

# TOWARDS A TYPOLOGY OF FRATERNITY/SORORITY PROGRAMS: A CONTENT ANALYSIS

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*Fraternity/sorority standards have been represented as the answer to the Call for Values Congruence authored by the Franklin Squared Group (2003). The outcome of this document was a proliferation of various styles and models of standards programs utilized to establish community practices with the overarching goal of facilitating values-based fraternity and sorority campus communities. However, fraternity/sorority standards programs answering this call have established higher standards through different methods. This study solicited standards programs from institutions from across the United States. Data from 31 standards programs were collected, cataloged, and analyzed through qualitative inquiry with the use of a rubric developed to establish a typology. Five categories resulted from analysis: evaluation, minimum standards, accreditation, awards, and comprehensive. Implications of the study are included along with future directions for research.*

Within the last 20 years, fraternities and sororities have continued to be featured in a number of high-profile incidents leading to negative perceptions of the organizations. News reports of incidents of alcohol-related deaths and other issues resulting from fraternity and sorority alcohol abuse lend credibility to these perceptions (Wall, 2005). For fraternities, these include racially charged party themes, hazing incidents, and most recently offensive comments about women (Kaplan & Lee, 2006; Marcus, 2011). For sororities, hazing, public displays of intoxication, as well as destruction of public property during formal chapter events are commonplace themes (Cornwell, 2010). Previous research indicated these problems exist within the cultures of fraternities and sororities on American college campuses because of their strong association with alcohol (Pascarella, Edison, & Whitt, 1996). Issues associated with sorority and fraternity membership such as sexual assault, binge drinking, and hazing within fraternities and sororities persist regardless of their value to individual members and society (Kuh, Pascarella, & Wechsler, 1996; Wall, 2005).

One of the more pragmatic attempts to address misbehavior among fraternity and sorority members at the campus level has been to require

individual chapters to align with a set of community standards structured by a procedural program or through a relationship statement. The relationship statement was originally intended to serve as a method to create space between fraternity/sorority chapters and their host institution, given their existence as a source of institutional liability. It was also the first documented attempt to address their relevance and viability as positively contributing to the campus community (Shonrock, 1998). Historically, the relationship statement was developed out of the premise that previous attempts to curb the negative aspects of the social culture of fraternities and sororities largely were not effective (Milani & Nettles, 1987). Colleges and universities chose this more drastic and proscribed approach in an attempt to bring fraternities and sororities back in alignment with university standards and expectations (Hauser, 1997).

## ***Purpose of the Study***

Without any basis for universal characteristics or guidelines, fraternity/sorority standards programs have been campus-based. This study employed the use of qualitative research methods, utilizing content analysis, to identify universal characteristics of fraternity/sorority

standards programs to provide a framework for categorization. In creating a categorical framework through qualitative inquiry, this study sought to add to the research and produce a pragmatic resource for student affairs practitioners advising fraternities and sororities.

## Background

Many institutions previously found that the development of community standards was a singular best-fit policy for addressing behaviors (Harvey, 1990). The relevancy question of fraternities and sororities, therefore, was answered and further made distinct through a relationship statement. Relationship statements defined the scope of the association between the host institution and the fraternity or sorority chapter. Such statements may have included a description of the limited purpose of recognition; acknowledgment that the fraternity/sorority letter organization was independently chartered; confirmation that the college assumed no responsibility for supervision, control, safety, security, or other services with respect to the fraternity/sorority organization; and a requirement that the fraternity or sorority provide evidence that it carried sufficient insurance to cover its risks (Gulland & Powell, 1989).

A relationship statement can be restrictive and can be overbroad in its scope. This has led to several issues on college campuses questioning the actual relationship between the fraternity/sorority community and the institution (Harvey, 1990). Although the existence of such a recognition statement might defeat a claim that the institution has assumed a duty to supervise fraternity and sorority chapters, it might also limit the institution's authority to regulate the organization's activities (Kaplin & Lee, 1995). However, the poor design and implementation of relationship statements led to several institutions facing liability issues because they failed to narrow or define the scope of their relationship with fraternities and sororities (Kaplin & Lee, 2006;

Pavela, 1995). Thus, the relationship statement has been deemed an ineffective singular policy approach (Pavela). The response to the failure of relationship statements, persistence of high-profile incidents, and research findings indicating the negative outcomes associated with membership facilitated a new multifaceted approach, the values-based movement.

