

FRATERNITY AND SORORITY THRIVING: A RESIDENTIAL PERSPECTIVE

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When provided with the space and resources common to residential learning communities, fraternity and sorority residences are often viewed as synonymous to the risky behaviors associated with fraternal organizations. The purpose of this study was to compare the levels of thriving of fraternity and sorority members in various living environment to their nonaffiliated peers using the Thriving Quotient. Fraternity and sorority members' type of residence was not found to be associated with student thriving, although living closer to campus was positively associated with Social Connectedness and negatively associated with Engaged Learning. Fraternity and sorority membership overall was positively associated with Academic Determination and Social Connectedness, and negatively associated with Engaged Learning. Implications for intentionally creating living-learning communities and maximizing the residential experience of fraternity and sorority residences are discussed.

Decades of studies have been dedicated to understanding the positive and negative correlates to fraternity and sorority membership. A significant number of researchers have noted negative outcomes, including associations with hazing, alcohol consumption, binge drinking, and a plethora of other negative correlates (Page & O'Hegarty, 2006; Penn, 1974; Tampke, 1990; Wechsler, Kuh, & Davenport, 1996). With such a presence on college campuses, some researchers and student affairs professionals have questioned the continued existence of social fraternities (Kuh, Pascarella, & Wechsler, 1996; Maisel, 1990; Winston & Saunders, 1987). On the other hand, at least some researchers believe fraternal organizations hold some degree of unrealized potential to positively influence student learning and development (Winston & Saunders, 1987).

One of the most iconic parts of fraternities and sororities is the house or place of residence. As such, fraternity and sorority residences are often viewed as synonymous to the risky behaviors associated with fraternal organizations. In an effort to address risk management concerns, some campuses have developed alternative forms of fraternity and sorority housing or opted to remove official fraternity housing

altogether (Kellogg, 2001; Shea, 1995). Yet in comparison to the amount of research dedicated to understanding the correlates to fraternity and sorority membership, little research has addressed how fraternity/sorority residences may affect student learning and development.

To meet the needs of students and address risk management concerns, an examination of which facilities support fraternity and sorority members' success is needed. Rather than take a strictly corrective approach, a positive psychology approach (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000) would address the characteristics of the living environment so that an optimal residence may be designed. Recent research by Schreiner, McIntosh, Nelson, and Pothoven (2009a) has verified an instrument grounded in positive psychology, the Thriving Quotient, designed to assess the predictors of student success. Such a tool may provide information to assess the comparative ability of student residences to promote student success and thriving.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study was to compare the levels of thriving of fraternity and sorority members in various living environments to

their nonaffiliated peers. Many variables may affect a student's living environment, including the location on or off campus, the distance from campus, the type of physical residence (e.g., house, apartment), the relationship of living-mates, and the affiliation with the housing unit to a fraternity or sorority. As a measure of student success, the Thriving Quotient (Schreiner, et al., 2009a) was used as part of a larger multi-institutional study.

The primary hypothesis was that official on-campus fraternity and sorority housing provided students with the living environment most likely to promote thriving. Three secondary hypotheses provided additional direction to this study:

Fraternity and sorority members, regardless of their residence, are more likely to experience higher levels of thriving in the domains of Social Connectedness and Positive Perspective and will report higher levels of overall thriving than their non-affiliated peers.

Fraternity and sorority members who live closer to campus than their affiliated peers will report higher levels of thriving.

A shared residential experience among members of a fraternity or sorority, defined by a higher number of fraternity or sorority members in a shared residence, will be associated with higher levels of thriving than students with fewer fraternity or sorority members in their residence.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Campus administrators responsible for fraternity and sorority housing have developed a myriad of options. In some cases, fraternity and sorority members may reside in official housing in the traditional form of fraternity houses or alternatively through townhomes, apartments, designated residence hall floors or hallways, or smaller residence hall suites. In other instances, either due to the college banning the aforementioned housing options or through the lack of available housing for all fraternity and sorority

members, some affiliated students may live in traditional residence halls, off-campus housing, or occasionally in the housing units of other fraternities or sororities.

Few studies have been published assessing the effect of fraternity/sorority housing solutions. Furthermore, even fewer studies have examined the potential benefits and drawbacks to traditional fraternity and sorority housing versus the alternative housing options that some college officials have explored. Identifying residences that best support affiliated students' collegiate success may help administrators implement plans that are intentionally designed to facilitate the growth and development of students.

Fraternities and sororities have an incredible potential to educate young adults outside the classroom. As advisors to these organizations and their constituents, student affairs professionals have a responsibility to ensure affiliated students have the opportunity to make the most out of the fraternity or sorority experience. Yet the lack of research in the area of fraternity and sorority housing has limited the ability of administrators to intentionally facilitate this key component of the fraternity and sorority experience. By addressing these assumptions about the experiences of fraternity and sorority members through research, student affairs professionals may be able to better facilitate positive experiences for these students. Constructing intentional living environments, drafting policies, and programming to affiliated students are just a few ways expanded research in this area may assist student affairs professionals, maximizing the potential of the fraternity and sorority residential experience.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

In recent years, a plethora of research has been conducted on the residential experience and associated student outcomes. However, few of these studies have examined the comparative experience of students in fraternity and sorority

housing, and fewer still have reviewed fraternity and sorority members not living in their fraternity or sorority residence. Many studies presented residence life and fraternity life as dichotomous student experiences (e.g., Blimling, 1999; Hallenbeck, Dickman, & Fuqua, 2003), and therefore do not account for fraternity and sorority members living in residence halls or other residential environments.

