidelines for accomplishment based on each undergraduate year (SAE, 2015a). For example, a new member would focus on history, traditions, ritual, and policies as the core requirements of TGE in his first year. A rising senior year undergraduate member would focus on preparing to graduate tasks such as networking, financial planning, and interview techniques in addition to fraternity-specific subjects like reflections on membership or new member mentoring. TGE was designed to extend beyond graduation into members' alumni and postgraduate years. Online modules support and enhance TGE, reinforced by development programs at local, regional, and national levels. SAE volunteer leaders and professional staff revised most of the formal education and leader development programs discussed earlier to conform to TGE principles and constructs with the intent to place most of the risk management topics into the period between membership bid and initiation; some portions, most notably in the alumni modules, remain in revision as of this study (SAE 2015a, SAE 2017). As part of TGE, local chapters may develop and use additional modules designed with flexibility for development and execution and may

include outside agencies, host institutions, and others (SAE, 2015a). Chapter recruitment numbers, grade point averages, philanthropic contributions, and service hours have all improved since TGE began execution (SAE, 2017).

Leader Development

SAE has several levels of leader development programs available for individual members as well as for members in formal leadership positions. A national-level leadership school has provided basic leader-development programs for undergraduate members since the mid-1930s to the present, with almost 700 graduates in 2017 (SAE, 2017). Building on this model, regional programs began in the 1980s to expand opportunities for individual leader development to more members. More specialized leader-education programs began in the mid-2000s for chapter president training and understanding the use of ritual. A recent addition has focused on a top-tier of 25 undergraduates in their last two years before graduation who demonstrated potential to serve as young alumni leaders after graduation (SAE, 2016a).

Leadership Literature

Personal socially responsible leadership, as an individual characteristic, is influenced by a person's upbringing and the environmental factors encountered throughout life. As previously described, for an undergraduate college student, these factors include academic and social pressures, as well as the impact of personal relationships and co-curricular activities. This study focused on determining whether SAE membership as a co-curricular activity affected the development of long-term social responsibility.

An undergraduate member enters SAE with certain personality and character traits that could be affected by the organization at every level of leadership: individual through national. What SAE provides in terms of formal and informal development through established programs, norms of behavior, and experiences is a natural result of the membership experience and the influence of other people. In addition to the characteristics of how people learn within their environments, it is also important to examine the leadership attributes of members in the organization and the theories on which they are built.

Leadership Constructs

Transactional and transformational leadership have been extensively researched and published as a means to evaluate leadership styles (Aarons, 2006; Bass, 1991; Bass & Riggio, 2006; Carlson & Perrewe, 1995; Judge & Piccolo, 2004; Weber, 1947). For this project, the researcher reviewed and used the basic constructs of transactional and transformational leadership to analyze data. Additionally, a comparison model of organizational leadership discovered during the research was incorporated into the study to analyze data and potentially develop themes and recommendations. Finally, the application of the social change model (Astin, 1996; HERI, 1996) described earlier in this chapter provided a useful construct to analyze the impact of leadership.

Transactional Leadership

Transactional leadership focuses on the managerial supervision of tasks rather than on the larger concept of a shared vision (Bass, 1991). Transactional leadership motivates individuals through reward and punishment based on attainment of goals, or lack thereof (Bass 1991; Weber, 1947). Transactional leaders thrive in more traditional

hierarchical organizations that employ a prescriptive set of methods and procedures within a culture oriented on short-term task accomplishment in which others (employees, members, followers) are led, but not viewed as active leaders (Judge & Piccolo, 2004).

Transformational Leadership

In contrast to transactional leaders, transformational leaders inspire and motivate followers (Bass, 1991; Bass & Riggio, 2006). Rather than focusing on rewarding task accomplishment as the goal, transformational leaders orient on larger aspirational goals (Aarons, 2007); these goals contain embedded supporting tasks. Further, transformational leaders use vision as an appeal to followers to motivate them to strive for substantive meaning in membership and action, accomplished through teaching, coaching, and mentoring without losing sight of individual transactional needs and obligations (Bass, 1991; Carlson & Perrewe, 1995).

Comparative Model

In March 2017, while conducting this study, the researcher co-facilitated a seminar entitled “The Army Profession: Character, Competence, and Commitment.” In this seminar, the Director of the U.S. Army Center for the Army Profession and Ethics conducted a presentation on character and showed a practical model of organizational leadership, that he described as ethics-based leadership, recreated in Figure 3 (U.S. Army, 2017). In discussions during the seminar and in later reflection, the researcher determined that this model could also provide a means of describing the translation of transformational leadership principles into action, including additional measures through which to view the SAE member-development program and its outcomes on individual members.

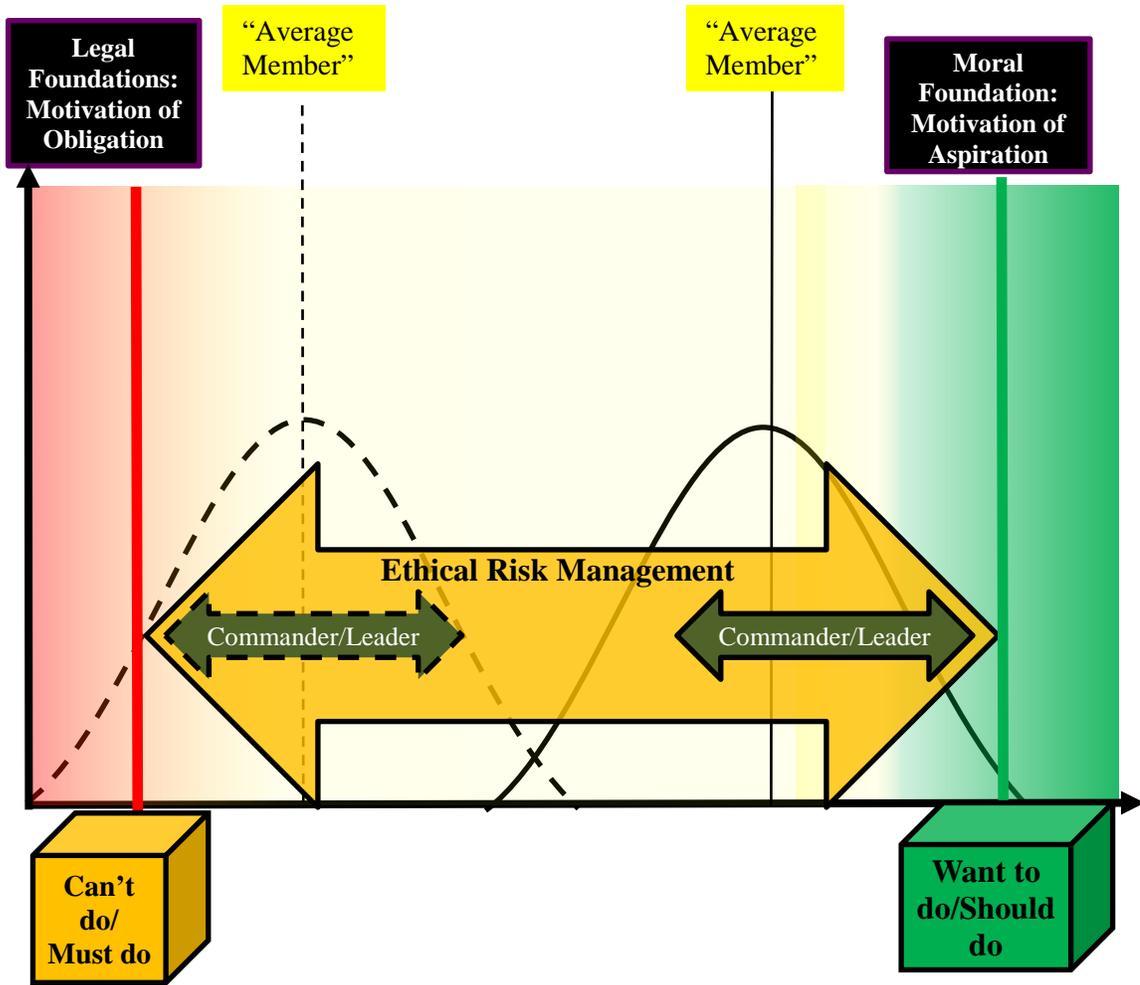


Figure 3. Model of ethical organizational leadership.

Note. Adapted from *The Army Profession: Character, Competence and Commitment* (Draft working presentation). United States Army Center for Army Profession and Ethics (CAPE), March, 2017. Used with permission of CAPE

The vertical axis on the chart represents the number of individual members in an organization, and the horizontal axis represents the application of organizational leadership on a continuum from basic obligational to highly aspirational. The two bell-shaped curves within the horizontal and vertical axes of the chart represent example organizations. Leaders in the dotted-line organization on the left describe mission

accomplishment in terms of legal or regulatory foundations. These permissive or restrictive foundations, described as “motivations of obligation,” represent what members *must do or cannot do*-the minimally accepted standard of behavior or performance. In contrast, on the right, the solid line shows an organization whose leaders describe mission accomplishment in terms of moral foundations. These leaders also provide permissive or restrictive foundations, but do so through “motivations of aspiration”: what members *want to do or should not do*-ideal behaviors or standards of performance. In both instances, when executing missions toward assigned objectives, leaders apply operational oversight to mitigate risk. Assuming that leaders follow professional ethics, this mitigation leads to effective mission accomplishment in either organization.

The difference between the two differently focused organizational models, however, appears in the leadership approach. Organizational managers can lead prescriptively through motivations of obligation or descriptively through motivations of aspiration (U.S. Army, 2017). As shown in the bell curves of each organizational model’s population set, leaders that employ a prescriptive obligation model of leadership will likely meet their basic obligations within acceptable risk. Individual members of the organization who fail to meet the minimum obligational standard, as depicted on the left side of the dotted bell-shaped curve, fail despite their leaders’ best efforts to mitigate risk. The members who fail may suffer consequences such as loss of membership in the group or even potentially punitive measures.

On the right side of the chart, the organization depicted in the solid-line bell curve, has leaders that follow a descriptive model of leadership through motivations of aspiration. In this organizational model, followers may exhibit some standards below the

median but not to the point of failure (U.S. Army, 2017). Some measure of additional education or training using aspirational motivations may be required to improve standards of performance, but the members and the organization do not fail. This model implies that leadership by aspiration may be more effective than leading by obligation.

Social Change Model

SCM (Astin, 1996) posited that every person within an organization exhibits some level of leadership through his or her actions toward an aspirational goal of positive social change. SCM aligns most directly with the tenets of transformational leadership and the concept of motivation by aspiration (Bass, 1991; U.S. Army, 2017). Individuals in an organization apply the attributes of SCM through their behaviors with others, and by extension, lead social change toward a greater good. According to previous researchers (Astin & Astin, 2000; Dugan & Komives, 2007), the SCM in action has great potential to develop individual leadership capacity in college students.

One example of the application of SCM in a collegiate organization occurred in two U.S. Army Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC) groups over an eight-year period from 2007 through 2015 (Estes, Miller, & Majure; 2016). Estes et al. (2016) evaluated the effectiveness of ROTC producing commissioned officers from undergraduate college students and used the Army Leader Development Program or ALDP (U.S. Army, 2013) and the social change model (Astin, 1996; HERI, 1996) as their measurement tools. ALDP comprised three domains: the institutional, the operational, and the self-development domains (U.S. Army, 2013). The institutional domain consisted of the education and experiences gained at a host institution college or university for the ROTC program. The operational domain included the training and experience gained through the

ROTC program itself. The self-development domain described experience, education, and training that an individual might gain through his or her own opportunities and study. Each domain contained formal and informal activities; individuals are guided and mentored throughout the experience (Estes et al., 2016; U.S. Army 2013).

Estes et al. (2016) concluded that ALDP provided the philosophical and practical underpinnings of producing effective Army officers by instilling the principles of commitment through the oath to the nation, the opportunities for collaboration with others, and exercising individual peer leadership of the organization toward achieving common objectives. SCM, as a recognized model within higher education, supported and reinforced the ALDP with its emphasis on commitment of an individual to positive social change, its reliance on the development of individual values, and the application of the collaborative peer leadership as a means to produce change (Estes et al., 2016). Estes et al. (2016) summarized the results of their study:

ROTC as a curriculum successfully emphasizes the need for the emerging leader to self-consciously commit to becoming a leader in programs with a significant social purpose; it understands the role that institutional values play in providing a sense of purpose for the emerging leader; and it socializes college students into a well-defined, socially-accepted subculture. (p. 16)

Leadership Program Structure

The SCM construct and the ROTC program examples demonstrated that individuals in organizations, regardless of whether they hold a formal leader position, can and should exercise the factors of leadership toward accomplishing common and positive goals. Placing this recommendation in the context of SAE and its existing development

program, relative to its established organizational goals, was the focus of this study.

Transactional and transformational leadership provided the construct lens for analyzing the data obtained in this study with the goal of providing useful feedback to SAE on the results and structure of its program.

Program structure design. Haslam, Reicher, and Platow (2011) outlined five essential criteria for a useful psychology of leadership.

- First, leaders' approach must be "non-individualistic," and is related to how leaders and followers in a group interact within the group, rather than focused on any single individual (Haslam et al., 2011, p. 17).
- Second, the psychology must be context-sensitive and flexible to meet the challenges of a specific environment (p. 18).
- Third, the psychology must be perspective-sensitive so leaders recognize that the opinions of those inside or outside a specific group may not always agree on leaders' aims (p. 18).
- Fourth, the psychology must have a transformation and inspirational characteristic that makes people want to be part of the group and excel (p. 20).
- Finally, the leadership psychology must be empirically proven as a valid method for the group to employ toward achieving the common goal (p. 21).

This psychology construct is a useful tool by which to evaluate any current or future model of instilling and developing personal social responsibility. At every level of SAE, leaders have opportunities to influence members by informal and formal programs and means. Considering the broader society from which members enter SAE, and

considering characteristics of SAE members themselves, individual members face many challenges.

Program design in practice. As described in the organizational background section, SAE has designed, implemented, and reinforced necessary programs to confront specific challenges. For example, sexual assault prevention, bystander intervention, and alcohol-abuse awareness programs have resulted from incidents in SAE and those observed in other GLOs (SAE, 2011; SAE, 2016). Programs to counter risky behaviors are extraordinarily important for individual member development and organizational resilience, but are focused directly on meeting immediate obligations that may be interpreted as a transactional approach. At a minimum, this approach has helped ensure the important requirements of focusing on SAE members' health and safety while reinforcing the viability of the organization and meeting the requirements of the chapter's host institution. However, a transactional approach may not satisfy holistic individual development to the point at which the members themselves grow as leaders, developing the personal social responsibility that would transfer with them into life after graduation.