Fraternity and sorority leaders and campus-based professionals launched the values-based movement in an attempt to refocus organizations on their founding values. These values are unique to each organization, however; there are elements that are common and shared across all organizations such as friendship, service, scholarship, and leadership. These values hold the underlying notion that acquaintance and loyalty to one another helps to advance the furthering of lifelong camaraderie also commonly associated as brotherhood and sisterhood. Additionally, it is also common that rites of passage further mark the transition and progression of membership. Service and leadership within the institution as well as scholarship are the essential and valued characteristics of a traditional fraternity and sorority experience. The values-based movement was spearheaded by the Franklin Square Group, an assembly of 20 college and university presidents and inter/national fraternal organization leaders representing several organizations, campus representatives, and academic consortia, which met in Washington, D.C. to consider and address the state of fraternities and sororities (Franklin Square Group, 2003).

In 2003, the Franklin Square Group issued *A Call for Values Congruence* to express concerns over the focus of the "liquid culture" of the fraternity/sorority system and to establish recommendations regarding the sustainability of fraternity and sorority chapters across the nation. The authors supported the notion that fraternities and sororities were a bastion for alcohol misuse that caused a dichotomy between their stated missions and their actual behaviors. The report also supported the notion that fraternities and sorori-

ties impact student culture in ways that no other student organization can through experiential learning opportunities outside the classroom. This juxtaposition led the authors to call for “the development of programs and policies addressing alcohol abuse based upon research findings and established best practices and oversee their implementation” (p. 6). It is through this recommendation for the use of best practices that *A Call for Values Congruence* advocated for the use of a periodic “certification process” to involve multiple external stakeholders ranging from local alumni to faculty. This certification process is reflected within the Collegiate Greek Community Standard (CGCS).

The CGCS is a framework for creating minimum policy and programming standards processes that fraternity and sorority chapters must meet to be recognized annually. It is a certification process for which each fraternity and sorority chapter must show how it has respectively met the listed standards. An external committee of alumni, faculty, and staff volunteers reviews this evidence. The Franklin Square Group (2003) devised a certification process model for fraternity/sorority standards programs within *A Call for Values Congruence*. It was the goal of this program to provide an active approach for programming and community standards for a campus system to address and ultimately reduce binge drinking and other related negative effects of fraternity/sorority involvement.

### **A Brief History of Fraternity/Sorority Standards Programs**

Dartmouth College established the first documented set of fraternity/sorority standards in 1983 (Norman, 2003). These policies, entitled “Constitution and Minimum Standards for Co-Ed, Fraternity & Sorority Organizations” (Hokanson, 1992, p. 20), included categories for leadership, membership, budgets, program development, alumni, student conduct, and housing appearance. There were no clearly set criteria

on what determined standards or benchmarks. The categories were open to judgment by evaluators as to whether organizations had effectively “passed” the review. While this program was simply a categorical review, other institutions began to set standards through engagement in self-study utilizing survey data, academic status measures, and recruitment statistics to gauge the condition of its fraternity/sorority community during the 1980s and into the early 1990s (Boyle, 1992).

Colby College and Franklin and Marshall College conducted summative self-studies on early standards programs in the 1980s (Boyle, 1992). Rutgers University engaged in a series of three self-studies beginning in 1980 and ending in 1992. Self-studies through formative evaluation were conducted by Middlebury College and Bucknell University in 1988 and 1990 respectively. The University of Minnesota also engaged in self-study to better increase retention of fraternity members and increase membership in 1987. In 1991, Duquesne University also engaged in an academic year self-study to gauge the health of its community. These self-studies were based on specific need and only established additional community standards or policies. None outlined any measures, methods, or strategies for improvements in individual chapters (Boyle, 1992). More comprehensive programs were developed in the early 1990s that addressed the needs of individual chapters through measuring their performance against specific standards.

Fraternity/sorority standards programs, more comparable to the model proposed by the Franklin Square Group (2003) originated from an earlier effort, Utah State University’s Five Star Program. This program evaluated each chapter yearly in several categories: academics, financial management, college relations, community relations/service, and campus involvement (Norman, 2003). The categories were weighted with 100 points for academic activities and 50 points for all others. Specific point totals were assigned to certain achievement levels ranging from one

to five stars. This was used as a barometer for chapter well-being. While the objective for the program was to simply assess the overall health of the chapter based upon criteria, there were no minimum standards. Therefore, there were no consequences for failing to meet any minimum standards. There also were no established criteria for improvement. A similar, but more complex program was developed by the University of Delaware (Norman).