In many of the studies that assess broader fraternity and sorority involvement, no cross analysis has been conducted for fraternity and sorority members residing within or outside of residence halls (e.g., Scharmer, 2005). In some research on college student housing, fraternity and sorority members living in official fraternity/sorority residences are intentionally excluded as a means of creating a more homogeneous sample (e.g., Pike, 1999). In this way, the fraternity and sorority experience has been generalized to the experience of those students living in official fraternity and sorority residences.

Research on Fraternity and Sorority Housing

Before researchers began to analyze the learning and development taking place in fraternity and sorority residences, the concept that fraternity houses were places of development had to be adopted. A series of articles published in the late 1960s and early 1970s explored variables associated with living in fraternity and sorority housing, yet largely through the lens of demographic correlates to residence type (Maurais, 1968; Kuder, 1972; Rago, 1973; Rappaport, et al., 1972). Leading up to the publication of *Learning Reconsidered* (NASPA & ACPA, 2004), a fresh perspective on fraternity residences was being developed.

In 1993, Terenzini, Pascarella, and Blimling suggested that the close residential communities that fraternities often develop are similar to the formal residential living-learning communities developed by administrators. Not long afterward in fraternity and sorority-themed

editions of *New Directions for Student Services*, Whipple and Sullivan (1998a; 1998b) compared fraternities to living-learning communities and suggested that colleges and universities do more to create a learning-centered atmosphere in fraternity housing. These authors' concept of fraternal organizations as communities of learners suggests that student affairs professionals should reconsider their assumptions about fraternity and sorority housing and take steps to intentionally develop meaningful learning environments for these students.

Since the turn of the century, several articles have examined the fraternity and sorority residential experience. One part of this dialogue and research has focused on on-campus versus off-campus fraternity and sorority housing. Coley and Henry (2000) identified seven positive outcomes associated with on-campus fraternity and sorority living: (1) stronger sense of community, (2) increased retention, (3) enhanced institutional involvement and guidance, (4) elevated sense of accountability, (5) improved institutional collaboration, (6) symbol of commitment and enhanced recruitment, and (7) a return to values. The authors advocated that on-campus fraternity and sorority housing can facilitate both the educational and social outcomes that fraternal organizations were founded to achieve. Although Coley and Henry based their opinions largely on anecdotal evidence from their experience at Mercer University, the ideals for which they advocate represent the strong potential for on-campus fraternity and sorority housing.

The opinions of Coley and Henry (2000) were echoed by Morettes (2010) in her study of the perceptions of fraternity and sorority members who moved from off-campus to on-campus fraternity/sorority housing. Morettes' qualitative research on fraternity and sorority members' perceptions of academic success, student retention, and residential community in fraternity/sorority housing revealed much about the differences between on- and off-campus living environments. Participants in the study exposed

significant differences in the two environments, ranging from greater financial security and improved maintenance to better laundry services. Perhaps the most significant finding from this research was the relationships between on-campus residences and academic success. Participants in the study reported that the environment at off-campus chapter houses negatively affected academic performance due to the fact that:

1. There was no accountability for attendance at academic study hours and the chapter facilities were not utilized for academic purposes, and
 2. The chapter facility negatively affected the academic performance of residents.
- (p. 54)

In contrast to the off-campus facilities, the on-campus chapter houses offered a clean and safe learning environment, enforced study and quiet hours, and a popular study room within the facility. These features were reportedly influential in improving the academic focus of residents and the overall academic environment. These findings suggest that on-campus fraternity and sorority housing may offer a better living and learning environment than off-campus equivalent housing arrangements.

Another fraternity and sorority housing research theme has been how the physical space may be constructed to foster community and student growth. Gratto, Gratto, Henry, and Miller (2002) specifically addressed this component through their reflections upon the development and construction of a new fraternity/sorority residential community at the University of South Florida. Grounded in research on student centered physical learning environments, the authors entered into the construction process with the goals of creating on-campus, university-constructed fraternity and sorority residences that would enhance within-group affiliations for individual chapters and the larger fraternity/sorority community; prevent a divide between affiliated and nonaf-

filiated students; create a centralized campus community; and prevent competition among fraternities and sororities based on their physical residence. To promote community within individual chapters, housing units were designed to be large enough to accommodate 20-28 members with an included common area and chapter room. Housing units were constructed in a duplex style and all of the units were internally positioned around a common area to create a communal feel and link each chapter to the fraternity/sorority community. In an attempt to integrate the fraternity and sorority community to the larger university community, the housing complex was placed in close vicinity to the traditional on-campus housing, and all of the units were similarly managed by the department of residence services. Finally, competition between fraternities and sororities was reduced by constructing each unit uniformly with unique landscaping and décor. All of these features allowed for a shared fraternity and sorority experience while remaining integrated into the larger university community.