A broader transformational approach to leadership that incorporates the programs to meet obligational needs may be useful in the context of studying how an organization like SAE might develop social responsibility and leadership in its members. Building on the idea that transactional leaders provide for basic needs, organization leaders who motivate followers by ideal provide an expanded concept of belonging and striving to work collaboratively toward common aims (Bass, 1991; Haslam et al. 2011; U.S. Army, 2017). Applying the transformational model, the leadership levels necessary to create change within SAE identified in Chapter 1 share the opportunity to develop and

implement complementary reinforcing programs with the potential to gain successful outcomes important to all stakeholders.

Summary

In the preceding sections, the researcher described several elements, including the impact of environment on individual development, a summary of how that development has occurred through individual learning, the environment prevalent on host institution campuses where students reside, and the challenges students face. This discussion was followed by support for the concept that in addition to the formal program of study at a host institution, co-curricular activities such as organizational membership help support individual development in students (Astin, 1993).

Personal development through organization programs, self-study, reflection, and application of leadership principles has enormous potential for instilling and exemplifying social responsibility in action. This review has shown that numerous organizational, academic, philosophical, and reflective sources reinforce the effects of environment on an individual's development through upbringing, education, experience, and motivation (Astin, 1993; Astin & Astin, 2000). Application of existing theoretical models provided a means for evaluating existing SAE developmental programs designed to foster personal social responsibility and leadership during members' undergraduate years.

Sigma Alpha Epsilon (SAE), a social fraternity whose members begin as undergraduate college students, was the organization used in this study. SAE has a long history with an established ritual, creed, and member-development program that has a universal (i.e., all-member) component and several additional leader-development

opportunities. SAE also has a published mission, vision, and values statement to provide overarching direction for its members throughout life, and a supporting strategic plan for execution.

The rationale for this study was based on the intent to compare the organizational ideals and programs with actual execution and results, and to provide recommendations on revisions and enhancements that may be revealed through analysis of data. Reinforced by previous quantitative studies (Hevel et al., 2015; Martin et al., 2012) concluding that GLOs members had not exhibited significant growth as undergraduates despite the resources applied to development programs, this case study was initiated to determine qualitatively whether the same results were true within SAE. Additionally, the opportunity to provide useful feedback to SAE regarding useful changes that might be made for the lifelong development of its members was a natural extension for this study. Three categories of questions were used to support the overarching research question and to gather data from the study sample: (a) questions about the alignment of the member-development program organizational ideals, (b) questions about the flexibility and adaptability to meet the needs of SAE members as college undergraduates and alumni, and (c) questions about the adequate structure, resources, tools, and leadership for effective execution.

The results of this evaluation also offered a basis for recommendations for future enhancements to existing programs and opportunities for further research. The significance of this topic resides in the focus on developing individual SAE members as leaders, an endeavor with potential positive effects on SAE members and leaders at every level, as well as for SAE host institutions and their leaders.

CHAPTER THREE: PROJECT METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study was to determine whether the existing Sigma Alpha Epsilon (SAE) member-development program enabled socially responsible leadership in undergraduate members and to explore how that development translated into sustained social responsibility for members after graduation. First, this chapter provides a restatement of the research question guiding the study. The research design and its appropriateness for providing insights into the problem and potential solutions are discussed. Using a qualitative case study approach, this study was executed principally through interviews with a sample selected from alumni members of Sigma Alpha Epsilon who graduated during academic years 2012–2016. Collection, coding, and analyzing data formed the centerpiece of the study. The researcher used supporting software for all aspects of the study. Ethical considerations and utility of the study are discussed. The chapter concludes with a restatement of the utility and potential impacts of the study for practitioners and future researchers.

Research Question

The overarching purpose of this case study was to determine whether the current SAE development program sustained socially responsible leadership in its members for the first five years after graduation. Additionally, recommendations emerged from the study for future enhancements of the existing program and for the development of entirely new programs, as a means to instill and reinforce socially responsible leadership in SAE members, to strengthen individual members and the organization, and to enhance their collective contribution to society. Based on these objectives, the following question guided the research:

Does the Sigma Alpha Epsilon undergraduate development program enable socially responsible leadership in its members that is sustained after graduation?

Research Design

Previous researchers of Greek-letter organizations similar to Sigma Alpha Epsilon found that socially responsible leadership traits increased during the first year of membership but did not increase by any significant amount after four years of membership (Hevel et al., 2014; Martin et al., 2012). In recommendations for further research, the authors proposed that future researchers pursue a qualitative approach to examine the results subjectively. Accordingly, the researcher used a qualitative case study approach, building on those recommendations. Based on insights from Creswell (2013) and Roberts (2010), the researcher determined the case study approach was most appropriate for answering the research question.

Creswell (2013) stated that the case study approach is useful to explore phenomena in a real-life, bounded system (p. 97). The bounded system in this study was SAE and its current member-development program, which further categorized this as an instrumental case study (Creswell, 2013). An instrumental case study employs in-depth review of the context of a particular subject as well as the phenomenon within the context itself using multiple data sources such as organizational history, relevant documents, interviews and participant observations (Baker & Jack, 2008; Creswell, 2013; Stake, 1995; Yin, 2003). This instrumental case study was further delineated as a single case study with multiple inputs focused on the SAE member development program in relation to socially responsible leadership (Stake, 1995), with the multiple inputs provided through research and the use of SAE member interviews.

This case study used SAE organizational documents and focused interviews with a sample of 12 members of SAE to gain insights and perceptions of the current member-development program. Each person in the study sample had graduated within the previous five years (2012–2016), and together, the population was representative of chapters from throughout the United States. The phenomenon in question was the capacity of the existing SAE individual member-development program to enable socially responsible leadership. The interviews consisted of questions on the extent of the participants' formal and informal member and leader-development program experiences as undergraduates in SAE, their understanding of the existing SAE vision and mission, the construct and application of the tenets of socially responsible leadership, and their perceptions on the effectiveness of the SAE program at instilling social responsibility and leadership. Leading questions were used as a means to gain additional insights into the resilience of participants' socially responsible leadership based on their experiences after graduation. In addition, demographic information was collected to validate efforts made to provide a diverse sample of SAE members.

Data Collection

Data collection for this study on the perceptions and experience of the SAE member-development programs was accomplished by conducting individual interviews with participants. Interviews were conducted from February 7, 2017 to March 1, 2017. All the interviews were conducted by telephone and followed the interview protocol found in Appendix B. Each interview ranged from 25 minutes to 40 minutes in length. Responses for each participant were digitally recorded and later manually transcribed into individual documents. Each participant was assigned an initial code during sample

recruitment for purposes of anonymity by SAE geographic region such as “DeVotie1.” Once the sample population was determined, a letter code was used to maintain anonymity on transcribed interview documents, for example, “Subject A.” This coding system appears in all later discussions in this dissertation.

The researcher made follow-up contacts with participants to clarify responses and to ensure the transcriptions accurately captured the intentions of the participants. This use of follow-up member checks became important as themes emerged from similar responses. In addition, the member checks helped to bracket the researcher’s own experience within the organization in order to mitigate potential bias and improve objectivity. Each transcription was entered into NVivo 11 (2016) software using the coding labels for anonymity.

Participants and Recruitment

At the time of this study, SAE consisted of approximately 14,000 undergraduates and over 190,000 living alumni, representing about 230 chapters in 46 of the 50 U.S. states and one chapter in Canada (SAE, 2017). Based on the large population of potential participants and the proposed use of individual interviews as the principal research method, it was necessary in this study to narrow the number of participants to a smaller representative sample.

To recruit and obtain the sample group, the researcher used a purposeful sample method (Creswell, 2013) from a pool of SAE members who were applicants to the Inner Circle. The Inner Circle was renamed in 2016 as the Levere Leadership Institute (LLI), one of the existing formal leader-development opportunities in the overall SAE development program. The Inner Circle/LLI was conceived in 2005 as an opportunity for

25 to 30 highly motivated members, selected annually, to extend their undergraduate SAE experiences into their alumni years as volunteers (SAE, 2017). Application and selection to the Inner Circle/LLI was open to all members, not just those in leadership positions. Selection criteria for attendance to Inner Circle/LLI were based on multiple factors, including academic achievement, broader campus involvement, service, philanthropy, and recommendations from host institution faculty and staff.

Approximately 250 members have attended from the inception of the Inner Circle/LLI through academic year 2015–2016. Recruiting those applicants who graduated in academic years 2012 through 2016 yielded a pool of approximately 120 members from which to obtain a representative sample.

The researcher received access to prospective participants' contact information. A recruitment statement (Appendix C) was transmitted by e-mail on January 13, 2017, to the total population of 120 SAE members who had attended Inner Circle/LLI and had graduated between 2012 and 2016. In the recruitment statement, the researcher explained the purpose of the study and the rationale for the interview sample:

I am studying the relationship between the experiences you had as an SAE in individual development as an undergraduate, your perception of their effect on enabling socially responsible leadership; and your experiences since your graduation. I am interviewing only SAE members in this study who are recent graduates (2012–2016) who applied for selection to the Inner Circle program, as you represent a discrete subset of our alumni base with recent experience.

Table 2 shows the data for the overall potential population and response return rate. Of the 36 responses received, three potential participants declined participation.

Additionally, four participants were currently serving as professional SAE staff or had recently departed as staff and thus were eliminated to preclude potential bias in the data.

Table 2

Recruitment Data

	Data
Population Potential	120
Responses Received	36
Response Rate	30.0%

The remaining 29 participants were screened to determine basic demographic data, specifically to ensure representation of each geographic region and graduation year. SAE at the time of this study was divided into eight geographic regions named for the original founders of the fraternity (SAE, 2017). Based on the screening process, a minimum of two participants remained for each region and each graduation year. The researcher then divided the participants into regions with names and coded identifying data using only region name and numbers (e.g., DeVotie 1 or Foster 2). Using a blind draw method, the first eight participants were selected. The remaining 21 participants were then combined into a selection pool, and four were chosen at random. The process yielded a final sample of 12, representing 10% of the original potential pool of 120 (Table 2). Tables 3 through 5 show the final sample characteristics by geographic region, graduation year, and type of undergraduate institution.

The data collection plan for this study originally proposed a sample of 12 to 15 participants. Based on the responses to the recruitment message, the diversity provided by region, graduation year, and the type of institution attended, the researcher determined

that 12 principal participants would provide sufficient data saturation for this study. This determination could have been modified during data collection as needed by inviting more participants up to the limit of 15 approved by the IRB. Seventeen alternate participants met the criteria for participation in the study. A subsequent message to each principal and alternate participant was transmitted on January 29, 2017.

Table 3

Number of Participants by Region

Region	Number of Participants
Cockrell	3
Cook	2
Dennis	1
DeVotie	1
Foster	2
Kerr	1
Patton	1
Rudolph	1
	12

Table 4

Number of Participants by Graduation Year

Graduation Year	Number of Participants
2012	2
2013	1
2014	3
2015	2
2016	4
	12

Table 5

Number of Participants by Undergraduate Institution Type

Undergraduate Institution Type	Number of Participants
Public university	6
Private university	4
Private college	2
	12

Data Collection Tools and Procedures

SAE history, organization, existing policies and programs, and individual interviews were the principal sources of the data. Participants were selected through a purposeful sample method (Creswell, 2013) composed of SAE members. The researcher accomplished recruitment using an e-mail notification to members who had applied for the Inner Circle and who had graduated in academic years 2012–2016. Interviews were

conducted individually by telephone. Each interview was projected to last 30 to 60 minutes but no artificial time limits were set. No interview exceeded 40 minutes. The researcher collected data from interviews using interview notes and digital recordings.

In this study, the researcher served as the primary instrument for collecting the data from interview participants. Because the researcher was a member of SAE and a senior executive in the organization, the potential for bias and skewing the data was high. The researcher controlled for this bias by using sustained self-awareness as well as by acknowledging the researcher's potential bias with each participant in the study sample prior to conducting the interviews. Careful consideration was taken during each interview to ensure the sessions were collaborative, rather than directive, to mitigate the potentially negative effects of a power dynamic (Creswell, 2013, p. 173).

The interview sessions were bounded but unstructured (Gerring 2012; Josselson, 2013). Bounding came from the central focus provided by the research question; however, the interviews were unstructured in the sense that they became more of a conversation than a set piece question-and-answer session. To motivate deep conversation, Josselson (2013) posited that interview questions for qualitative studies should be organized into the "big Q," or central research question, and the "little q," the initial framing question that begins the interview (Appendix B). The framing question used for this study was "Why did you choose to be part of a fraternity as an undergraduate, and why SAE?" This question was meant to frame the study by building the beginnings of the motivations and background of the individual and to clarify the input factors of individual experience. This opening was also used to focus participants' thoughts on the relationship between expectation, satisfaction, and the effects on their

lives after graduation. The second framing point was “How would you describe socially responsible leadership and social change?” Subsequent questions were based on participants’ answers to initial questions; themes emerged after multiple interviews.

The collaborative interview approach and open-ended conversational questioning resulted in development of the codes and themes presented in Chapter 4. Control of data, coding, and themes was supported by use of the qualitative research software program NVivo (2016).

Data verification followed a substantive validation model (Creswell, 2013) using several means. Because of the in-depth knowledge and experience of the researcher with SAE, and having already acknowledged the potential for bias, the study was built on a strong foundation of organizational understanding, which produced extensive information on the existing SAE development program. The program itself, however, was only relevant with regard to its impact on enabling socially responsible leadership. Thus, to confirm or disconfirm the findings, this approach required triangulating the data with existing SAE programs and observations reported in previous studies on personal development, as reviewed in Chapter 2.