The University of Delaware established the Five Star Chapter Evaluation Program for its entire community that had significantly more depth and breadth than the Utah State University program. Delaware's program objectives established criteria for improvement and ramifications regarding recognition from the university. Consequences included removal of recognition for noncompliance and removal of recruitment privileges for failure to comply with minimum standards (Norman, 2003). The program evaluated each chapter based upon specific criteria: academics, financial management, university/community relations and service, campus involvement, and membership intake/pledge program. Points were based upon each performance indicator or standard that when totaled, equaled 350 points. The program was weighted toward the academic and membership intake/pledge program categories, each worth 100 points; the remaining categories were worth 50 points each. Chapters received a number of stars ranging from one to five based on their total number of points. Those chapters with the highest point totals (four or five stars) received cash awards, and those with one or two stars lost social or recruitment privileges (Norman).

By 2000, many other colleges had adopted Delaware's Five Star Chapter Evaluation Program including Clemson University, the University of Toledo, Central Michigan University, the University of Texas San Antonio, the University of Central Arkansas, Shippensburg University, the University of South Dakota, and even Utah State University. Other colleges and universi-

ties developed similar programs as well (Farrell, 2006). For example, Oklahoma State University developed the Chapter Quality Achievement Program in 2000. This was a point-based, voluntary program that sought to encourage participation through improvement over time. The program was designed to have two award levels, exemplary performance and commended performance, to reward those individual chapters that exceeded minimum standards. In 2001, Bucknell University began a compliance-based accreditation program similar to that proposed by the Franklin Square Group.

In the Bucknell program, each chapter must achieve 90 percent of points to be in good standing (Bucknell University, 2002). Chapters that fail to achieve 90% are placed on "Conditional Recognition" and face sanctions that include a \$500 accreditation review fee and must receive special permission to have events with alcohol, recruit, participate in intramurals, and participate in fraternity/sorority week. If the chapter continues to fail to meet compliance standards, the chapter is placed into "Stayed-Suspension Status" in which the chapter is charged \$1,000 and loses most recognition privileges. If non-compliance continues, the chapter is closed for up to three years. The Bucknell program also offers awards to those chapters that go beyond the standards. These chapters are eligible for silver and gold levels that featured the ability to receive \$2,500 to \$5,000 grants for non-alcohol related events and a recognition plaque. The incentive portion of the program is optional if chapters choose to exceed the 90% compliance minimum (Bucknell University).

In 2006, the University of Rochester established the Expectations for Excellence program. This accreditation-style program encourages chapters to become college-centered through co-sponsorship of programming between other campus organizations and facilitating increased use of campus services. Each fraternity and sorority chapter creates an individual plan with proposed events and strategies for the academ-

ic year. This plan is presented and approved by an advisory board and later outcomes from this approved plan are presented again to another board. A chapter receives accreditation if the outcomes are congruent with the original individual chapter plan. The University of Rochester plan is significantly different than others because it is not based on a sliding scale or levels like those aforementioned, but instead functions through a certification process.

These programs, overall, were developed with no true guiding typology. Their individual institutional nature and best-fit development has created the absence of a true model because they are so diverse in delivery and in user experience. Therefore, a typology is needed to help practitioners navigate the diverse differences of style among fraternity and sorority standards programs.

## **Methodology**

### ***Overview of the Dataset***

This study employed a homogeneous purposeful sampling procedure to obtain a representative sample reflective of the different styles of fraternity/sorority standards programs. One hundred nine fraternity/sorority-advising professionals were solicited via e-mail to submit their standards program for use. Forty-one responses were received over a three-week period, for a 37.6% response rate. Thirty-one respondents, consisting of college and university representatives from seven states in the Pacific Northwest, Mid-Atlantic, Midwestern, Southern, and Northeastern regions of the United States, sent programs. Additionally, the sample was found representative when checked against 31 colleges and universities selected at random from the Association of Fraternity/Sorority Advisors member database.

### ***Overview of the Instrument***

The Greek Standards Project Rubric (GSPR) was developed to measure the characteristics of each program (see Appendix A). The rubric examined fraternity/sorority standards programs

on five sectional levels. These levels were: theoretical orientation, policy, process, procedure, and outcomes. A description of each level follows.