With fraternity and sorority residences being developed to improve academic success and foster community, it is no surprise that researchers have begun to compare fraternity/sorority housing to living-learning communities. At some campuses such as Miami University (OH), living in a fraternity or sorority house qualifies as fulfilling the sophomore living-learning community residency requirement (Lorenzetti, 2006). To support decisions such as this, Blackburn and Janosik (2009) examined the extent to which fraternity and sorority members experience learning outcomes in their fraternity or sorority residence similar to those experienced by students in typical living-learning communities.

To assess fraternity and sorority members' residential experience, the authors surveyed fraternity and sorority members living in fraternity/sorority residences using the Learning Communities Assessment. This instrument used a 10-point Likert-type scale with distinct do-

mains including active engagement, learning, sense of community, and identity. The results indicated that participants scored highly on active engagement and sense of community, but scored lower on learning. Results on the sense of identity subsection were mixed, with fraternity and sorority members scoring high on some items but low on others.

Several additional trends emerged when examining the contrasting results of fraternities versus sororities. Fraternity members cited improved writing skills and critical thinking skills as a result of their living environments at significantly higher levels than their sorority counterparts. Furthermore, fraternity men rated their experience significantly higher on two items: "everyone knows who belonged to our group" and "we developed our own way of doing things" (Blackburn & Janosik, 2009, p. 66). Both of the later items were in the Sense of Community subscale.

Blackburn and Janosik (2009) made significant progress toward quantitatively assessing fraternity and sorority residences as living-learning communities. However, a number of limitations and shortcomings restrict the extent to which the research succeeded in accomplishing its purpose. In studying fraternity and sorority residences, the authors missed several opportunities to increase the amount of knowledge generated from their study. One of the study's stated objectives was to "examine the degree to which members living in fraternity/sorority housing experienced learning outcomes associated with living in a learning community" (Blackburn & Janosik, 2009, p. 57). No data were published comparing the results of fraternity and sorority residences to other living-learning communities or traditional housing options, the results relied upon individual items from the instrument that were not independently validated, and no control group was used. This lost opportunity would have provided relevant data on the comparative experiences of student housing options. In addition, the

study sampled both on-campus and off-campus fraternity residences but failed to compare or contrast these groups.

At the campus where the research took place, on-campus and off-campus fraternity housing differed based on size and location of the residences. The differences could potentially have significant implications in terms of the student experience. Again, the failure to analyze or report these data was a missed opportunity. Nevertheless, Blackburn and Janosik (2009) demonstrated that fraternity and sorority housing may result in improved developmental and learning outcomes for residents.

Research on Thriving

A plethora of quantitative instruments exist for research on college students and their environment, each with distinct variables and characteristics. Yet when seeking to gain a holistic perspective on a student's success during college, fewer instruments match the criteria. The Thriving Quotient provides a means of assessing the extent that students' academic, intrapersonal, and interpersonal characteristics predict academic success and retention (Schreiner, McIntosh, Nelson, & Pothoven, 2009a). Grounded in the field of positive psychology and related to the concept of flourishing (Keyes & Haidt, 2003), the term thriving has been used to describe college students "who are fully engaged intellectually, socially, and emotionally" (Schreiner, 2010a, p. 4). In this way, thriving includes the intrapersonal, interpersonal, and academic dimensions of student success. Thriving may be further broken down into five factors: Engaged Learning, Diverse Citizenship, Academic Determination, Positive Perspective, and Social Connectedness. These independent factors encompass many of the experiences and attitudes of students during college.

Perhaps the most overlooked dimension of student success in recent research that is examined by the Thriving Quotient is the variable of intrapersonal thriving. Intrapersonal thriving is

measured by the domain of Positive Perspective. Students demonstrating strong intrapersonal development and scoring highly on measures of Positive Perspective demonstrate an optimistic explanatory style, are able to envision future success, and are able to understand and apply their strengths (Schreiner, 2010a). These skills may be learned and developed in college so that students may achieve more during and after their collegiate experience.

Academic thriving encompasses more than achieving good grades during college and is measured by the domains of Academic Determination and Engaged Learning. Schreiner (2010b) outlined Engaged Learning as a compilation of meaningful processing, focused attention, and active participation. Students who are engaged academically make connections from their coursework to extracurricular activities and are psychologically engaged in course material. Furthermore, these students are more likely to be satisfied with the learning process, to interact with faculty outside of class, and to report higher learning gains in college (Schreiner, 2010b, p. 4). Academic Determination is reflected in students' investment of effort, self-regulated learning, environmental mastery, and goal-directed thinking. Students who demonstrate persistence through challenging work, believe their effort will contribute to their academic success, and develop strategies to reach their academic goals demonstrate high levels of Academic Determination. In this way, through both Academic Determination and Engaged Learning, thriving incorporates a multifaceted approach to the academic learning experience.

Interpersonal thriving is reflected in the domains of Social Connectedness and Diverse Citizenship. Social connectedness refers to the sense of community and healthy relationships with peers (Schreiner, 2010c). Beyond developing a support network, strong Social Connectedness may be demonstrated by social integration into campus as a member of a community of learners. Diverse Citizenship encompasses

an openness to diversity and a commitment to making the world a better place. Students who demonstrate Diverse Citizenship "not only are open to diverse viewpoints and value differences in others, but they also believe that it is their responsibility to contribute to the community around them and make a positive difference" (Schreiner, 2010c, p. 8). The dual effect of Diverse Citizenship and Social Connectedness is a student who has developed mature interpersonal relations and is thriving in college.