Additional substantive validation of the data came from the use of member checks and rich, thick descriptions (Creswell, 2013). To ensure that the results were portrayed accurately, member checks were used with nine of the 12 participants to validate the researcher’s understanding as data were analyzed and collated into themes. Sending themes and observations back to individuals in the sample throughout the study and refining the results based on their inputs resulted in refinement of the understating of the data and proved useful in analysis and development of themes. Generating rich, thick

descriptions in this case study involved the development of participant responses and perceptions of the member-development program into convergent themes (Creswell, 2013; Stake, 1995; Yin, 2003). Descriptions were used to clarify the impacts of the existing program on enabling socially responsible leadership, generated recommendations for enhancements, and offered insights for assessment of potential generalization and transferability of recommendations to GLO leaders at similar organizations.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations regarding studying human subjects were a key consideration in the study. The researcher used the Institution Review Board (IRB) process guidelines provided through Creighton University (2016) as the standard for preparing, recruiting, corresponding, coding, and presenting the study. This study conformed to the requirements in Section 2.7 of the IRB instructions for an expedited review (Creighton University, 2016). After the initial review, Creighton IRB officials determined the study was eligible for an exempt review and subsequently granted approval on January 10, 2017.

Legal considerations may have surfaced, especially regarding personal and organization liability questions emerging during data collection; however, none manifested during the course of the study. The researcher controlled this potential problem during data collection by coding participants' names and chapters to maintain anonymity. Maintaining confidentiality of the sample participants and their data was accomplished through disassociation of responses from specific identifiers as well as by

using passwords on electronic and information technology platforms. Using telephone and e-mail for both recruitment and data collection mitigated financial and budget issues.

Computer files consisting of participants' anonymous identities, interviews, and notes were backed up daily on an external drive. The data remained in the researcher's possession throughout the study preparation, defense, and publication and will remain in the researcher's possession as required for a minimum of three years after publication. As the author of a dissertation in practice, the researcher will also report results back to SAE, including recommendations for enhancing its program. Subject anonymity will be respected throughout this process.

Additionally, an important ethical consideration was maintaining perspective on the generalization and transference of the results of this study. Although this study followed previous quantitative researchers' recommendation for further qualitative review regarding why no significant increase in undergraduate GLO member socially responsible leadership was seen after four years (Hevel et al., 2014; Martin et al., 2012), the sample in this study was not the same as the samples used in previous studies. The researcher placed no additional controls on the input factors participants brought to their SAE membership (e.g., academic achievement, family upbringing, faith base) but focused instead on the membership experience itself as an environmental factor, with socially responsible leadership as the output.

Data Analysis Plan

In this qualitative case study, data derived from organizational research, individual interviews and member checks yielded many subjective points for analysis. Capturing the results of each interview through notes and digital recording, and using a

standard protocol template enabled the researcher to match responses to questions in this bounded, unstructured approach. Additionally, the input of data collected from SAE programs as well as the use of academic and leadership literature provided context to the data collected through interviews. Development of themes based on this data convergence provided a deeper and more comprehensive understanding of the individual development program, and more important, showed its impact on instilling and sustaining socially responsible leadership. The use of a narrative, conversational interview style facilitated the collation of data into themes for richer analysis and reporting of this case study.

The goal of this narrative style questioning approach was to allow participants to build their stories, initially using the question categories as basic elements, but gradually encouraging them through open-ended probing questions to share anecdotes to synthesize key points, or “clusters of meaning” (Creswell, 2013; Schostak, 2006).

Using broad, open-ended questions generated large amounts of data, even with a relatively small sample of 12 participants. NVivo (2016) aided in efficiently capturing and encoding data by person within each broad category. Throughout the analysis and synthesis process, NVivo (2016) also enabled the researcher to identify common ideas between participants, even as the transcribed notes of the narrative conversation from the interviews naturally flowed or shifted between categories. The software also aided the researcher to identify themes and develop conclusions, reinforced by the participants’ personal experiences and anecdotes, and provided a means for deeper holistic analysis of the topic.

Timeline for the Study

The timeline proposed for this study was aggressive but feasible within the scope of the research. The process began with initiation of the research proposal in September 2016 with approval in December 2016.

Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval from Creighton University (2016) was obtained on January 10, 2017. On receipt of IRB approval, recruitment began with the goal of identifying the final sample population and beginning interviews by early February 2016. The recruiting e-mail (Appendix C) was transmitted on January 13, 2017, with a request to respond within five days. Screening of participants for their willingness participation required three additional days, and a final list of 12 participants was prepared immediately thereafter. Pilot test interviews with 3 SAE members were conducted during this period, as well as interviews with a few key SAE staff members who fit the demographic profile of potential participants, but were purposely excluded from the study because of their employment by SAE. Concurrently, the researcher continued to review relevant academic and professional literature on personal social responsibility, personal developmental philosophy and psychology, higher education and student co-curricular activities, prevalent society behavioral statistics, and SAE programs, policies, and procedures.

As interviews began in February 2017, data were collected, recorded, and collated; evolving themes emerged as interviews occurred. The researcher used the remainder of February through April 2017 to develop detailed themes for member checking and initial data analysis. In the proposed plan, the researcher anticipated that the interview results may require conduct additional literature research during the analysis

phase planned for March through May 2017. That likelihood became reality as the researcher conducted additional research coordinated with the dissertation Chair and Committee. Continued draft preparation of the dissertation reflected this dynamic research, with recurring submissions to the Chair and Committee for review and revision. A majority of the writing for drafts of Chapters 4 and 5 occurred from May through August 2017, along with a rewrite of Chapters 1 and 2 based on actual execution. Final draft submission had originally been planned for the end of July 2017, with defense in August 2017, but this was deferred slightly based on the researcher's personal and professional considerations. Additionally, because this dissertation in practice was conducted in the researcher's organization, it was important to present results to the organization informally for their awareness.

Summary

This qualitative case study was designed to provide an analysis of the effectiveness of the current SAE individual development program and provide recommendations for enhancement in order to instill and reinforce socially responsible behavior and leadership in its members. Using organizational documents and interviews with recent graduates as a means to gather their previous experiences and perceptions as undergraduates, the study was designed for potential use to improve the overall organization for future members and provide the opportunity for the participants to reflect on their experiences. Each step of the study was critical for building the next. The researcher made time for in-stride reflection to ensure that academic rigor was maintained while fulfilling the purpose of the study. Ultimately, the researcher hoped the study

would build a broader body of knowledge for use by SAE and its members, with potential generalization and transference across organization lines to similar groups.

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to determine whether the Sigma Alpha Epsilon member-development program enabled socially responsible leadership in undergraduate members and to explore how that development translated into sustained action for members after graduation. Results of the study form the basis for recommending future enhancements to the existing program or entirely new programs as a means to instill and reinforce socially responsible leadership in its members, to strengthen individual members and the organization, and to enhance their collective contribution to society. Based on these objectives, the following question guided the research:

Does the Sigma Alpha Epsilon undergraduate development program enable socially responsible leadership in its members that is sustained after graduation?

This chapter outlines the findings obtained from the research. The study was motivated by results from two foundational quantitative studies (Hevel et al., 2014; Martin et al., 2012) that showed no substantive increase in socially responsible leadership among members of Greek-letter organizations (GLO) after four years of undergraduate membership, as well as an additional study on the effects of fraternity and sorority membership (Barnhardt, 2014). Among their conclusions, Hevel, et al (2014) recommended a qualitative study to clarify the GLO membership experience itself and its impact on personal development. With this study, the researcher acted on the recommendation for a deeper review, using Sigma Alpha Epsilon as a subset of the overall GLO community.

The study used a qualitative instrumental case study research approach, executed through interviews with 12 participants selected from alumni members of Sigma Alpha Epsilon who graduated during academic years 2012–2016. During in-depth interviews, the participants discussed several aspects of their undergraduate experience, including their decisions to join a fraternity, and SAE in particular; their understanding of the organization's mission, vision, and values; and their perceptions of the tenets of socially responsible leadership. Building on this foundation, the interview questions focused on participants' perceptions of the effects of SAE member-development programs on instilling and reinforcing socially responsible leadership. The researcher asked for anecdotal examples of their experience as undergraduates and sought to clarify how that experience translated into their lives as alumni. The interviews then focused on the participants' subjective assessments of the member-development program as it was presented during their undergraduate period, and its relationship to post-baccalaureate experience. Finally, participants were asked for recommendations for program improvement.

The interview protocol (Appendix B) facilitated the collection of participants' experiences and overall perceptions of both socially responsible leadership and the SAE member-development program. Research findings presented in this chapter are based on the results of each interview transcription, organized into overarching themes. Each theme is supported by specific responses to questions where appropriate. The chapter concludes with an analysis of the findings to introduce recommendations for sustainment or improvement, further discussed in Chapter 5.

Presentation of the Findings

Data Collection

The researcher used a qualitative case study approach to gather data through organizational research and individual interviews, with a sample consisting of 12 individuals as outlined in Chapter 3. The interviews consisted of digitally recorded telephone conversations. The researcher transcribed the recordings and entered the data into the qualitative data analysis software NVivo 11 (2016) for coding and development of themes. The themes provided the basis for synthesis and analysis of findings.

Data Analysis

An instrumental case study is an exploration of a particular phenomenon within a bounded structure (Baker & Jack, 2008; Creswell, 2013; Stake, 1995; Yin, 2003). In this study, the bounded structure was SAE membership and the phenomenon the member-development program. The data analysis in this case study followed systematic procedures, moving from understanding the context of the environment surrounding the case to discrete statements made in individual interviews on the broader experiences and perceptions within the case itself (Baker & Jack, 2008). The holistic analysis (Creswell, 2013, p. 100) distilled data within the context of the case into converging themes. The researcher then analyzed what the themes meant, assessed how they were important to the shared experience of the group, and discerned what could be learned from the case in question for individual and organizational growth (Creswell, 2013).

As described in Chapter 3, the researcher used a recommended general outline of case study inquiry recommended for data collection and analysis (Creswell, 2013; Stake, 1995; Yin, 2003). NVivo 11 (2016) software was used to archive the data collected

through interviews. First, the researcher transcribed each interview from digital recordings into a word processing document and assigned letter codes to participants for anonymity. NVivo 11 (2016) provided the means to segregate records into individual documents and to analyze, by comparative means, each record against keywords derived from organizational document research. This step was critical to understanding how each individual experienced the phenomenon within the case and revealed common intersections among the participant experiences (Creswell, 2013), known as nodes in NVivo 11 (2016).

The intersecting points became the starting points for placing responses into groups for the development of patterns and themes. NVivo 11 (2016) enabled the process through its analytical capacity to determine the percentage of similar responses among all participants. This was used to collate responses into summary phrases of the responses to each question (Roberts, 2010) and to show what participants perceived as the most important aspects of the SAE member-development experience, socially responsible leadership, and the translation of both into their alumni lives.

When analyzed more deeply, the summary phrase responses to questions, identified as “clusters of meaning” by Creswell (2013, p. 82), began to clarify overall themes for synthesis of the phenomenon itself. Tables 6 through 11 show the frequencies of the summary phrases for each interview question. After each table, the researcher discusses the “why,” based on participants’ anecdotal examples.

Why Sigma Alpha Epsilon? The responses to the first interview question, “What drew you to SAE over another fraternity?” are found in Table 6.

Table 6

Why Sigma Alpha Epsilon?

Interview Question	Summary Phrase	Frequency
What drew you to SAE over another fraternity?	Reference to the True Gentlemen as a code or creed	10
	The men I met exemplified my values and aspirations	8
	Make the most of my college experience	6
	Opportunities in the chapter, on campus, and networking	5

Five of the 12 participants reported interest in fraternities prior to their entry into campus life. Two participants began the membership recruitment process with a different group; one participant had pledged elsewhere and then dropped out of that program. Despite relative lack of interest in Greek-letter organizations prior to school, SAE drew them in for two major reasons. For one participant, the choice between other groups and SAE was clear:

“I narrowed down to one other and SAE because of their values basis . . . but SAE won out because of the True Gentleman creed . . . I’ve always found creeds to be very useful and important to organizations as focal points and what they’re about” (Subject K).

Most participants reported that the SAE creed, the True Gentleman, served as both an overt declaration of the qualities of SAE men and the values of the participants themselves. Subject D stated, “SAE was up front about it—these are our values, and this is how we try and live up to them. This is what we care about, and this what we do.”

The other primary factor that drew the study participants to SAE over other organizations was the example set by men in the chapter. For at least three participants, the manner in which they were greeted during recruitment visits to the chapter house significantly influenced their decisions. Subject F, in particular, found the experience so singular that he made his decision to pursue membership after one visit, stating in his interview, “My attraction to SAE at my school was the attraction and relationship to the active members at the chapter, how they treated me and respected me.”

Several participants indicated that SAE men stood out from others throughout various campus organizations by their presence, behavior, and treatment of others. Participants indicated surprise at the many places SAE members appeared in leadership roles throughout campus. Additionally, participants were drawn by the immediate opportunities SAE might provide in terms of finding a near-peer mentor or guide early in their undergraduate years to help them navigate their campus lives.

SAE in Theory; Mission, Vision, Values. No individual participant could restate verbatim the current SAE mission, vision, or values statement. However, all 12 stated in their own words that the tenets of the True Gentleman creed and the term *brotherhood* captured the nature of SAE, as shown in Table 7.

Table 7

SAE in Theory; Mission, Vision, Values

Interview Question	Summary Phrase	Frequency
Your understanding of SAE mission, vision, and values?	True Gentleman says it all	12
	Brotherhood	10
	Building the next generation of leaders	7
	A group of diverse men working toward something bigger than themselves	4

Although these ideas were consistent throughout each participant’s interview, when followed up in a subsequent session, Subject J provided a more expansive explanation of his perspective on mission, vision, and values:

The aim is to create a group of men who learn and act through the core values that SAE holds and build that experience through their time in college. Show and do that—teach and learn together. The values like, what’s in the True Gentleman, integrity, and doing the right thing. From a purpose standpoint, I feel that’s what you’re taught and challenged to do. SAE challenges you in many different ways, and the guys challenge each other as well (Subject J).

Several noted there were some SAE members who did not necessarily agree with the bigger concepts of creed and brotherhood as part of a personal standard or organizational aspiration. Subject E noted that far too many undergraduates viewed their fraternity life exclusively in the context of their undergraduate social experience and lost sight of both the personal development picture and the concept that membership was a lifelong opportunity. Other participants noted that too many members became

complacent and content with the status quo or struggled with how to make the fraternity something bigger than what it currently was in their chapter and thus turn it into a vehicle for change (Subject F; Subject K). The subject of diversity was raised by 4 participants as an important factor in their SAE experience. Two specifically (Subject B; Subject J) opined that SAE should do more to encourage diversity through recruitment.

SAE in Practice; Theory into Action. A significant number of participants regarded their membership as valuable both to their undergraduate experience and as bridge into their post-graduate life as shown in Table 8.