Theoretical orientation considered evidence of administrative frameworks, use of student involvement theory, leadership development initiatives, chapter management initiatives, housing management initiatives, and clear program goal articulation. Policy categorized incentive or reward, residential/housing policy, minimum standards for continued recognition, generation of competition for resources, a ranking or sliding scale, accreditation-style processes, use of a metric or standard rating scale, community standards or values, consequences for noncompliance, formation of judicial council specific only to the campus fraternity/sorority system, compliance or mention of federal or state law, and evidence of language regarding mandatory or voluntary participation.

Process considered the end user's experience of the program on two levels: administrative and chapter. On the administrative process level, the GSPR sought evidence of specificity among chapters or governing councils, involvement of alumni councils or chapter alumni boards, extension of program to fraternity/sorority housing, use of resources, use of staff, number of staff necessary to implement the program standards, number of stakeholders involved with the program, expenditure of resources, and administration. On the chapter process level, the GSPR sought evidence of duplication of forms to international and/or national headquarters, number of chapter members involved, and expenditure of resources. Procedure considered to what extent the program was implemented and rewards were distributed. Finally, outcomes observed the deliverables of the program, existence of proposed learning outcomes, archival of results for future use, and sharing of the results.

### ***Procedure***

Each participant was e-mailed individually

confirming receipt of submission and was debriefed utilizing a standard message. The 31 programs received were downloaded and analyzed for content and language. The GSPR was used in the analysis of each program within the sample to develop salient themes. Content analysis was selected as the appropriate qualitative inquiry method. Patton (2002) defined content analysis as, "any qualitative data reduction and sense-making effort that takes a volume of qualitative material and attempts to identify core consistencies and meanings" (p. 453). An inductive procedure was used to condense raw data into categories or themes based on valid inference and interpretation (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). This inductive procedure was the directed content analysis method. When utilizing directed content analysis, initial coding starts with a theory or relevant research findings. Then, during data analysis, the researcher becomes immersed in the data and allows themes to emerge from the data (Hsieh & Shannon). The purpose of this approach traditionally is to validate or extend a conceptual framework or theory (Berg, 2001).

In this study, the researcher utilized the GSPR as a rubric to generate a guiding theoretical framework. Low, moderate, and high levels were assigned in response to each criterion. Submitted programs were then coded and recoded until saturation utilizing the individual criteria from the GSPR. Themes were then created utilizing a constant comparison method.

## **Analysis and Results**

Analysis of 31 programs resulted in five program categories. These included: evaluation ( $n = 4$ ), minimum standards ( $n = 6$ ), awards ( $n = 4$ ), accreditation ( $n = 10$ ), and comprehensive ( $n = 7$ ). Within each category, the programs displayed significant commonalities and characteristics (see Table 1). Descriptions of each follow.

### **Evaluation**

Evaluation programs were mandatory, singu-

lar-level programs that offered a grade for chapter performance. Evaluation programs displayed significantly strong administrative frameworks with every evaluation plan within the sample utilizing chapter management initiatives. There was a low level of student development theory use, and not all the programs had clear goals. There was virtually no mention of federal law or evidence of compliance with hazing and alcohol state law. Evaluation programs were completely mandatory and points-based. There was evidence of a standard grading rubric for each. There were outlined consequences for noncompliance in two phases: probation and then removal of recognition. Evaluation programs were also not resource-intensive.

The evaluation program took only one staff member to implement and usually involved between two and four other constituencies. The most common constituencies of evaluation were the chapter, the student conduct office, and the alumni advisor. The cost of the program was limited to the cost of paper and time. The fraternity/sorority campus-based practitioner typically administered the evaluation. Chapters typically involved their membership and invested resources on an as-needed basis.

Chapters typically submitted a three-ring binder at the end of the year demonstrating completion of the program criteria and its associated forms. There was also a rolling submission of forms throughout the academic year for membership rosters and event registration forms as these programs had a very high administrative framework. The outcomes of evaluation programs did not include learning outcomes, however; typically these outcomes were chapter-level programming that resulted from compliance with the standards, submission of forms, and the end of year evaluation. The results were archived for future use and shared with each chapter via conference or an e-mail notification.