While all five domains of thriving represent distinct individual qualities, the broader concept of thriving has been shown to be a second-order factor based on the cumulative effect of all five domains. Thriving has been shown to account for 12-22% of the variance in student success outcome variables above and beyond other individual and institutional characteristics (Schreiner, Edens, & McIntosh, 2011). In comparison, institutional and student background variables only contribute between 1-7% of the variance for student persistence, satisfaction, and fit (Schreiner, Pothoven, Nelson, & McIntosh, 2009b).

The construct of thriving as defined by the Thriving Quotient has been shown to effectively measure student vitality and success. Furthermore, the instrument accounts for a broad range of student experiences and may account for the many dimensions of fraternity and sorority life. Using a broad construct such as thriving to assess fraternity and sorority housing may provide a more holistic perspective and allow for meaningful comparisons of student experiences.

METHODOLOGY

Overview of the Instrument

Understanding the differences in student success by residence and fraternity or sorority involvement was achieved through the implementation of a correlational design, the distinguishing nominative variable being fraternity or sorority membership. A cross-sectional study

was implemented as an appropriate means of evaluating the effectiveness of mostly unchanging living environments. The independent variables were fraternity or sorority membership, residential location (on or off campus), residence type, and distance from campus. The dependent variable was student self-report scores on the Thriving Quotient and its five domains (Schreiner, McIntosh, Nelson, & Pothoven, 2009a).

The current study was implemented as part of a multi-institutional national survey designed to validate the newly created Thriving Quotient (Schreiner, McIntosh, Nelson, & Pothoven, 2009a). Items on the Thriving Quotient were scaled on a six-point Likert-type scale ranging from (1 = *strongly disagree*, 6 = *strongly agree*) (see Appendix A). Previous studies have established the Thriving Quotient as internally valid in the five factors of Engaged Learning ($A = .85$), Diverse Citizenship ($A = .80$), Academic Determination ($A = .83$), and Positive Perspective ($A = .83$), and established the validity of the Thriving Quotient as a whole ($A = .91$; Schreiner, McIntosh, Nelson, & Pothoven, 2009a). In addition to the core instrument, a number of demographical items supplemented the survey and offered a larger perspective on the levels of thriving among different student groups. Finally, specific to the host institution for this study, three additional items were included related to fraternity and sorority residence type, designed to test the core and secondary hypothesis (see Appendix B). Together, the Thriving Quotient, demographic questions, and institution specific items created the online survey administered to students.

Following approval by the Institutional Review Board and the National Panhellenic Council, members of the fraternity and sorority community were notified of the study through an email sent via listservs administered by the institution's Panhellenic Council and Interfraternity Council. The email informed students of the study's purpose, revealed its relationship to the institution's Greek Life Office, and encour-

aged them to participate. Although the study was promoted through the Greek Life Office, the researcher was not a part of the office. However, the researcher worked in the adjoining student activities office and therefore was familiar with many of the students in the fraternity/sorority community. For this reason, the promotional email to students included notes about confidentiality and the use of the data.

Based on responses to the listserv request, students were randomly sampled to participate in the study received an invitation via email to their university account on April 29, 2010. Included in the email was the letter of consent and a link to the Thriving Quotient in an online format. A second reminder letter of a similar format was sent one week later. As part of a multi-institutional study, the online survey was administered by representatives of the national project. These researchers were able to insert additional survey items for each institution through the online survey tool Survey Monkey. As a result, the fraternity and sorority housing-specific questions in Appendix B were only administered at a single institution. Following the survey administration, representatives of the national project collected the data, compiled the multi-institutional data, and distributed each participating institution their respective results.

Selection of Data and Variables

The population for this study was college student members of social fraternities and sororities. A stratified random sample was drawn from the general undergraduate population attending a single institution. Of the 1,400 students sampled, half were selected based on fraternity/sorority membership according to institutional research records, and half were randomly selected from the general population as a control group. The sample of fraternity and sorority members represented slightly less than half of the population. Fraternity and sorority members were oversampled to gain sufficient data for correlation analysis. Unlike the previous research

samples using the Thriving Quotient (Schreiner, McIntosh, Nelson, & Pothoven, 2009a), the current study’s sample included non-traditional aged students.

Several institutional characteristics helped define how the survey was designed and implemented. At the host institution, fraternity/

sorority involvement is defined as active membership in a local chapter of a National Interfraternity Council (NIC), the National Panhellenic Conference (NPC), or National Pan-Hellenic Council (NPHC) organization. At the time of the survey, 26 national fraternities and sororities were on campus, composing 9.5% of the

TABLE 1

Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Demographic Variable	Number (N)	Valid Percentage
Sex		
Female	55	61.8
Male	34	38.2
Class Level		
Freshman	11	12.2
Sophomore	9	8.6
Junior	25	27.8
Senior	42	46.7
Other	3	3.3
Race/Ethnicity		
Caucasian/White	73	81.1
African-American/Black	5	5.6
American Indian/Alaskan Native	2	2.2
Asian-American/Native Hawaiian/ Pacific Islander	2	2.2
Latino	2	2.2
Multiracial	2	2.2
Prefer not to respond	4	4.4

Frequencies of participant responses indicated a heterogeneous sample suitable for comparative analysis. Participation in fraternity and sorority life was balanced among participants, with 36% reporting no involvement (see Table 2). Sixty-eight percent of respondents reported living off campus, which closely matched the institutional characteristic. However, 68% reported living on campus or within one mile of campus. Shared residences with fraternity and sorority members were common among participants with 20% of respondents reporting living with four or more members.