Table 8

SAE in Practice; Theory into Action

Interview Question	Summary Phrase	Frequency
How did SAE contribute to your undergraduate experience?	Being part of something larger than yourself	11
	Provided me leadership opportunities	10
	It was the centerpiece of my college years	8
	Opened up opportunities on campus and networking	7

None of the participants could separate his SAE experience from the undergraduate experience. Eight of the 12 participants used some variation of the phrase “centerpiece of my college years.” Additionally, participants said SAE provided opportunities they may not have found elsewhere. Two participants turned undergraduate internships gained from SAE alumni into full-time employment on graduation (Subject A and Subject D). New opportunities and networking tied directly into leadership

opportunities, both within SAE and in various organizations throughout campus. All 12 of the participants held some formal leadership role within their chapter as undergraduates, and most held several. All were involved in multiple other campus organizations as well; for example, 10 held significant leadership roles, including two student government presidents and three campus inter-fraternity council presidents or vice presidents. Participants credited their SAE experience with making them aware of other campus organizations and introducing them to people outside SAE, but also credited their leadership experience in the chapter as being a developmental building block toward their leadership of other organizations.

Leadership and Social Change. Table 9 illustrates that many of the individuals interviewed had experience applying the tenets of the social change model and its attributes in their undergraduate years, but struggled some in specifically articulating what comprises social change leadership.

Table 9
Leadership and Social Change

Interview Question	Summary Phrase	Frequency
How would you describe socially responsible leadership in your own words?	Communication	7
	Working together	7
	Listening without judging	5
	Working to give back	4
	Trying to do what’s right, even when no one is watching	1

As was the case when the researcher asked for a comprehensive restatement of SAE’s mission, vision, and values, the participants were similarly challenged when asked

to provide a definition of socially responsible leadership. Although not explicitly stated in terms of the competencies or precepts in the social change model (Astin, 1996; HERI, 1996) or the assessment metrics within the Social Responsibility Leadership Scale (Tyree, 1998), each of participants provided compelling restatements and anecdotal examples of actions that aligned with some of the concepts of SCM. The major summary phrases shown in Table 9 provide insights into participants' perspectives. The preponderance of interview responses centered on the concepts of effective communication, leading by example, and recognizing that each individual was part of something bigger than himself. Several participants noted their experiences in leading or being part of chapters that had gone through some significant turmoil; they said they fell back on their instincts and basic member-development precepts, rooted in the True Gentleman creed and fraternity ritual as guidelines for action (Subjects C, D, & F). For example, Subject C recounted troubles with individual members not adhering to basic chapter rules that had gone unenforced for years until he and his cohort came forward to challenge the status quo. By referring to the standards found in both the bylaws and ritual, Subject C led an open debate among all members that led to expulsion of several substandard members. He viewed this as an example of adhering to standards while working together toward common purpose and remaining objective and civil, all precepts of socially responsible leadership.

The True Gentleman Basis. This interview question was designed to determine the effects of the organizational aspirations of SAE, as defined by its mission, vision, and values, on the member-development program, which was directed at the national level for implementation at the local chapter level and required for all members. The results of this

question yielded the most varied set of answers to the question and occupied the majority of the time in each interview. The summary phrases centered on a few major points that seemed to be at separate ends of the spectrum between philosophy and practical application. Table 10 shows the results of questions that tied the ideals espoused by SAE back to the actual experience of the individuals interviewed.

Table 10
The True Gentleman Basis

Interview Question	Summary Phrase	Frequency
Reflecting on your undergraduate experience, can you describe how SAE member-development programs contributed to your personal development and that of others in your chapter?	Formal leader development opportunities were critical to my personal growth and understanding of the organization	12
	Mentoring, partnering with alumni is missing	11
	More emphasis is placed on “what” to do rather than “why”	10
	National level programs are well-communicated plans but fall apart in execution at the chapter level	8
	The infrastructure-people who know how to present, and more in-person contact-is the gap	8
	The mandatory topics are important, but seem to have more importance to national than to us	7
	Additional emphasis on teaching that SAE is for life	5

Most participants identified member education as necessary and useful in basic education on history, tradition, and ritual. In addition, all participants believed that the formal leader development opportunities offered as part of the overall member-

development program, such as national leadership school, the ritual institute, and Inner Circle, were critical to their individual growth and understanding of the more comprehensive scope of SAE as a national organization. However, tone and insights shifted in the interviews on the discussion of the member-development program execution at the local level.

As outlined in Chapter 2, SAE created its current member-development program, the True Gentlemen Experience, to correspond with the sweeping changes that resulted from the elimination of probationary membership in 2014 (SAE, 2014; SAE 2015a). The program design included several mandatory subjects on basic member education such as history, ritual, traditions, and organization but also incorporated modules on preventing or mitigating risky behavior such as substance abuse, sexual assault, and proactive programs to counter risky behaviors such as bystander intervention (SAE, 2011; SAE 2016a). The program was designed to be additive by undergraduate year, extending into postgraduate alumni years. Each succeeding year was to provide more detailed modules that add on to the basis of the previous modules, and to add elective modules on subjects such as networking and job interviewing that would be relevant for members as they progressed toward graduation (SAE, 2014). By design, the program provided flexibility at the local level to develop and implement modules tailored to the needs and experience of individual chapters.

Several participants' responses also indicated a gap between the expectations of the program and the results at the local level. This finding seemed true in both the content of the program modules as well as in the manner of presentation of the material. Eight participants indicated that those responsible for coordinating or presenting the

information were insufficiently skilled, and therefore the messages were lost on the majority of men in the chapter. A second common observation was that presenters emphasized *what* men should do or not do over *why* men should act a certain way. In the perception and experience of several participants, this mechanistic approach to learning was counter-productive to members' full development.

A consistent theme found throughout the interview data concerned the role of alumni members in the member-development program. Eleven of the 12 participants specifically mentioned the need for alumni to be more involved in assisting with the member education and development at the local level. The comments ranged from recommending alumni oversight of the development curriculum in both preparation and execution of the development program, to suggesting an alumnus "big brother" for every new member on initiation as a near-peer who was not still in the undergraduate experience, but had successfully navigated the challenges and was now in the workforce or doing graduate academic studies. The perception was that these men were better equipped to understand the positive impact of effective development during undergraduate years on building strong leaders ready to move successfully into their postgraduate lives.

True Gentlemen for Life. As noted earlier, SAE initiates its members for life. The capstone question in each interview was a reflective question aimed at encouraging participants to describe the impact of their SAE experience on their lives as alumni. Participants indicated a positive impact, and several provided specific examples, using descriptors common to socially responsible leadership as shown in Table 11.

Table 11
True Gentlemen for Life

Interview Question	Summary Phrase	Frequency
As an alumnus, how does your SAE experience translate into your life?	I keep a copy of the True Gentlemen with me all of the time (home, office, wallet)	11
	The leadership opportunities and experiences translate regularly	9
	Dealing with the diversity in a chapter taught life skills for the work place	8
	Sustaining the idea of giving back through service and philanthropy	7

As in previous summary responses, a common theme for 11 of the 12 participants was the enduring impact of the True Gentleman as an aspirational statement and a series of guidepost behaviors for conduct. In addition, leadership opportunities as undergraduates, both formal and informal, translated in a majority of participants' perceptions to their current situation as young professionals or graduate students. For example, Subject C, Subject D, and Subject H used skills they learned as undergraduates in building teams from diverse members, dealing with controversy, and listening to alternative opinions in order to develop better solutions to challenges in their professional lives. Subject H summed up his perspective:

My SAE experience directly translates into my professional life. I feel like I've grown fairly quickly and taken on informal leadership roles. People have asked me how I know how to organize teams and motivate people to get things done . . . my answer is I made big mistakes in leadership and other things when I

was an undergraduate running my chapter, and you're learning the same things but in your 30s (Subject H).

Two additional summary phrases focused on participants' alumni experiences in the areas of diversity, philanthropy, and service. Subject J noted that much of his learning as an undergraduate came from experiencing things that did not work within his chapter and then having to open up discussion to a wide variety of opinions and perspective that often were counter to his opinion. Eight of the 12 participants indicated that their current work experiences benefited directly from learning to build collaborative groups from different subsets within the larger group in order to meet objectives. Subject K, for example, said that his experience dealing with over 50 men from many different backgrounds in his chapter had prepared him to lead a team of seven in his workplace, all of whom were older.

The concept of giving back to community through philanthropy and service as an alumnus was central to 7 of the 12 participants. Each talked about the service aspect of their undergraduate experiences while in school; one even noted that during recruitment, he was surprised that philanthropy was part of the fraternity at all—philanthropy was one of the reasons he pursued membership (Subject G). The seven participants in this cluster were involved as alumni with SAE at the chapter level or in their communities through civic organizations or local service groups.

Summary

This discussion of responses and summary phrases by individual participants in the initial analysis provided a useful summation of the findings gained through personal interviews. The data indicated that SAE had a positive impact on the lives of these men

as undergraduates that translated into their lives as young alumni. These distinct “clusters of meaning” (Creswell, 2013, p. 82) were useful as both textural and structural descriptions also of the overall phenomenon of SAE membership and of the individual development experience of the participants. A more detailed analysis of these clusters follows, grouped into overarching themes that emerged from the findings, and as viewed through the theoretical perspectives outlined in the literature review in Chapter 2.

Analysis and Synthesis of Findings

The data collected in this study indicated that SAE had a positive impact on the lives of the participants that continued into their present experiences as recent alumni. However, there was little evidence to suggest the positive impact derived from the member-development program. Rather, the interviews revealed numerous anecdotal examples of how their SAE membership experience contributed to this positive impact. Their responses also showed where gaps might inadvertently exist between the aspirational statements of the SAE mission and vision and SAE desired outcomes for presenting development programs in support of the mission and vision. Opportunities for refinements or enhancements to the development program emerged from the findings. These opportunities were especially apparent when the participants reflected on their perspectives of the member program from the viewpoint of the average member rather than through their own. Based on the data collected, three major themes emerged for deeper analysis and synthesis: There remains a mismatch emerged between SAE’s vision and its member-development program; leaders tend to focus more on obligation requirements than on aspirational goals; and lifelong membership in SAE does not seem to equate with lifelong fulfillment opportunities.

Organizational Vision and Program Mismatch

Responses from the participants indicated a strong connection between the inspirational ideals contained in the foundational principles of SAE outlined in the mission and vision statements and the aspirational goals espoused in the tenets of the True Gentleman creed. According to several participants, the ideals and goals were strongly reinforced when men within the SAE chapters at a participant's host institution personified the ideals in actions and behaviors routinely (Subjects A, C, D, E, F, H, K, L). The aspirational standards of the True Gentlemen and its personification by SAE members were examples of positive stimuli in the environment on study participants (Adler, 1924; Astin, 1993).

Inspirational mission and vision statements, coupled with the positive examples of behavior by SAE members at their host institutions, provided the study participants with positive environmental stimuli and was central to their undergraduate experience (Bandura, 1977; Kolb, 1984). These findings were not consistent, however, when measuring the overall effectiveness of the impact of the SAE member-development program on instilling or reinforcing behavior. Although the program was not a negative stimulus, and in many respects, was a positive contributor, its outcomes were inconsistent.

Most participants felt the SAE member-development program was too sterile and not directly tied to aspirational tenets that inspired them during recruitment; like True Gentleman, brotherhood, and the total fraternity experience they anticipated. Participants did not challenge the adoption of the True Gentleman Experience when SAE decided to eliminate probationary membership. Instead, participants noted that most inconsistencies

emerged in the SAE adoption of centralized requirements without sufficient application of resources or recognition of alternative options at the local level.

Ten of the 12 participants in this study described the SAE development program as more defined by what one “had to do” rather than as what one “ought to do” to reach the ideals espoused in the True Gentlemen (Subjects A, C, D, E, G, H, I, J, K, & L). The SAE guidebook itself states,

The mission of the True Gentleman Experience is to ensure equal rights and responsibilities for all members, to educate all members throughout their membership, and to provide a framework of requirements that will promote accountability for all individuals and chapters. (SAE, 2015a, p. 3)

The three explicit outcomes of the program are: to promote continued education about the fraternity, to gain and maintain rights as a member in good standing, and to serve as a means for chapters to hold members accountable.

The current TGE program uses a baseline of online directive requirements supplemented by multiple options of modules available from the national organization, as well as opportunities for local development of education and training. TGE began with the premise that everyone needed to know the basics of SAE history and traditions. Elective choices were offered for members in each undergraduate year. Implementation occurred at the local level, usually led by an undergraduate SAE member who was appointed as chapter educator under his undergraduate chapter leadership. Anecdotal examples provided during interviews, as discussed earlier in this chapter, indicated that the result of this approach was mixed at best.

The data suggested that the application of a mass approach to individual development may have been an efficient way to accomplish transactional mandatory tasks, but may not be the most effective method if the desired outcome is individualized personal growth.

Participants in the study related anecdotally that most of the TGE was conducted online. Several participants indicated their chapters' method of completing TGE requirements was done in mass settings, with attendees clicking through modules without any interaction or discussion opportunities. Two specifically mentioned the desire for reflection (Subject E, Subject J) as important to their understanding of the material but more important to their ability to use it for personal and organizational growth (Kolb, 1984; Kolb & Kolb, 2005). Subject L summed up his perspective of the program and its execution:

Our education and development program is not so great. A lot of guys in the chapter view it as a chore you have to do, and they have trouble trying to figure out how to make it work, meet the requirements, build the brotherhood aspect, and keep moving. Read the stuff, do the online modules, etc. . . . It's hard to see the end result value. It's not seen as their own program—it's a "have to do" requirement with all these things by year—actives lose ownership and interest. Balancing it with basic fraternity stuff, school, looking past graduation . . . guys seemed to have a kind of bad taste in their mouth, losing what brought them to SAE in the first place by the time they graduate (Subject L).

The task of building and executing an overarching development program that would yield effective results for over 14,000 members was challenging. Placing the

responsibility on undergraduate SAE members for refining the program further at the chapter level for implementation contributed further to the challenge. However, if the ultimate goal was to achieve the aspirational vision of SAE to develop and provide “True Gentlemen for a better world,” then it seems to imperative to develop different solutions to this challenge for future implementation.