### **Minimum Standards**

Minimum standards programs were man-

datory, singular-level programs that offered a high level of requirements with no option for advancement. Chapters were required to complete the program to retain recognition annually. Minimum standards programs featured a strong administrative framework with specific deadlines for submission of forms. There was limited use of student development theory and leadership initiatives but a high level of chapter management initiatives. There was also a moderate amount of housing initiatives involving student conduct and facility management. There was strong program goal articulation with an administrative basis for the existence of the programs.

Minimum standards programs were typically, like evaluation programs, not incentive-based. Minimum standards programs were used for residential and nonresidential fraternity/sorority communities. Minimum standards programs did not rank or grade chapters, however; they did include standard checklists for requirements. There was a moderate level of compliance with federal law regarding housing and a strong compliance with state law involving alcohol, housing codes, and hazing. Minimum standards programs displayed moderate use of fraternity/sorority judicial board with removal of recognition as the only penalty for noncompliance. There were no options for probation or lesser penalties. Like evaluation programs, there was little involvement from external constituents beyond the alumni advisor.

Minimum standards programs required one staff member and included the costs of paper and time to implement. The fraternity/sorority campus-based practitioner typically administered the evaluation. Chapters typically involved their membership and invested resources on an as-needed basis. Chapters submitted required documents and forms on a rolling basis. The outcome of the program included submission of forms and recognition for the following academic year. There were no proposed learning outcomes for any minimum standards program. Results were archived for future use and shared with chapters

via conference or not at all.

### **Awards**

Awards programs were voluntary, singular-level incentive programs that encouraged participation and distributed rewards to the highest achieving chapters. Awards programs had a low administrative framework, as each chapter must simply submit documentation for each award for which they choose to apply. There was no evidence of student development theory and low existence of chapter management, housing, and leadership initiatives. The goals of these programs were clearly evident. The basis of existence of these programs was to recognize “model” chapters.

These programs featured a high level of competition for resources and chapters received rewards based on a ranking/sliding scale or via a standard metric utilized to determine eligibility. Awards programs did not comply or even mention state or local laws, involve alumni, nor offer minimum standards. However, awards programs did cater to a significantly broader range of constituencies that included alumni advisors, individual members, chapters, governing councils, or faculty advisors. Awards programs required at least two staff members to administer, usually from the fraternity/sorority involvement office, and required resources such as the cost of paper, awards, and time invested. Many of the awards included monetary compensation. Chapters utilized their membership on an as-needed basis to facilitate submission of awards applications.

Chapter members typically experienced awards programs through submission of supporting documents via a three-ring binder. Awards were distributed at the end of the year, often at a large event. Awards established equity as all chapters were eligible and encouraged to apply. The outcome of the awards programs was the presentation of rewards. Award winners were documented and archived for future use, and results were shared utilizing a variety of methods such as via a banquet or ceremony.



## **Accreditation**

Accreditation programs were mandatory, multilevel programs that offered recognition on a yearly basis. Chapters were expected to submit a plan at the beginning of the year and submit an end-of-year report that documented how they implemented their proposed plan. These plans were typically based on minimum standards or expectations set by the institution. If their plan met the basic expectations or minimum standards and resulted in at least a satisfactory rating, chapters retained full recognition privileges. Accreditation programs featured a heavy administrative framework and strong use of leadership, housing, and chapter management initiatives. Goals of the accreditation programs were well articulated and there was a moderate use of student development theory.

Accreditation programs did not offer awards as a part of the certification process. Instead, they offered minimum standards for continued recognition. If there was noncompliance, a chapter was put on probation and if noncompliance continued recognition was revoked. Several programs incorporated referrals to a fraternity/sorority judicial board. Chapters were usually certified by a ranking/sliding scale or simple status designation utilizing a standard rubric. No formal evaluations were assigned, unlike evaluation programs. Accreditation programs showed strong support for local and state level alcohol and hazing regulations and for federal laws regarding housing.

Accreditation programs were resource-intensive. The cost of paper and time was heavier than those of the aforementioned programs. Additional staff and human capital was usually required. Accreditation programs were submitted via a three-ring binder to a committee of faculty, staff, and alumni for review. These individuals were usually volunteers. Accreditation programs were implemented by one to four staff members and varied depending on the resources of the individual program. These programs typically included four to seven reviewers such as residen-

tial life staff members, student conduct officers, senior administrators, housing boards, alumni councils, or student activities staff. The fraternity/sorority campus-based practitioner typically administered the evaluation. Chapters typically involved their membership and invested resources on an as-needed basis of the program. Chapters submitted forms and documentation on a rolling basis, however; all information was presented in aggregate at the end of the year.