TABLE 2*Involvement Characteristics of Respondents*

Involvement Variable	Number (N)	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
How often do you participate in fraternity or sorority life on campus?			
Never	32	36.0	36.0
Once a week or less	4	4.5	40.4
2-3 times a week or so	2	2.2	42.7
About once a day	2	2.2	44.9
2-3 times a day	2	2.2	47.2
4 or more times a day	47	52.8	100.0
Where do you live?			
On campus	28	31.5	
Off campus	61	68.5	
In your current residential setting, how many fraternity or sorority members do you live with?			
One	18	42.9	42.9
Two	13	31.0	73.8
Three	3	7.1	81.8
Four or more	8	19.0	100.0
What is your current residence's distance from campus?			
On campus	23	26.9	26.7
Within 1 mile of campus	31	36.0	62.8
1-5 miles from campus	12	14.0	76.7
6-10 miles from campus	7	8.1	84.9
More than 10 miles from campus	13	15.1	100.0

Given the stratified sampling method used in the study, the confidentiality of participants prevented the researcher from matching responses to the sample groups. Participants were therefore asked to self-report their involvement in fraternity and sorority life during the survey. A strong possibility exists that as a consequence of this sampling method, several respondents from the control group may have reported high involvement in fraternity or sorority life. Responses to other items related to student behavior and involvement were largely on par with institutional norms.

student body. Four NIC fraternities and three NPC sororities had official fraternity and sorority houses on campus with a total capacity for 85 students, although considerably less typically reside in the residences. No official off-campus residences or alternative housing arrangements existed for fraternities and sororities, although it is well known that many fraternity and sorority members live on campus.

ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

Frequencies

Although 105 responses were collected, a number of participants did not complete the entire Thriving Quotient. Incomplete responses were not filtered from the data set. Therefore, the response rate for the Thriving Quotient factors ranged from 6.1% for Diverse Citizenship and 6.4% for Social Connectedness. The response rate for the entire Thriving Quotient was 5.9%. The response rate represents a significant weakness of the study and is discussed further under Limitations.

Demographic variables used to understand the students' background included items assessing gender, age, class level, and race/ethnicity. The mean age of participants was 23.08 ($sd = 6.97$) with a median age of 21, thus reflecting the skewed results toward upperclassmen. Because of a limited number of respondents to some items such as race/ethnicity, no cross analysis were conducted to protect participant confidentiality. In addition, due to incomplete surveys, the percentage for each demographic group displayed in Table 1 reflects the valid percentage based only upon the percentage of respondents to the particular item.

Primary Hypothesis

A one-way ANOVA was conducted to compare the variance in thriving among students in fraternity houses, traditional residence halls, or apartment-style residences. No significant difference in thriving was found between these

groups. Similarly, no significant difference was found between the groups in the domains of Positive Perspective, Social Connectedness, Engaged Learning, Diverse Citizenship, and Academic Determination. To mirror the conditions of the national study, participants 25 years of age and above were filtered out of the data set. A second one-way ANOVA was conducted without the older participants, and no significant difference was found between residence type and thriving, Positive Perspective, Social Connectedness, Engaged Learning, Diverse Citizenship, and Academic Determination.

Secondary Hypotheses

To determine the thriving of fraternity and sorority members regardless of their living environment, a Pearson correlation coefficient was calculated to examine the relationship between fraternity and sorority involvement and scores on the Thriving Quotient. A moderate positive correlation was found between the thriving domain of Social Connectedness and fraternity and sorority involvement ($r(87) = .336, p < .01$). A negative correlation was found between Engaged Learning and fraternity and sorority involvement ($r(85) = -.291, p < .01$). Overall, a weak relationship that was not significant was found between thriving and fraternity and sorority membership (see Table 3).

Additional correlation calculations were conducted using filters to determine the factors that influence thriving in fraternities and sororities. For students who reported their age as under 25 years, a significant relationship was found between Social Connectedness and fraternity and sorority involvement, $r(71) = .272, p < .05$. A positive significant relationship was also found between traditionally aged students' fraternity and sorority involvement and Academic Determination, $r(71) = .272, p < .05$. When students of all ages were used in the calculations, a significant negative relationship was found between Engaged Learning and fraternity and sorority involvement, whereas when non-