Leadership

As outlined in the previous section, SAE leaders face a challenge to build a development program that is oriented first on the aspirational goal of SAE espoused in the organization’s vision and mission yet adaptive and organic enough in design to meet requirements and individual needs. When analyzed through the prism of long-term organizational health and individual growth, however, meeting this challenge with a set of feasible solutions seems to be a necessity.

From recruitment through their college undergraduate years to graduation and now as alumni, participants felt most connected to the aspirational aspects of SAE. As described previously, the overall SAE membership experience was central to their lives during college by providing opportunities to test ideas, gain leadership experience, expand their networking into other organizations, and develop as men by following the precepts of TGE and SAE ritual. Although these are all positive outcomes of membership, participants could not attribute the attainment of these results to the member-development program itself, which they characterized as obligation-based rather than as aspiration-based.

Viewing this perception through a leadership theory lens, participants seemed to describe an organization with vision whose leadership executes a program based on

requirements. To carry this thought further, there appeared to be a cognitive mismatch between words and actions, with action focused more on transactional or managerial supervision of tasks rather than on the larger concept of a shared vision (Bass, 1991; Weber 1947).

Participants in the study recognized the need to meet obligational requirements to counter risky or unwanted behaviors in members. As outlined earlier in this chapter, however, the participants also identified the desire for a collaborative environment supported by a relevant member development program that reinforce SAE ideals and promotes brotherhood (Subjects A, B, D, F, H, & K).

The data collected in this study reinforced the concept that aspirational goals motivate men to desire membership and active participation in an organization in which the members exemplify the ideals of the organization through their actions. Ideally, the member-development program for all members would have reinforced this concept, beginning with initiation and continuing throughout the undergraduate experience and into life as alumni; however, the data did not support this assertion. SAE leaders described SAE as a mission-oriented and values-based organization with a strong aspirational vision to provide “True Gentlemen making our global community better” (SAE, 2015). Although all 12 participants clearly articulated understanding of this aspiration and believed strongly in it, 10 of the 12 reported that a gap remained between ideals and goals and the member-development program designed to inculcate and reinforce the precepts that should sustain the organization and achieve success.

The relationship between SAE's stated purpose, mission, and programs that consistently reinforced that aspiration in practice was highlighted in the data collected for this study. Subject B's perspective amplified it directly:

We should focus more on enforcing the idea of a purposeful organization with undergrads. We should talk more about the "why" in everything: why we exist, why we do things a certain way, why . . . I believe a lot in the idea of having good answers to the why question to let people see and be more willing to buy into the organization. Solid, straightforward purpose that is explainable to people works better (Subject B).

Discussion that emanated from the researcher's participation during the Army leader-development session (referenced in Chapter 2) reinforced a clear alignment between the research on the value of transformational leadership, the application of the social change model with its aspirational focus on a greater-good result, and the data collected from the participants in this study. The approach taken by an organization and its leadership toward motivating by either obligation or aspiration has shown to have the potential to produce different outcomes (Bass, 1991; U.S. Army, 2017). Those who focus on obligations achieve transactional results (Bass, 1991). Members who fail to meet their basic obligations are suspended or expelled at worst; or at the least become disengaged (SAE, 2015b). Those motivated by aspiration achieve transactional results but also saw the value of incorporating SAE's stated mission, vision, and values into their SAE member experiences and into their broader life experiences. Each facet supported the other and directly reinforced the central concept of the organization, tying its stated mission to execution of a shared vision through effective leadership. Effective leaders

built and sustained healthy learning organizations, established and maintained trust through open communications, and consistently stayed true to their ideals (Robbins & Judge, 2012). SAE has the foundation for this within its mission, vision, and values and has the strength of its members and structure to expand and reinforce through its development program.

Initiated for Life

The data collected for this study came from interviews with recently graduated young alumni, all members of Sigma Alpha Epsilon, each of whom experienced the organization's member-development program at the basic level and in several of the formal leadership opportunities as well, including Inner Circle/LLI. Their total experience portfolio, although obtained from a relatively small subset of the over 190,000 living alumni within SAE, gave them a relatively deep perspective of the organization at an early point in their postgraduate lives.

SAE initiates its members for life. Lifetime membership, however, does not always equal lifetime involvement in the organization or opportunities for lifetime development. One of the consistent themes recurring throughout the participant interviews was the observation that few alumni were engaged within the respective chapters, and even fewer of those who were engaged were involved in member development or education.

As outlined in Chapter 2, SAE is organized at the national and regional level with a small professional administrative staff but is actually led by an executive board composed of elected volunteers. Assisting the board in their duties is a network of regional volunteer alumni leaders organized geographically into 30 provinces that have

their own executive boards as well. Most individual chapters have an alumni group, and many have house corporations that own and support maintenance of their housing. Each province and chapter must operate within the national laws but also have their own discrete set of bylaws for governance within their local traditions and the regulations of their host institutions. Most germane to this study, however, was the fact that no formalized system of member development or education exists between the national TGE program and its execution at the local level, including the incorporation of alumni into a formalized support structure.

A set of modules in the TGE program had been planned and designated specifically for alumni, designed for continuing development and education after college graduation. Although the TGE program remains under development as of this study, some portions of it are already in place, including sections on networking and alumni volunteer opportunities. Several online modules are available, some of which are required, for chapter advisors and other leader support positions focused on risk management and other mandatory programs for undergraduates.

The interview data for this study revealed a gap between the formal required programs for alumni volunteers and the aspirational developmental goals the members desired. More simply, the participants believed that many alumni, and especially the younger ones, could be a critical link in the improved development of undergraduate men. Subject C summarized this position:

We need to do better at training the people who lead the education/development.

We do this for the required things like risk management, but we leave a lot of the soft skill stuff to the chapters to figure out. Alumni are the best people to do

this—young alumni especially, as they have the most recent experience (Subject C).

Subject H noted that the linking of passions to actions by men with recent college experience now transitioned to young alumni life could be a key to engaging undergraduate men within a chapter. Similar to the attraction that undergraduate men felt for senior members during recruitment that exemplified the tenets of the True Gentleman, several participants stated that the same could hold true in a mentor-protégé relationship between undergraduate college members and alumni. Networking, professional connections, and job opportunities might be an added bonus, but the basic idea revealed during data collection from participants focused on continuing the SAE concept of brotherhood and extended family as a means to sustain the experience after college.

Summary

The findings gained from data collected during this study yielded deep, rich insights from participants into the relationship of the SAE member-development program design and its outcomes. Measured by interview responses to open-ended questions and narrative, amplified by anecdotal examples, the data showed many consistent responses and several key themes. Most significantly, SAE has a strong mission and vision, supported by the True Gentleman creed and fraternity ritual that resonated with every participant. In fact, this aspect of SAE was central to their decision to pursue membership as undergraduates.

However, the lack of reinforcement of this strong philosophical basis by a strong, comprehensive, and well-executed development program focused on aspirational goals seemed to indicate a gap. Responses by participants indicated that this gap was further

widened by inconsistent execution methods and practices at the local level, and an overreliance on inexperienced presenters who mostly offered mandatory, obligation-focused subjects rather than using a broader aspirational, scenario-based collaborative method. Finally, the lack of deep and consistent oversight by volunteer alumni at the chapter level to support and augment the senior volunteer alumni and the professional staff exacerbated the challenge by placing additional burdens for planning and executing a complex development program on the shoulders of undergraduate members.

The data collected to answer the research question showed challenges and shortfalls in the existing member-development program. The challenges, however, also presented opportunities for exploring options to enhance or revise the member-development program, reinforcement of the link between vision, mission, values and actions, and the incorporation of a more expansive alumni portion of the program. The findings of this study may lead to new options and recommendations for filling gaps, reallocating resources, and potentially growing new programs for developing men into socially responsible leaders and improving the health of the SAE organization.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study began with the idea of determining how Sigma Alpha Epsilon's member-development program has enabled socially responsible leadership in its men over time. The results of the study gained through focused interviews revealed the program's strengths and challenges. The main finding was the discovery of a misalignment between the aspirational goals of SAE and its current member-development program. This misalignment resulted largely from the organization's evolution over time as it adapted to changes in the host-institution environment experienced by undergraduate members. This evolution motivated SAE leaders to create programs focused on obligations to meet immediate requirements and counter risky behaviors more than creating a program to help members meet aspirational goals.

This study was not a condemnation of the approach to counter risky behaviors. Based on the historical threats to the organization resulting from some members' behaviors and actions, such as death, injury, and public displays of racism (CBS, 2015; Hechinger & Glovin, 2013; Reitman, 2012; SAE, 2016c), SAE leaders had to launch corrective directives. The decision to eliminate probationary membership and the development of the TGE were examples of bold, decisive, necessary action (SAE, 2014). However, the findings from this study indicate that conditions, at this time, are conducive for revising the member-development program to align the program with the SAE Strategic Plan (SAE, 2016a) and to take a more aspirational, transformational approach.

When analyzed through the lens of relevant literature, the results yielded several themes for reflection. Opportunities for refinements to the program to take advantage of success and build for the future emerged. In addition, the researcher found potential

transferable concepts that could help build the body of knowledge for leaders in other organization to consider in their respective development programs.

This chapter begins with a brief review of the purpose and aim of the study. The proposed solution and recommendations for implementation derived from the data collected during the study and the themes that emerged in analysis of the data are then discussed. The proposed solution and implementation recommendations are next reviewed, followed by an outline plan for implementation that includes stakeholder identification, required resources, a generic timeline for action, and the role of leadership in implementation. Additionally, several noteworthy ideas emerged from participants' insights that may inform potential future studies for the benefit of SAE and other organizations. Finally, this chapter concludes with a summary of the entire study, its value to SAE men throughout life and the organization itself, and the greater good that SAE vision purports to serve.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to determine whether the Sigma Alpha Epsilon member-development program enabled socially responsible leadership in undergraduate members and to explore how that development translated into sustained action for members after graduation.

Aim of the Study

The aim of this study was to analyze the current SAE member-development program to provide recommendations for enhancement that instill and reinforce socially responsible leadership in its members, in order to strengthen individuals and enable the success of the SAE vision and mission.

Proposed Solution

SAE has a strong organizational mission and vision, reinforced by its core values, and supported by the tenets of creed and ritual (SAE, 2016a). These points were prevalent throughout the data collected in the interviews with participants, each of whom is a member of SAE and a recent alumnus. As outlined in Chapter 4, however, gaps emerged regarding participant perspectives as to how strong SAE organizational principles translated into SAE's member-development program and whether the program influenced behavior sustained after graduation. Three main gaps were identified in the responses and analysis: (a) mismatch between SAE's organizational vision and its member-development program, (b) a focus on obligation requirements rather than on aspirational goals, and (c) a lack of effective connection between the SAE concept of lifelong membership and lifelong fulfillment opportunities for member after graduation.

In practical application terms, the data also showed the current member-development program placed too large a burden on specific content development at each individual chapter and on its relatively inexperienced members. Inconsistent content presentation practices, overreliance on punitive measures to drive program completion, and a lack of content aimed at active alumni members in the development portion of the program may not have enabled sustained growth by members after graduation. However, despite these gaps and factors, the findings showed participants' deep commitment to the organization and its mission and awareness that the program must address all members-undergraduate and alumni-as well as an equally deep dedication to find opportunities addressing the challenges. The identified challenges and the desire to seek these

opportunities lead to the proposed solution and recommendations for implementation of this study.

The True Gentleman Experience “2.0”

The greatest opportunity revealed in this study leads to the proposed solution: a review and overhaul of the SAE member education program to follow the original intent of the True Gentleman Experience more closely as a mission-focused, values-based, and aspirational goal-oriented program (SAE, 2014). Four recommendations for adopting and implementing this solution emerged from analysis of the data in this study. The first recommendation is to build a revised program on the basic structure of the existing TGE, hereafter referred to as TGE “2.0,” that provides a framework for directly aligning member actions with SAE vision and mission. Supporting the alignment of values with actions through adoption of TGE “2.0”, the second objective would be directed toward engaging and retaining members by focusing on aspirational goals as guideposts for individual behaviors and actions, rather than a focus on obligations first. Additionally, the program would incorporate learning techniques and capabilities designed on academic and practical literature. Third, TGE “2.0” would provide a structure for lifelong member development and opportunities for individuals to remain connected with SAE and serve as continuity for future members as well. Fourth, the adoption and implementation of TGE “2.0” should follow a well-publicized, adaptable, and coordinated plan that incorporates all stakeholders in its design and execution.

Mission and vision. Previous researchers on transformational and vision-based leadership have found that individuals motivated by aspiration or inspiration focus beyond basic obligations (Bass, 1991; Bass & Riggio, 2006; Carlson & Perrewe, 1995).

SAE's vision is "True Gentlemen making the global community better" (SAE, 2016a, p. 2). This vision is an aspirational goal toward which the organization and its members should strive, so the first recommendation is to orient TGE "2.0" directly on that goal as its primary objective. In consonance with this objective is the recommendation to align TGE "2.0" with the concepts within the social change model (Astin, 1996; HERI, 1996), which holds that positive social change results from practical application of the supporting tenet "making a better world and a better society for oneself and others" (Dugan & Komives, 2007, p. 6).

Aspirations First, Obligations Always. All the participants in this study had experienced the SAE member-development program as college undergraduates. Participants received inspiration as SAE members from the transformational tenets of the SAE vision, the True Gentleman creed, and the translation of their experiences into their lives as alumni. However, participants perceived that the member-development program focused on transactional obligations rather than on transformational aspirations. The True Gentleman Experience "2.0" builds on the findings of this study and the SAE organizational vision by refocusing the overall objective on a solution that also incorporates the tenets of the essential criteria for a collaborative "psychology of leadership" (Haslam, Reicher, & Platow, 2011). According to Haslam, et al., (2011, pp 205-206.) strong leaders (a) reflect by observing and listening to the perspectives of the group (b) represent the group through words and actions that embody and advance the group's values, and (c) perform and produce results that matter to the group.

The collaborative approach outlined by Haslam, et al (2011) applied to the TGE "2.0" concept indicates that groups should design actions that are reflective of all

members. Participant responses in this study often referred to other members in their chapter as “losing interest” (Subject E) or “absent brother” (Subject H). To account for SAE members like this when considering implementation of TGE “2.0” as well as the diversity of all other members, a concept such as “average member” may be useful. This idea also reflects the theoretical concepts outlined in the U.S. Army leadership seminar on character, competence, and commitment that the researcher co-facilitated during the conduct of this study (Figure 3). The “average” member in this diagram lies in the middle slopes of the example population curves. Focusing on motivations by aspiration across the organization using the “average” member as a constant—while at the same time including all the specific topics necessary for the transactional requirements of health and safety through effective risk management— potentially keeps more individuals and the group oriented on the broader program objective and positive change. This would be especially true if group leaders used a collaborative and flexible process to design the program as well its implementation.