The outcomes of accreditation programs were chapter-level programming and yearly assessment. There were few, if any, proposed learning outcomes. All results of the programs were archived for future use and shared to a committee via a presentation, letter/e-mail notification, conference, and Web site.

## **Comprehensive**

Comprehensive programs were mandatory, multilevel programs that featured the characteristics of evaluation, minimum standards programs, or accreditation coupled with awards. Comprehensive programs had strong administrative frameworks with moderate integration of student development theory. They had high levels of leadership and chapter management initiatives. Housing initiatives were apparent in a few of the programs. The goals of the program were clearly stated. The existence of the program was to provide incentive for chapters to exceed minimum expectations and standards.

As previously mentioned, every comprehensive program was incentive- or rewards-based. Comprehensive programs were also two-tiered. At the first level, much like accreditation programs, there were minimum standards that all chapters should meet. If a chapter chose, it could exceed these standards to be eligible for rewards. These higher standards were the second level of the program. This level was either accreditation-style or an evaluation through a ranking/sliding scale. Each style of assessment was characterized by the use of a standard rubric or metric for evaluation. If a chapter failed to meet the minimum



expectations, they were either given probationary status, removal of recognition, or referred to a fraternity/sorority judicial board. Referral to a fraternity/sorority judicial board was specific to those programs that integrated the use of judicial sanctions and hearing panels. Comprehensive programs also featured strong levels of compliance with state and local hazing and alcohol laws. However, there was poor compliance with federal law.

Like accreditation programs, comprehensive programs were resource-intensive. The costs to implement comprehensive programs included rewards, time, and paper. However, unlike accreditation programs, an ample supply of staff was not apparent. One to three was the range of staff members involved with the process. Typically responsibility of program administration was given to the fraternity/sorority office staff. There were high levels of duplication of forms and standards to the inter/national headquarters as well. Chapters participated through providing the necessary leadership as required by the programs through positions such as president, recruitment chair, membership educator, risk management officer, and other leaders. Chapters also involved members as needed to submit forms and end-of-year reports.

Comprehensive programs were implemented via rolling submission of forms and through submission of a three-ring binder. Rewards were given to those chapters who surpassed the minimum standards based on program-specific eligibility requirements. The rewards did not establish equity among chapters, as there was limited availability of awards. This instituted a high level of competition for resources. There was no evidence of proposed learning outcomes. Results were archived for future use and are shared with chapters and as well other constituencies via Web site, conference, and e-mail.

## Discussion

This study examined the spectrum of stan-

dards programs across the United States using qualitative methods. Through the employment of qualitative inquiry, five salient themes developed. These themes were used to develop a typology of standards programs, which was the intent of this study. The typology of standards programs as identified by this study is: accreditation, evaluation, minimum standards, awards, and comprehensive.

No additional research currently exists regarding fraternity/sorority standards programs. Therefore, this study serves as a foundational benchmark. While this study is merely a baseline for possible future research regarding fraternity/sorority standards programs, it does reveal the diversification of standards programs that involve complex systems of policies and procedures.

The complexity is evident in the accreditation and comprehensive models, which were the most common within the sample of the study. These were multilevel programs with multifarious groupings of thematic expectations. Expectations were grouped under specific core values associated with the fraternity/sorority community. This same complexity was also indicated in the measurement of performance.

As higher education professionals have evolved these programs from relationship statements into self-study as previously documented, each of these programs addresses the need to establish a set of minimum standards or set expectations regarding the performance levels of individual chapters. However, the distinct difference between comprehensive or accreditation programs and the other models is how they measure this performance. The other models of minimum standards and awards, with the exception of evaluation, offered little measurement of performance. Comprehensive, accreditation, and evaluation all measured performance through a qualitative or quantitative designs. These programs have a point system for standards and include several levels upon which performance can be based. Additionally, others have introduced standards on a sliding scale with increasing stan-

dards implemented over a specific timeframe. The true distinction between the programs is that evaluation and accreditation measure chapter compliance and performance whereas awards and minimum standards enforce or encourage standards. Comprehensive programs encompass all the elements of incentives for minimum standards and evaluate chapter performance. One can conclude that whether performance of chapter is measured is the true determination of the type of fraternity/sorority program.