TABLE 3*Thriving and Fraternity and Sorority Involvement Correlations*

Thriving Variable	No Filter	Age < 25	≤ 1 Mile	> 1 Mile, Age < 25	≤ 1 Mile, Age < 25
Positive Perspective					
Pearson Correlation	.093	.097	-.058	.237	-.081
Sig. (2-tailed)	.390	.418	.684	.288	.575
N	88	72	52	22	50
Social Connectedness					
Pearson Correlation	.336**	.272*	.314*	.210	.320*
Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	.020	.022	.348	.022
N	89	73	53	22	51
Engaged Learning					
Pearson Correlation	-.291**	-.074	-.358**	.046	-.352*
Sig. (2-tailed)	.006	.538	.009	.839	.012
N	87	72	52	22	50
Diverse Citizenship					
Pearson Correlation	.109	.131	.149	-.103	.138
Sig. (2-tailed)	.317	.281	.298	.656	.344
N	86	70	51	21	49
Academic Determination					
Pearson Correlation	.151	.272*	.083	.637**	-.087
Sig. (2-tailed)	.160	.020	.560	.001	.544
N	88	73	52	22	51
Thriving					
Pearson Correlation	.129	.224	.051	.282	.051
Sig. (2-tailed)	.244	.064	.729	.216	.728
N	83	69	49	21	48

* Correlation is significant at the .05 level (2-tailed).

** Correlation is significant at the .01 level (2-tailed).

traditionally aged students were filtered out, no significant relationship was found (see Table 3).

Measuring students' residence's distance from campus in relation to thriving resulted in several notable relationships. Not surprisingly, students who lived further from campus were found to participate less in fraternity and sorority life than students who lived close to campus, $r(83) = -.583, p < .01$. No significance difference was found between the thriving scores

of students who lived on campus ($M = 4.41, SD = .51$) versus off campus ($M = 4.50, SD = .53$), $t(81) = -.662, p = .510$ (see Table 4). Among students who lived within one mile of campus, fraternity and sorority involvement was found to have a significant positive relationship with Social Connectedness ($r(51) = .314, p < .05$), and a significant negative relationship with Engaged Learning, $r(50) = -.358, p < .01$ (see Table 4).

TABLE 4

Thriving and Number of Fraternity and Sorority Member in Residence Correlations

Thriving Variable	No Filter	Age < 25
Positive Perspective		
Pearson's Correlation	-.103	-.089
Sig. (2-tailed)	.515	.586
N	42	40
Social Connectedness		
Pearson's Correlation	-.003	-.001
Sig. (2-tailed)	.985	.994
N	42	40
Engaged Learning		
Pearson's Correlation	-.045	-.025
Sig. (2-tailed)	.780	.882
N	41	39
Diverse Citizenship		
Pearson's Correlation	-.011	-.005
Sig. (2-tailed)	.944	.976
N	40	38
Academic Determination		
Pearson's Correlation	-.171	-.132
Sig. (2-tailed)	.278	.417
N	42	40
Thriving		
Pearson's Correlation	-.031	-.004
Sig. (2-tailed)	.853	.982
N	39	37

In combining the two filters based on age and residence location, additional relationships were found. Among traditional-aged students who lived more than one mile from campus, a strong positive relationship was found between fraternity and sorority involvement and Academic Determination, $r(20) = .637, p < .05$. Among traditional-aged students who lived within one mile of campus, a positive significant relationship was found between Social Connectedness and fraternity and sorority involvement, $r(49) = .320, p < .05$, and a significant negative relationship was found between Engaged Learning and fraternity and sorority involvement, $r(48) = -.352, p < .05$.

A Pearson correlation coefficient was calculated for the relationship between the number of fraternity and sorority members students lived with and their scores on the Thriving Quotient. No significant relationship was found between the number of fraternity and sorority members in one's residence and thriving, or with any of the thriving domains of Positive Perspective, Social Connectedness, Engaged Learning, Diverse Citizenship, and Academic Determination.

DISCUSSION

Type of On-Campus Residence

Evidence from this study did not support the primary hypothesis that official on-campus fraternity and sorority residences support student thriving. Residents of fraternity and sorority houses reported levels of thriving that were not significantly different than their peers in other on-campus residences. However, it should also be noted that no other type of residence resulted in increased thriving levels. In the same way that the results do not demonstrate increased thriving in fraternity and sorority house residents, the results do not support or justify the abandonment of this traditional form of fraternity housing. In this way, the results are inconclusive.

The lack of a relationship in thriving across

fraternity and sorority member residences may be symptomatic of the larger on-campus housing experience. Across the entire sample of affiliated and nonaffiliated students, on-campus housing was not shown to be correlated with increased thriving. A lack of significance in this area challenges an even greater orthodox component of higher education in the United States. Previous researchers have suggested that the lack of conclusive evidence regarding student residences may be attributed to the presence of an indirect correlation, rather than a direct correlation (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). Living on campus has been previously shown to be associated with higher levels of academic and social engagement (Ballou, Reavill, & Shultz, 1995; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). Therefore, although on-campus housing may not directly support the development of thriving, an increased likelihood to participate in other positive activities may indirectly support student thriving.

Distance From Campus

While no significant differences were found in levels of thriving based on students' on-campus versus off-campus residence location, participants were also assessed on their residences' distance from campus. In examining the correlations between fraternity and sorority involvement and student thriving among students who live within one mile of campus, results similar to that of the broader population were found—that is, higher levels of Social Connectedness and lower levels of Engaged Learning. It should be noted that the relationships between Engaged Learning and fraternity and sorority involvement was slightly stronger in a negative trajectory among students who lived within one mile of campus. The positive relationship found between Social Connectedness and fraternity and sorority involvement was slightly lower and less significant among students within one mile of campus, although the relationship was nonexistent among students living greater than one mile from campus.