In addition to the focus of the development program goal, data collected during the study indicated that the content was more mechanical than developmental. Additionally, placing the responsibility for refining the overall TGE program on relatively inexperienced undergraduate college members at the local level exacerbated gaps between designed program expectations and the outcomes at execution.

TGE “2.0” offers an opportunity to redesign the member-development program as the centerpiece of the entire education system for SAE, starting from a clean slate. Assuming the acceptance of the organizational vision as the aspirational goal, the next step is to develop the basic building blocks of the program. Instead of beginning at the

logical starting point of what a new member needs to know and working forward, the second recommendation is to consider an alternative approach, starting from a statement of program success at end state and working backward toward the new member block. Using focus groups of successful alumni and undergraduate members to test each step of a sample program designed around specific desired outcomes could yield a more cogent, vision-based development program.

This approach also takes advantage of extant literature on learning, as outlined in Chapter 2. For example, Kolb (1984) provided constructs on cycles of learning and learning styles. Following an iterative approach to rebuilding TGE using Kolb's model could yield measurable results on specific portions of the program, resources required, and in-stride adjustments. The adjustment opportunity could be maximized if leaders spent more time in the reflection, observation, and conceptualization stages of the learning cycle (Kolb, 1984). By engaging a cross-section of alumni and undergraduate college members to assist in this study, some variance in learning styles could be observed. When balanced with other learning-style studies, such as recent literature on millennial generation learners (Dede, 2004; Sharma, 2016; Sickler, 2009), this method could assist in building a more balanced and focused development program.

SAE for life. The organization initiates its members for life. The current True Gentleman Experience was originally intended to provide development programs for postgraduate members; however, to date, the alumni portion of the program has not been fully implemented. Study participants reflected some frustration with the lack of follow-through on this programming but also highlighted the opportunity for the future.

TGE “2.0” should be inclusive for all members, from new initiates through senior alumni. The third recommendation is to build a holistic program that includes not only educational development models but also major objectives for lifetime service. These lifetime-service objectives could include recruiting and retaining alumni volunteer leaders, building or rebuilding active alumni associations, and renewing connections between alumni men and their undergraduate chapters. This recommendation also provides a means to reinforce the sustainment of social responsibility into the alumni years by potentially pairing TGE “2.0” with community service or volunteer opportunities outside SAE, much like undergraduate chapters do in their service and philanthropy projects.

Participants in this study indicated that most members would benefit from a more active young-alumnus mentoring relationship during their undergraduate college experience. Additionally, most of the participants reported that few alumni from their respective chapters were engaged in any capacity. Given the relatively small professional field staff, SAE and its chapters rely heavily on volunteer alumni leaders to oversee undergraduate affairs. To adopt a methodology focused on aspirational motivation, transformational goals will require a deeper commitment on the part of the organization to lead, advise, teach, and mentor undergraduates, and this burden will fall most heavily on the shoulders of trained and educated alumni volunteers. This observation directly mandates revising and reinforcing a major portion of TGE “2.0” to focus on alumni member development.

Adopting the recommendation to implement TGE “2.0” as a solution to gaps identified through the research in this study provided SAE with an opportunity to better

align member actions with organizational vision. It also presents an opportunity to retain the interest and engagement of members in their undergraduate collegiate years and throughout their alumni years as well. Implementing this recommendation mandates that SAE as an organization recognizes the need for change and that leaders throughout the organization gain the support and resources necessary for success.

Implementation Process. The implementation process for TGE “2.0” requires several steps, beginning with the approval of the concept by the SAE senior volunteer leadership. Once approved, leaders and staff must identify required resources, existing policies and regulations that may affect implementation, and conduct a stakeholder analysis. The research and analysis will provide a key framework to identify important change agents to lead and oversee implementation, build momentum by identifying and empowering opinion leaders, translating the perceived need for change into a plan, and developing a communications strategy and gaining acceptance within the organization. Each of the steps is crucial, and although logically sequential in theory, would likely be more effective in practice if executed near-simultaneously.

The fourth recommendation for implementation of TGE “2.0” is to follow the steps outlined in Rogers’ innovation-decision process (2003, p. 170), as depicted in Figure 5, and the associated 5-stage innovation model (Rogers, 2003, p. 421) shown in Figure 6. The innovation-decision process (Rogers, 2003) outlines how an individual makes decisions over time with regard to an innovation or change. As shown in Figure 5, there are five stages: *Knowledge, Persuasion, Decision, Implementation, and Confirmation* (Rogers, 2003, pp. 169-170). The *knowledge* and *persuasion* stages comprise the time and events when an individual gains information on the innovation and

forms an opinion on its value relative to him or herself (Rogers, 2003, pp. 171-175). The *decision* stage equals the point at which the individual chooses to adopt or reject the innovation (Rogers, 2003, pp 177-179). The *implementation* and *confirmation* stages occur if the individual chooses to adopt the innovation and put it into practice, followed by an ongoing assessment of the innovation’s effectiveness and a choice to continue or reject the innovation (Rogers, 2003, pp 189-194).

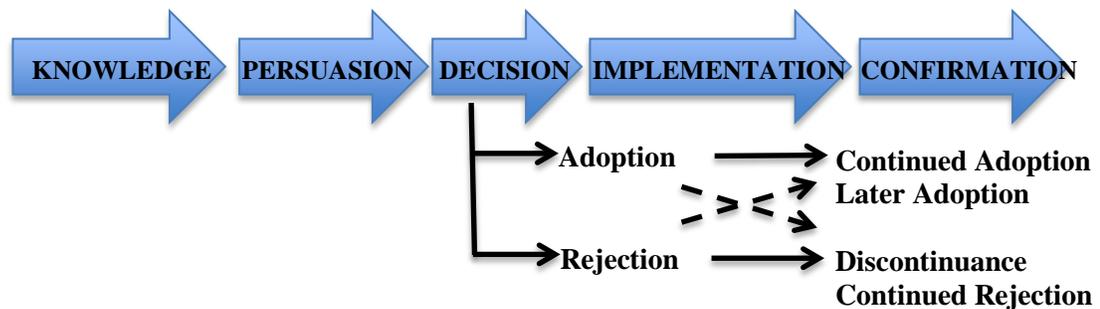


Figure 5. Rogers’ innovation-decision process.

Note: Adapted from *Diffusion of innovations*, by E. Rogers, 2003, New York, NY: Free Press, p. 171. Used with permission of Free Press.

Rogers’ 5-stage innovation process (Figure 6) outlines the steps taken within an organization to identify, decide, and implement an innovation. The steps are divided into five steps: *Agenda-setting*, *Matching*, *Redefining/Restructuring*, *Clarifying*, and *Routinizing*; within two basic sub-processes: *Initiation and Implementation* (Rogers, 2003, pp. 434). The *agenda setting* and *matching* steps define the period of *initiation*, when an organization challenge is identified that may require an innovation, and potential innovation solutions are developed and planned (Rogers, 2003, pp. 422-424). The decision point on adopting or rejecting an innovation is the point between *initiation* and *implementation*. If the organization decides to execute the innovation, *implementation*

starts. The first step of implementation, *redefining/restructuring*, more closely aligns the innovation with the organizational needs and structure (Rogers, 2003, p. 424). The *clarifying* step comprises the period when the innovation is diffused more broadly across the organization (Rogers, 2003, p. 428). *Routinizing* is when the innovation is complete and the adopted processes have become the norm within the organization (Rogers, 2003, pp. 428-430).

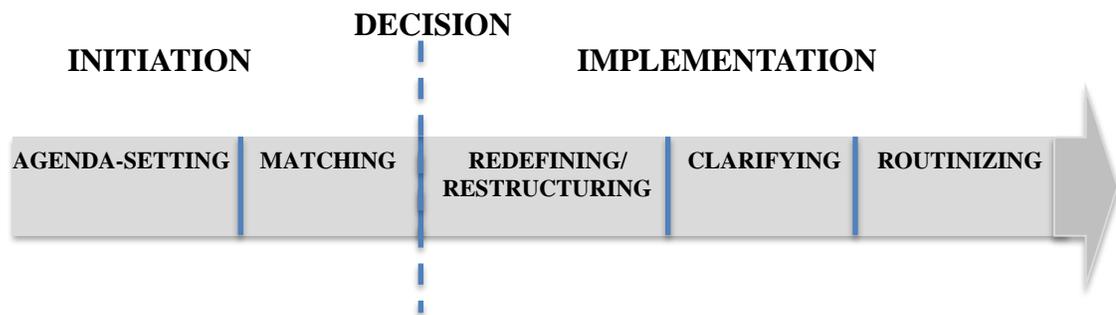


Figure 6. Rogers’ 5-stage innovation process.

Note: Adapted from *Diffusion of innovations*, by E. Rogers, 2003, New York, NY: Free Press, p. 421.

Data obtained from the participants in this study identified that members felt a strong connection with SAE and its values and mission. Participants also recognized identified that the existing member education program did not adequately support the vision and mission, and recognized the opportunity adapt the current program to better align with the SAE vision and mission. TGE “2.0” is a recommendation to accomplish this objective. Key to the implementation of TGE “2.0” will be the inclusion of all stakeholders in the development of the innovation and transparent communication throughout the process, to ensure that it remains reflective of SAE vision and mission and the opinions of the members (Haslam, et al, 2011). Adoption of the innovation and decision processes (Rogers, 2003) as a means to implement the recommendation to

achieve better alignment and support the objectives of SAE outlined in its strategic plan (SAE, 2016a) through adoption of TGE “2.0” will be discussed in more detail in subsequent sections.

Factors Related to the Solution

With a recommendation for change comes the need to identify and analyze factors necessary for effective implementation. The anticipated factors in the adoption of TGE “2.0” include organizational policy and regulatory changes, the potential reallocation of resources and cultural changes. After identifying all of the existing organizational components and resource aspects, the next major step is the advocacy for cultural change with SAE members at every level. Because this proposal deals with member development for all SAE men, which directly relates to every aspect of the organization, the most pressing factors in implementing change are stakeholder identification, classification, management and effective execution of the plan.

Fraternity law and policies. SAE is governed internally by laws that are updated and adopted at each biennial convention of members (SAE, 2015b). In addition to the laws, several other documents provide policy guidelines and statements pertaining to member education and development. Portions of the laws relevant to this study and other pertinent documents include:

- The designation of the member education and development program as the True Gentleman Experience (SAE, 2015b, p. 26);
- The True Gentleman (SAE, 2015b; see Appendix A);
- The Phoenix Membership Manual (SAE, 2012);
- The True Gentleman Experience Guidebook (SAE, 2015a);

- Minerva’s Shield—The Rules for Health and Safety for Sigma Alpha Epsilon (SAE, 2016b); and
- Good Samaritan Policy (SAE, 2013).

These references guide overall SAE administration for the development of SAE members and govern members’ experiences, specifically emphasizing the undergraduate years.

Adoption of TGE “2.0” would have minimal impact on laws or health and safety policies.

The major changes would come in the review, testing, updating, and implementation of a revised Phoenix membership manual, TGE Guidebook, and associated resources. As discussed in the previous section, several methods could be employed to accomplish this important step, including gathering focus groups, employing outside talent development and curriculum experts, and using appropriate literature and research from learning theories to guide the change through execution and evaluation.

Resources. Development and implementation of TGE “2.0” may incur some human and financial costs. However, these costs need not be inordinate or overly burdensome to the organization. SAE leaders revise other programs regularly; these revisions are often accomplished using volunteer leaders drawn from both undergraduates and alumni. The major resources envisioned for implementation therefore would come in the form of time and human capital. The preliminary research to the critical foundational tenets of the revised program has been completed with the research in this study.

Allowing sufficient time for development, testing, reflection, and experimentation following the Kolb learning model (Kolb, 1984; Kolb & Kolb, 2005), and incorporating the tenets of the social change model (Astin, 1996; HERI, 1996) will be essential to building a successful program and gaining consensus among members on both the

rationale for change and its utility. Adopting a recommendation for hiring outside talent or curriculum development experts, or both, would incur some cost, as well as publishing new documents and guidelines for implementation. The financial challenge could be overcome by reprogramming funds from other areas or could be potentially offset by contributions from the SAE Foundation as allowable educational expenses.

Barriers, enablers and change. SAE is hierarchically organized with central volunteer leadership at every level, from the national organization through individual chapters on host-institution campuses. A small professional staff augments and supports volunteer leaders by overseeing adherence to laws, policies, and routine administration. Individual chapters, although governed by the national laws, retain a relatively high degree of autonomy because of their distributed geographic dispersion. In addition, SAE is characterized like many other GLOs as an organization with strong long-standing traditions and norms based on its history and experience since its founding in 1856.

In sum, the SAE hierarchy is a highly mechanistic structure; one that is typified by predictability and accountability and is transactional in its approach to its members (Hatch & Cunliffe, 2006). The transactional approach is sustained in the member development program as identified through the data obtained in this study from the participants and outlined in Chapter 4. Traditions and a routine transactional approach to leadership may present a barrier to change. The environment in which SAE exists, however, is the college and university campus and the broader society of the United States and Canada. This environment is highly organic, typified by flexibility, adaptability, and innovation (Hatch & Cunliffe, 2006).

The apparent mismatch between organization and environment represents a natural phenomenon that also presents opportunity for change. Lawrence and Lorsch (1967) posited that successful organizations are those that align the degree of differentiation (people to tasks, time, and goal focus) with the demands of the environment. This alignment process is defined as integration—the collaboration needed to reach the goal (Lawrence & Lorsch, 1967). Haslam, et al (2011) also posited the importance of collaboration and the inclusion of members within a group in order to more effectively apply their perceptions and beliefs into the norms and processes of the group. The social change model (Astin, 1996, HERI, 1996) advocated that all members of a group exhibit leader behaviors toward positive social change through application of competencies that emphasize collaboration, engagement, and communication.

The SAE organization, existing policies and programs, and leadership provide both barriers and opportunities for innovation. The recommendation for adoption and implementation of TGE “2.0” incorporates the strong basis provided by the SAE vision, mission, values, and traditions as a platform on which to build a more transformational member development program that better aligns actions with ideals.