In examining the results of students living more than one mile from campus, a strong significant relationship was found between fraternity and sorority involvement and student Academic Determination. This evidence suggests that living farther from campus may be more conducive to academic thriving. Or when viewed inversely, fraternity and sorority members who are more motivated to do well academically are more likely to choose a living environment away from the social atmosphere closer to campus.

Thriving in Fraternity and Sororities

Fraternity and sorority membership has frequently been associated with social development. In similar fashion, fraternity and sorority involvement was shown to be related to the thriving domain of Social Connectedness. These results support the notion that peer support networks in fraternal organizations encourage interpersonal development. However, in the other measure of interpersonal thriving, Diverse Citizenship, no significant relationship was found. These results indicate that fraternities and sororities may need to expand the breadth of the social relationships and experiences during college to promote more holistic interpersonal development.

Somewhat contradictory results were found relating to fraternity and sorority members' learning and academic thriving. While fraternity and sorority membership was found to be significantly positively related to Academic Determination among traditionally aged students, membership was found to be significantly negatively related to Engaged Learning. The subtle differences in the academic values and attitudes of fraternity and sorority members have also been found in previous studies. Membership in fraternities and sororities has been found to increase the extrinsic value placed upon education but not the intrinsic value (Astin, 1993; McCabe & Bowers, 1996; Wilder, McKeegan, Midkiff, Skelton, & Dunkerly,

1997). Remaining unaffiliated was found to promote intrinsic values of education. The different outcomes for Engaged Learning and Academic Determination may be due in part to how the two domains relate to the intrinsic versus extrinsic value placed upon education.

Age and Thriving in Fraternities and Sororities

While the national study limited its exploration of thriving to traditionally aged students, the current study explored several dimensions of thriving across age limits. When nontraditional-aged students were filtered from the data set, a slightly smaller and less significant relationship was found between Social Connectedness and fraternity and sorority involvement. The negative relationship between fraternity and sorority membership and Engaged Learning that was present in the general sample was no longer present when students 25 and older were filtered out. Furthermore, where no relationship existed in the larger data set, a significant relationship was found between Academic Determination and fraternity and sorority membership. While the sample of nontraditional-aged students in fraternities and sororities was small, the effect of their responses significantly altered the data set. The findings from the age filters suggest that nontraditional-aged students in fraternities and sororities are less likely to be socially connected and have Academic Determination, but more likely to be engaged in their learning than their traditional-aged affiliated peers.

IMPLICATIONS

Building on the research by Blackburn and Janosik (2009) and Morettes (2010), the current study expands the knowledge base relating to fraternity and sorority housing. By intentionally examining and comparing the experiences of affiliated and nonaffiliated students based on their residence location and type using an inde-

pendently validated measure, a more holistic representation of student experiences may be achieved.

While the current case study institution provided one type of official fraternity/sorority housing, the results indicate that fraternity and sorority houses may be developed that do not detract from student thriving. Yet more can be done to fully develop fraternity and sorority houses into the living-learning communities that Whipple and Sullivan (1998a; 1998b) envisioned. Sigma Phi Epsilon Fraternity has taken a bold step in this direction in the development of Residential Learning Communities for undergraduate chapter members across the country. With evidence supporting higher developmental outcomes associated with housing in living-learning communities (Inkelas, Vogt, Longenecker, Owen, & Johnson, 2006), implementing similar programs into fraternity/sorority housing has been shown to provide similar results.

Eberly, Wall, and Warren (2007) assessed students from 34 chapters who participated in the Residential Learning Communities using items from the EBI Fraternity Survey and the College and University Residence Environment Scales. The researchers found that chapters with higher faculty involvement were more likely to demonstrate higher academic support among members. Furthermore, higher faculty involvement supported nonacademic outcomes such as fraternal engagement. The results from this study demonstrate that more intentional steps in promoting a positive fraternity residential experience can be successful in promoting strong academic, interpersonal, and intrapersonal development.

The one domain of thriving that was negatively correlated with fraternity and sorority involvement was Engaged Learning. Many living-learning programs specifically promote engaging students in learning outside the classroom, whether through faculty in residence, residential classrooms, or a specific focus on an academic discipline. Promoting these or simi-

lar experiences among fraternities and sororities may alleviate the negative relationship between fraternity and sorority involvement and Engaged Learning. As the results indicate that fraternity and sorority members are academically determined in their investment of effort, self-regulated learning, environmental mastery, and goal-directed thinking, the programs developed through living-learning communities may promote the further development of academic thriving through Engaged Learning. Fraternities and sororities should not just strive to achieve the top GPA among other campus chapters, but also to become the most actively academically engaged.

FUTURE RESEARCH

Further research comparing the fraternity living-learning community to other similar residential programs may enhance the understanding of student benefits from such programs. One such study was conducted by Kohl (2009) examining the comparative success outcomes of students in honors living-learning communities, civic/social leadership living-learning communities, or tradition residence halls. Using a similar methodology in examining established fraternity and sorority living-learning communities would provide a benchmark for student development in these programs. If the construct of thriving is used to assess such programs, care should be taken that honors programs are not perceived as the sole academic thriving living-learning community and civic leadership programs as the Diverse Citizenship thriving community, thereby leaving fraternities and sororities to fill the gap of the Social Connectedness thriving living-learning community. In each of the programs, a holistic approach to thriving and student success must be implemented.

Additional research will be necessary to examine the student experiences of fraternity and sorority members residing in different residential environments. The lack of significant dif-

ferences in thriving scores between fraternity and sorority members in these different environments indicates that fraternity and sorority membership is more salient among these individuals than their residential experience. However, the opportunity for student development in the residential setting cannot be ignored. Comparing the experience of fraternity and sorority members in these alternative official or unofficial residential environments – whether they are townhomes, apartments, designated residence hall floors or hallways, or smaller residence hall suites – will allow student affairs professionals to develop intentional programs for student growth in these settings.

The inconclusive results from the present study do not provide step-by-step guidance for institutions exploring the development of fraternity or sorority housing. What can be gained is the need for institution-specific information related to fraternity and sorority residential experiences and a willingness to explore alternative residential environments that best promote student success. Additional multi-institutional research may provide guiding insight into the general residential experiences of fraternity and sorority members. Coley and Henry (2000), however, offer several guiding principles for the process of developing fraternity and sorority housing. They recommend involving students throughout, examining your housing philosophy early, ensuring continuity of the project, incorporating celebrations, and maintaining institutional oversight. As one part of this process, a philosophy of student thriving may guide the development of and intentionally educational residential experience.

LIMITATIONS

Several institutional characteristics and methodological procedures limit the impli-

cations that may be drawn from the study. At the host institution, only one type of official on-campus housing was available to students in the form of fraternity and sorority houses. However, even these residences had a relatively small capacity, thereby limiting the number of responses from students. The host campus also did not support any official off-campus fraternity residences. The lack of diversity in fraternity housing created a homogeneous sample that limited the comparisons between fraternity and sorority living environments.

The survey suffered from a relatively low response rate, most likely due to its late distribution. The window for survey responses extended into spring finals and up to graduation. This time frame may have contributed to the higher response rate among seniors, who may have remained on campus until graduation. Furthermore, the high response rate of juniors and seniors may be due to the timing of the survey and the self-identification of students as members of the junior class they would begin in the fall, rather than the sophomore class they had just completed.

Further, results from this study were based on the experiences of students at a single institution; therefore, generalizability is limited. Contradictory or complimentary results may be found in the national sample of student thriving. Broadening the sample of institutions participating in the study on student thriving, and including items relating to fraternity and sorority housing will allow for more generalizable results. Furthermore, while the Thriving Quotient has been statistically shown to be a valid and reliable instrument, it has not been present in the literature long enough for it to be rigorously tested and compared to other instruments which measure similar traits. Doing so would allow for a greater understanding of student experiences.

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APPENDIX A

Thriving Quotient Variable List

Social Connectedness

Other people seem to have more friends than I do. (reverse scored)

I often feel lonely because I have few close friends with whom to share my concerns. (reverse scored)

I don't have many people who want to listen when I need to talk. (reverse scored)

Positive Perspective

When things are uncertain for me, I usually expect the best.

I always look on the bright side of things.

I'm optimistic about what will happen to me in the future.

I am satisfied with my life.

The conditions of my life are excellent.

Engaged Learning

I feel as though I am learning things in my classes that are worthwhile to me as a person.

It's hard to pay attention in many of my classes. (reverse scored)

I can usually find ways of applying what I'm learning in class to something else in my life.

In the last week, I've been bored in class most of the time. (reverse scored)

I find myself thinking about what I'm learning in class even when I'm not in class.

I feel energized by the ideas I'm learning in most of my classes.

Diverse Citizenship

Knowing how a person differs from me greatly enhances our friendship.

I can best understand someone after I get to know how he/she is both similar and different from me.

I would like to join an organization that emphasizes getting to know people from different cultures.

No matter what kind of person you are, you can always change substantially.

I give time to making a difference for someone else.

I have the power to make a difference in my community.

I value opportunities that allow me to contribute to my community.

I am willing to act for the rights of others.

You can learn new things, but you can't really change how intelligent you are. (reverse scored)

Academic Determination

I am good at managing the many responsibilities of my daily life.

I am good at managing my time so that I can fit everything in that needs to be done.

Even when course materials are dull and uninteresting, I manage to keep working until I finish.

I study more than most of the students here.

I am motivated to do well in school.

I actively pursue my educational goals.

When I become confused about something I'm reading for class, I go back and try to figure it out.

When course work is difficult, I give up or only study the easy parts. (reverse scored)

APPENDIX B

Additional Items Variable List

If you live on campus, please select your current living setting.

(1, traditional residence hall; 2, fraternity or sorority house; 3, ULP suite or apartment)

In your current residential setting, how many fraternity or sorority members do you live with?

(1, 1; 2, 2; 3, 3; 4, 4 or more)

What is your current residence's distance from campus?

(1, on campus; 2, within 1 mile of campus; 3, 1-5 miles from campus; 4, 6-10 miles from campus; further than 10 miles from campus)