Innovation, decision, and adoption. The proposed method for implementing this recommendation is to follow the innovation-decision process outlined by Rogers (2003). This concept was discussed in detail earlier in this chapter. What follows is the application of Rogers’ (2003) process specifically to SAE and TGE “2.0”.

Knowledge. Step 1, the knowledge step, began with the implementation of TGE in 2014. Knowledge about TGE has been continuously enhanced by members’ experiences and feedback since implementation. Past data from previous studies on the

impact of GLO membership and development of socially responsible leadership (Martin, et al, 2012; Hevel et al, 2014) have been supported by the findings of this study. This consolidated body of knowledge can now be translated into the next stage of development based on the parallel innovation model posited by Rogers (2003), shown in Figure 6.

In the knowledge phase, agenda setting establishes and reinforces the need for the TGE “2.0” innovation based on the perception of a general organizational challenge and opportunity (Rogers, 2003). TGE “2.0” is not a massive disruptive or traumatic change based on an existential threat to the organization but rather a latent opportunity. A latent opportunity is one purposely designed to create an enhanced or improved situation (Bardach, 2012). Gaining the support of senior leaders is therefore crucial in this step, because their acceptance of the issue and assignment of implementation resources are critical to long-term success.

Matching. The next step, matching, takes the identification of the innovation and support of senior leaders and places it within the structure and culture of the organization (Rogers, 2003). This key step in the innovation process requires that change agents among staff and volunteer leaders at all levels develop ways and means of translating learning theories and aspirational goal concepts into actual practice. This step also mandates understanding and analyzing the internal and external stakeholders and their respective power and interests (Figures 7 and 8). There exists an important role for this researcher in this step, as an executive within the organization to help lead change based on the insights gained from this research, application of transformation leadership

experience gained in professional life, and through knowledge of key stakeholders based on the current role of gaining philanthropic support to SAE through its Foundation.

The matching step begins with persuasion on the potential for innovation by aligning stakeholder opinions with the proposed solution. This necessitates establishing early and sustained contact with stakeholders through direct communication, identification of key opinion leaders, and a plan for implementation that includes an assessment of the newly implemented TGE “2.0.” “TGE 2.0” is important but challenging, given the nature of the organization and its multifaceted leadership structure and the variance of membership between undergraduate men and alumni across many demographic categories.

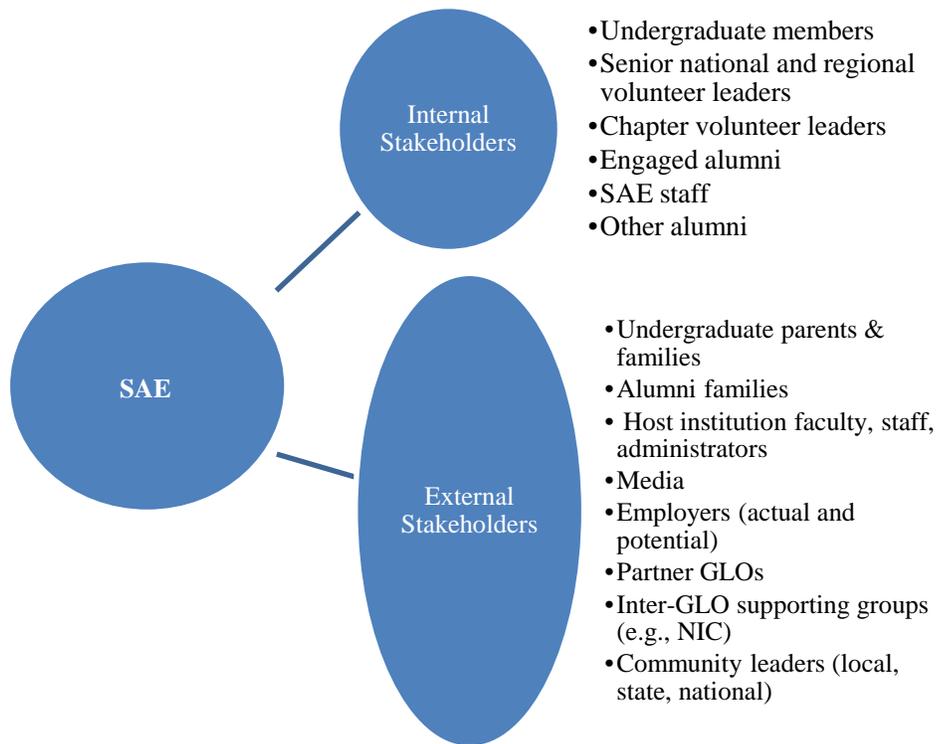


Figure 7. Stakeholder diagram.

Power	<p><u>Keep Satisfied</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapter volunteer leaders • Engaged alumni • Host institutions faculty, staff, administrators 	<p><u>Manage Closely</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Senior national and regional volunteer leaders • Undergraduate members
	<p><u>Monitor</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Other Alumni 	<p><u>Keep Informed</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SAE staff • Undergraduate parents and families • Alumni families • Media • Employers • Partner GLOs • Inter-GLO support organizations • Community leaders
Interest		

Figure 8. Stakeholder power-interest diagram.

The importance of assessment of the newly implemented TGE “2.0, however, mainly depends on establishing and transmitting the need for better understanding of the opportunities provided by adoption of a revised member-development program. Better understanding of the opportunities could improve individual member behaviors, and by extension, improve the overall organization. Critical to this step, therefore, is the ability of SAE leaders to explain the rationale for the SAE leadership program revisions to members in order to gain consensus on the innovation. Gaining consensus with the “average” members will be especially important; most members likely fall into the early and late majority adoption categories (Rogers, 2003). In accordance with Rogers’ innovation-diffusion model, the matching step, correctly performed, should gain acceptance by innovators, early adopters, and some early majority individuals (Figure 9).

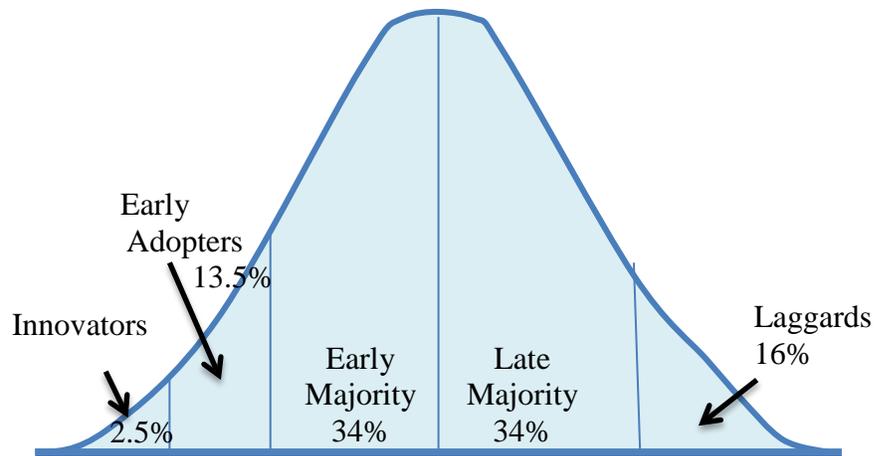


Figure 9. Sample adopter categories

Note: Adapted from *Diffusion of innovations*, by E. Rogers, 2003, New York, NY: Free Press, p. 281.

Decision-Redefining and restructuring. This step begins the actual implementation of innovation based on a decision and implementation (Figure 6) by SAE leadership and the assessment of effectiveness of the planning and socialization work done in the preceding actions. Redefining TGE into TGE “2.0” will require a significant investment of individual and organizational energy to drive this innovation. Because this is a latent opportunity to improve the member-development program, based on experience and data collected in this study, this innovation should not require a broad leap of faith or trust. Nevertheless, one of the essential steps to sustain implementation success will be opinion leaders’ identification and communication of the need and utility of the innovation to the membership, especially to those who would be categorized as “average” members, in order to continue adoption by early-majority stakeholders and the beginning of adoption by late-majority stakeholders (Figure 9). Some crucial steps are recommended for effective action during implementation:

- Conduct individual and chapter opinion and satisfaction surveys on the existing TGE with specific focus on alignment of organizational mission/vision/values with program objective/outcomes/curriculum;
- Collect SAE statistics on all categories and indicators of individual, chapter, and alumni association success. Statistics might include
 - Undergraduate members and chapters' grade recruitment and membership numbers, social programs data, grade point averages, financial data, health and safety records, and campus organization, participation, and leadership data; and
 - Alumni members' knowledge and awareness of alumni portions of TGE, amount of participation individually (volunteer, donor, etc.), membership in chapter or area alumni association, categorization of individuals into professional or vocational sectors by geographic location and age;
- Resource analysis including staff, volunteers, budget, and time; and
- Benchmarking statistics from other GLO partners, best practices from outside organizations, or other education and development programs.

These steps follow and expand on the objective prescribed in the SAE Strategic Plan to “introduce and invigorate mission-focused programming that serves member development needs throughout college and alumni life” (SAE, 2016a, p. 3). Two supporting SAE initiatives within the strategic plan relate to this objective: to assess member and alumni education and training needs, and to develop and implement a program based on the needs assessment and review of current programming. This study

provides the research-based means to develop effective courses of action for adoption within SAE and establishes a basis for increased integration, as defined earlier, to best support the innovation.

Clarifying and routinizing. The clarifying and routinizing (Figure 6) phases of implementation are the final steps in the management of this innovation, and critical to its sustained acceptance and success. As Rogers (2003) outlined in his innovation-decision model, confirmation by those in the organization determines continued acceptance of the innovation or a change from initial rejection to acceptance. This brings the remainder of the late majority and laggard stakeholders (Figure 7) into adopting and actively supporting the innovation. Key to the success of this innovation period is transparent and consistent communication of the importance of the innovation as well as active demonstration of tangible, positive examples of the results of the innovation throughout the organization (Rogers, 2003). Throughout the entire innovation process, active transformational leadership remains a vital component. This requires communication to all internal and external SAE stakeholders through newsletters, electronic and social media, conferences, and most importantly direct engagement by SAE leadership at all levels.

Adoption of the recommended TGE “2.0” will reinforce the strong vision and mission statement of SAE with a program that is aspirational and enables personal social responsibility, and continues to improve the organization. SAE needs to align its member-development program outcomes with its mission and values to meet current challenges and to provide the basis on which to build for the future. TGE “2.0” supports developing men to meet these requirements and enables SAE to adapt dynamically to

follow Hatch and Cunliffe's (2006) prescription "that successful organizations will change in response to changes in their environments in order to maintain fit" (p. 80). TGE "2.0" helps members sustain the value of SAE while appropriately focusing on those who exemplify that value through demonstrated socially responsible leadership in consonance with the ideals of the True Gentleman.

Implementation and Management

As outlined in the previous section, the recommended TGE "2.0" has the potential to reinforce the existing SAE organizational mission and vision with a strong supportive member-development program that enables undergraduate and alumni members' socially responsible leadership actions. This proposed solution emerged from participants' experiences and insights and is supported by research in literature on learning and leadership. TGE "2.0" is a change from the existing program in terms of better alignment of outcomes to vision and mission, but is more accurately an innovation or "improvement of a product" rather than an overt, massive shift (Robbins & Judge, 2012, p. 242). The concept of innovation also reinforces the idea stated in the previous section that SAE is striving to be an integrating organization that maintains its traditional hierarchical structure when necessary while still demonstrating an organic capacity to flex and adapt to the environment (Hatch & Cunliffe, 2006).

The theoretical steps to gain stakeholder buy-in and management were discussed previously. Effective execution, however, is where theory translates into action, and that requires detailed planning and "caring and committed leadership and followership" (Bryson, 2011, p. 382). Bryson offered two basic approaches to implementation: direct and staged. Direct implementation is most appropriate when the situation is relatively

simple, the need is obvious to most stakeholders, and the change can be accomplished without major disruption to the ongoing operations of the organization (Bryson, 2011). Staged implementation is a more deliberate program occurring over time, with pilot projects, demonstrations, and major decision points on resources and communication (Bryson, 2011).

TGE “2.0” is envisioned as a long-term process improvement to the existing member-development program but one that is relatively simple, beginning with a reorientation of outcomes aligned to the aspirational objective in mission and vision and the True Gentleman program, followed by updates to curricula and alignment of resources, training, and education. Long-term process improvement is best supported by the concept of direct implementation (Bryson, 2011). Table 12 shows an example of direct implementation action plan and timeline using Rogers’ (2003) innovation-decision model.

Table 12

Example Implementation Plan

Phase	Task	Desired Outcome	People	Projected Start Date	Duration in days
<i>Agenda Setting</i>					
	Reaffirm program goal & supporting objectives	SAE mission & vision validated -TGE 2.0 goal approved	-Senior volunteer leaders -SAE staff	Immediately on review	1
	Determine desired final implement date	-Date and requirements list complete, including cost and risk	-Senior volunteer leaders -SAE staff	Month 1, 1	1
<i>Continued</i>					

Table 12 continued

Phase	Task	Desired Outcome	People	Projected Start Date	Duration in days
	Determine desire or need for external design partner	-Decision point 1 -Y/N? -Scope of duties?	-Senior volunteer leaders -SAE staff	Month 1, 1	1
Matching					
	Communicate decision to high power/interest stakeholders	-Tailored message based on P/I grid	-SAE staff develops, Senior vol leaders implements -Partner org (T)	Month 1, 15	15
	Gather response	-Collated data	-SAE staff brief results	Month 1, 30	15
	Develop and implement needs/insights surveys to all internal stakeholders	-Gather data and statistics	-SAE staff	Month 2, 15	15
	-Collate data, brief results, develop communications to all stakeholders	-Finalized objectives and base implementation plan	-SAE staff -Senior vol leaders	Month 2, 30	15
	-Identify key opinion leaders and early adopters	-Develop & distribute focused supporting info and documents for identified individuals	-SAE staff -National and regional volunteers -Engaged alumni -Identified undergrad members	Month 3, 15	15

Continued

Table 12 continued

Phase	Task	Desired Outcome	People	Projected Start Date	Duration in days
Redefining and Restructuring					
	Conduct initial assessment of sample members using SRLS	-Gain baseline data on tenets of SRL -Determine areas of emphasis on content	-SAE staff -Partner org (T) -Sample undergrad and alumni members	Month 3	30
	Develop program-release beta version for trial testing	-Gain additional consensus on content and method -Develop additional network of followers through inclusion in process -gain buy-in from alumni	-SAE staff -Partner org (T) -Engaged alumni -Undergrad members -Volunteer leaders	Month 3 & 4	60
	Continue or Reject?	-Decision point 2	-All	EOM 4	
Clarifying					
	-Continue refinement of program	-Additional content developed	-SAE staff -Partner org (T)	Month 5	30
	-Stakeholder messaging	-Internal for program buy-in -External for explanation on rationale and scope -Other GLO partners for feedback and sharing	-SAE staff -Volunteer leaders -Partner org (T)	Month 5	30

Continued

Table 12-Continued

Phase	Task	Desired Outcome	People	Projected Start Date	Duration in days
Routinizing					
	TGE 2-0 Complete?	Decision point 3	All	Month 6	30
	Implement & Communicate		All		
	Assess results quarterly/refine		All	Ongoing	

Leaders’ roles in implementing proposed solution. Leaders at every level play a critical role in implementing this solution. The first major leadership step is gaining buy-in from the senior volunteer leadership for the solution throughout SAE. Senior volunteer alumni leaders in formal positions must agree on the purpose of the program and innovation, the methods through which it will be implemented and executed, and the desired end state. Once gained, this consensus must be communicated clearly and consistently to all stakeholders in order to gain broader consensus from leaders at all levels. Once leaders communicate the decision and rationale for innovation, and support is gained, the second major step is building the base of consensus across SAE. Referring back to Rogers’ (2003) adopter categories in Figure 9, most of those in the innovator and early adopter categories are senior and regional volunteer leaders, engaged alumni, and some undergraduates. These men are also likely the opinion-leaders who can be the network of advocates for the recommended innovation across the organization. To gain momentum on consensus, and potentially accelerate adoption, leaders should focus strong communications on the early and late adopters. The optimum method is to orient directly

on those assessed as late adopters in order to reduce the peak of the bell-shaped curve into a nonstandard result and move a higher percentage into the early adopter category.

One potentially challenging barrier that leaders at all levels may face is communicating with the laggards, or those who may not choose to support the innovation willingly. Their resistance may be passive and can therefore be handled with patient resilience. Some laggards may decide to resign their memberships; others will retain membership but be inactive. However, some small subset of the laggard population may choose to resist the innovation despite its low cost and perceived high benefit. If the overwhelming majority of the organization approves and embraces the change, leaders will have to deal with those few directly in accordance with existing fraternity laws and policies.

Implications

Practical Implications

Implementing the proposed solution based on this study may present opportunities both inside and outside SAE. The most compelling implication is the prospect for alignment of the central member-development program with the vision, mission, and values of SAE as the core on which the entire member experience is built. Emerging from this core are the many other programs already in place for health and safety, history, ritual, traditions, laws, and other central topics important for members to understand and practice. Additionally, the core member-development program that is by design universally applicable to all SAE members is also the supporting block for the remaining leader-development opportunities. By realigning TGE in its current form to TGE “2.0,” every program could and should be reviewed in detail and redesigned as well to achieve

the intended outcomes of TGE “2.0” and meet the dynamic needs of members and the organization now and in the future.

An additional compelling implication from this study lies in the generalizability and transferability of the results. Although the data were gained solely from SAE members based on their perceptions of the SAE member-development program, the results could motivate leaders of other GLOs to review their programs and alignment as most GLOs have similar visions and mission statements and member-development programs. Additionally, the recommendation to use the social change model (Astin, 1996) and the Socially Responsible Leadership Survey (Tyree, 1998) as the framework and assessment tool ties directly back to best practices in higher education and the recognized need for more routinized development programs for undergraduates that yield long-term results (Dugan & Komives, 2007). As such, it is possible that other organizations within the higher education environment might benefit from employing these constructs in adapting the current recommended alignment strategy for SAE to their respective organization.

Reflections and Implications for Future Research

This study produced several concepts that may provide potential avenues for reflection and future research. The purpose of this study was to evaluate how the SAE membership contributed to development of socially responsible leadership in members’ undergraduate years and how the SAE leadership program affected their lives after graduation. Future research might explore additional questions that emerged for the researcher in this study: How does this concept relate to similar limited-membership organizations with stated ideals and values that must rely on demonstrated individual

member behaviors to ensure the organization itself remains viable? Can an organization that is “advertised” as a social group realistically include and expect all members to inculcate and exhibit ideals and values more akin to a social service organization and still attract new members over time? Finally, in light of the ongoing challenges facing students and their host institutions regarding race relations, gender-orientation questions, and academic inquiry, can SAE or any GLO provide something different or unique to its members, and ultimately, to society? Other question may emerge for readers with varied experiences and interests.

Achieving some balance between retaining the social part of SAE membership and a focus on building socially responsible leadership was an important aspect of the context around this study, reinforced by data gathered from participants during the interview process. Additional research on deeper understanding of the relationship between the social aspect of GLOs and the service and philanthropy aspects could contribute further to the future viability of SAE and other GLOs. For SAE to survive, it must be relevant to current and prospective members, to host institutions, and to members as they graduate and become alumni. The social aspect cannot be discounted and must be incorporated in the overall scheme of development. Many philanthropic, service, community, and professional organizations exist in the United States—why does SAE (or any GLO) matter, and how does it remain relevant now or into the future?

One additional implication for future research emerged as the data were gathered and analyzed. Several participants responded during their interviews that SAE membership might offer opportunities to grow more holistically as undergraduates, and to use that opportunity to further their lives as young alumni. A potential study could be

designed to determine if another model already in practice that supports holistic human development, such as the health promotion model (O'Donnell, 2009), might be a useful supporting base for an aspirational organization like SAE. The health promotion concept promotes individual growth across the pillars of physical, behavioral, spiritual, family and social health-all of which are inter-related and connected (O'Donnell, 2009).

Summary of the Study

This study provided a unique opportunity to review the existing member-development program of Sigma Alpha Epsilon and its impact on enabling socially responsible leadership in its members after graduation. Collected from a sample of 12 alumni who graduated between 2012 and 2016, the data yielded relevant, recent, and rich descriptions of the impacts of membership and the member-development program.

The data showed that SAE membership and identification with the mission, vision, and values of SAE were central to the participants' undergraduate experiences and translated into their postgraduate lives as alumni. The participants noted the mission, vision, and values were most directly reflected in SAE ritual and its creed, the True Gentleman (Appendix A). However, although the participants felt deeply the positive impacts of their membership experiences, significant gaps were identified between the aspirational standards of the SAE organizational statements, ritual, and creed on one hand, and the universal member-development program on the other. Participants felt many of the positive aspects of their experiences came from the relationships they built with other members, their own self-development, and their choice to engage with their local chapter and the national organization.

SAE has a strong strategic plan with clear mission, vision, and values (SAE, 2016a). SAE's history is rich with traditions, ritual, and creed—all reflective of the mission, vision, and values—as well as the existing member-development program, the True Gentleman Experience, and other programs that provide a framework on which to build. Leaders may find it difficult to align all the programs toward achieving the high standards of existing ritual and creed while focusing on the aspirational goals of the mission, vision, and values, and still meet the prescriptions necessary to ensure all member actions comply with existing laws and host institution requirements. SAE at its core, however, is a social organization, and much like other organizations, has the potential to meet these challenges by viewing them as opportunities.

Analysis of the results of this study resulted in the overarching recommended solution: to revise the existing SAE member education program into a mission-focused, values-based, and aspirational goal-oriented program called TGE “2.0.” Four supporting points for adopting and implementing this recommended solution emerged from analysis of the data in this study: 1-Build the program in direct alignment with the SAE vision, mission, values, and creed; 2-Design the program content to engage and retain members by focusing on aspirational goals as guideposts for individual behaviors and actions, rather than a focus on obligations first and incorporate learning techniques and capabilities designed on academic and practical literature; 3-provide the structure for lifelong member development and opportunities for individuals to remain connected with SAE, and serve as continuity for future members as well; and 4-the adoption and implementation of the program should follow a well-publicized, adaptable, and coordinated plan that incorporates all stakeholders in its design and execution.

Program revisions might better align the program and all SAE's supporting programs with the mission and vision, consistent with the strategic plan (SAE, 2016). Embedded within the revision would still be the requirements to meet all the legal and regulatory prescriptions, but the overall focus would shift toward aspirational and inspirational motivation rather than obligational motivation. Learning theories and models such as the social change model (Astin, 1996; HERI, 1996) provide a ready framework recognized in higher education that might serve as a foundation for SAE program revisions and help align TGE "2.0" with other developmental opportunities already resident on host-institution campuses. TGE "2.0" also supports the lifelong development of SAE men who initiate for life by providing a program that meets the needs of alumni in their postgraduate, professional experiences.

As discussed throughout this study, belonging to a social fraternity or attending a member-development program is not, nor can it be, the sole solution for every challenge undergraduate members might face in their lives. However, social fraternities provide a potential structure on which an individual could build a balanced view of personal development, which could include the critical aspect of socially responsible leadership. This development could also lead to increased potential for academic, social, behavioral, and financial success as an undergraduate and as an alumnus. Members who live SAE's aspirational goals by developing and exhibiting the behaviors of SAE's mission, vision, values, and creed, as supported by a lifelong SAE program, ultimately benefit themselves and other individuals, as well as their communities, businesses, and families. Achieving this high standard requires an effective and focused program; the results of this study reinforced the provision of a revitalized member development program that meets the

needs of the individual, matches the ideals of SAE, and contributes ultimately to the greater good.

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Appendix A: The True Gentleman

The True Gentleman is the man whose conduct proceeds from good will and an acute sense of propriety and whose self-control is equal to all emergencies; who does not make the poor man conscious of his poverty, the obscure man of his obscurity, or any man of his inferiority or deformity; who is himself humbled if necessity compels him to humble another; who does not flatter wealth, cringe before power, or boast of his own possessions or achievements; who speaks with frankness but always with sincerity and sympathy; whose deed follows his word; who thinks of the rights and feelings of others, rather than his own; and who appears well in any company, a man with whom honor is sacred, and virtue safe.

John Walter Wayland

Appendix B: Interview Protocol

Subject Code X	Name	Chapter/Region	Graduation Year & Inner Circle/LLI Year

Phone Number: xxx-xxx-xxxx

Interview Date/Time: Day, Month/Time

- Interview guide questions:
 - a. “Why did you choose to be part of a fraternity as an undergraduate?”
 - i. Why SAE and not another social fraternity?
 - ii. Tell me your understanding of the SAE mission and organizational values.
 - b. “Describe how your SAE membership contributed to your undergraduate experience?”
 - i. If positive, what made it so (anecdotal examples)
 - ii. If negative, what made it so (anecdotal examples)
 - iii. What resonates most with you about SAE and your undergraduate years?
 - c. “How would you describe socially responsible leadership?” “Social change?” How did SAE instill or develop this definition for you?
 - d. “Reflecting on your undergraduate experience, can you provide examples of how your SAE membership contributed to development of social responsibility or socially responsible leadership?”
 - i. Anecdotal examples
 - ii. Ties back to 8 Cs of SCM (listed below)
 - e. “Now as an alumnus, what are some examples of how your SAE undergraduate experience has translated into in your post-graduate life?”
 - i. What kinds of things are you involved in (community, faith, fraternity, work, family...)?
 - ii. Anecdotal examples of SAE member experience into alumnus life-again application of 8 C principles to real-life challenges or opportunities
 - f. Member Development Program assessment?
 - i. Your experience?
 - ii. The “average” member
 - iii. If you wanted to change one thing, and could, what would it be?
 - g. Anything else you’d like to add?

Eight Cs of the Social Change Model

Individual Values	
Consciousness of Self	Being self-aware of the beliefs, values, attitudes and emotions that motivate you to take action. Be mindful or aware of your current emotional state, behavior, and perceptual lenses
Congruence	Acting in ways consistent with your values and beliefs. Thinking, feeling, and behaving with consistency, genuineness, authenticity, and honesty towards others
Commitment	Having significant investment in an idea or person in terms of intensity and duration. Having the energy to serve the group and its goals. Can originate from within but others can create the environment that supports individual passions.
Group Values	
Collaboration	Working with others in a common effort, sharing responsibility, authority, and accountability. Multiplying group effectiveness by capitalizing on various perspectives and talents, and on the power of diversity to generate creative solutions and actions.
Common Purpose	Having shared aims and values. Involving others in building group’s vision and purpose.
Controversy with Civility	Recognizing two fundamental realities of creative effort that differing viewpoints are inevitable, and that differences must be aired openly but with civility and respect.
Community Values	
Citizenship	Believing in a process where and individual and/or group becomes connected to the community/society through activity. Members of communities are interdependent, and individuals and groups have responsibility for the welfare of others.
Change-the ultimate goal of leadership is positive social change	Believing in the importance of making a better world and society. Individuals, groups and communities work together to make change.

Note. Adapted from “Leadership for social change,” by H. S. Astin, 1996, *About Campus*, 1(3), pp.6-7; *A social change model of leadership, developmental guidebook* (Version 3), by Higher Education Research Institute, 1996, The National Clearinghouse of Leadership Programs (NCLP), p. 21; *Designing an instrument to measure the socially responsible leadership using the social change model of*

leadership development (Doctoral dissertation), by T. Tyree, 1998, University of Maryland, College Park, MD, p. 176. Used with permission of NCLP.

Interview Notes:

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Transcription (Direct transcription from digital recordings captured on each participant's record.

Appendix C: Recruitment Message

Dear Brother,

I am studying the relationship between the experiences you had as an SAE in individual development as an undergraduate, your perception of their effect on enabling socially responsible leadership; and your experiences since your graduation. I am interviewing only SAE members in this study who are recent graduates (2012-2016) who attended the Inner Circle/Levere Leadership Institute program, as you represent a discrete subset of our alumni base with recent experience.

I intend to select a sample of up to 15 from those who respond to this request that is representative of the total population in age and geographic dispersion. Complete anonymity by name, age, Chapter, and your answers will be maintained by coding all responses. If selected for inclusion in the sample, your total time commitment should not exceed an initial interview of approximately one hour, with the potential of a follow-up interview of not more than 30 minutes.

The results of this study will serve as partial fulfillment of my requirements to complete a Doctor of Education degree at Creighton University in Omaha Nebraska, as well as provide feedback to SAE leadership on recommendations for enhancements to existing programs or creation of new programs to further our members' development.

Thank you for your consideration in this important study. If interested and willing to participate, please respond accordingly by Wednesday January 18, 2017.

Will Grimsley, NC Theta '80