Regardless of the individual style or approach, this research study also provides advisors and other campus-based professionals a typology of programs. This typology can act as a compass with which they can navigate the vast landscape and offerings of standards programs with more ease. The typology found within this research also holds several implications for campus professionals.

## **Implications for Practice**

### ***Selecting a Typology***

The typology this study generated can be utilized in discussions regarding the development of standards programs for a campus fraternity/sorority community. It can also serve as a guide in the classification of any program that can be applied to better clarify the purpose of an existing program. Additionally, the five typologies that emerged can be utilized and implemented with regard to the specific needs of the fraternity/sorority community.

An evaluation model can be utilized to measure the current performance of chapter during a single academic year. An evaluation model simply provides feedback data on performance. Campus professionals should employ such a program if they wish to provide a quantitative measure that demonstrates improvement or deficiencies within specific domains the program seeks to measure.

A minimum standards model could be developed when there is little institutional support for

the fraternity/sorority community. Minimum standards can serve as an administrative framework to ensure compliance with a specific range of policies. This model would serve as a best-fit approach in a campus environment that facilitates little support for the fraternity/sorority community.

An awards model can be best employed to encourage progress toward an ideal chapter. In this study, submission for awards was voluntary to encourage competition for resources among chapters. Such a program should be implemented to encourage the submission of information and to reward chapters for specific accomplishments. These accomplishments should take the form of each award.

An accreditation model can be introduced when an institution can exert control over the recognition of fraternities and sororities. Accreditation models encourage chapters to set their own expectations based on minimum standards or agreed upon community principles. This can be used to offer continued recognition and then facilitate interventions for struggling chapters. An accreditation plan may be an effective method to ensure compliance and development of chapters through offering continued recognition and its associated privileges.

Albeit resource-intensive, a comprehensive model can be implemented when there is strong institutional support for the fraternity/sorority community. Within this study, a comprehensive model encouraged the development of chapters to exceed minimum expectations through the use of incentives. Student affairs practitioners can use such a program type to facilitate increased development within their chapters.

Each of these five types of awards can be utilized specifically to meet a desired purpose: to measure performance, exert control, recognize accomplishment, or encourage development of chapters. Their specific nature simply limits their efficacy as programs and serves to restrain development of chapters as complex organizations. Individuals charged with authoring or revising stan-

dards programs should consider several additions based on the findings from this article. These suggestions will now be addressed.

### ***Tailoring a Standards Program***

The fraternity/sorority programs that comprised the sample failed to mention whether they were inclusive of all collegiate fraternal organizations. Fraternity/sorority standards programs, within this sample, appeared to develop the expectations based on traditional fraternities and sororities. Campus professionals should be mindful of all fraternities and sororities, including ethnic, service, and professional fraternities and sororities. Therefore, it is suggested that standards programs consider participation from all fraternal organizational types across the host institution.

Standards should express, in more detail, exactly what constitutes an exemplary chapter. The idea of a high-achieving chapter draws its origins from the work of Jelke (2001) and appears as well in the Franklin Square Group (2003). Programs should outline the specific tenets of a “model” chapter. Within the sample of this study, in comprehensive programs, many discussed the notion of a model chapter but failed to outline the programming, qualities, or achievements that define it as such. A model chapter can be communicated as simply as a listing of specific ideal achievements or categories with qualified values such as community service, programming, or academics.

Within many of these programs, especially within the comprehensive model, there were only two achievement levels. This establishes a dichotomy—a chapter was either a model chapter or was not. Therefore, future programs should strongly consider applying a tiered approach and have emerging, foundational, intermediate, and advanced levels for each learning outcome or expectation in a standards program. It appears in many of the programs that an achievement gap is created as several offered privileges to high-performing chapters that others do not receive.

In several instances this included the ability to recruit first-semester students if a chapter achieved a specific composite grade point average for both the new members and active membership. A developmental approach would provide better support for struggling chapters and chapters, as well as advisors, who can better conceptualize growth over a range of levels instead of simply examining a more dichotomous result.

Direction of noncompliance should also be made more distinctive and clear. There was little evidence of consequence for standards noncompliance within the sample of this study. In several programs when noncompliance was outlined, consequences were punitive. Student affairs practitioners should, when developing or amending these programs, consider offering rewards to establish better accountability measures rather than extend disciplinary measures related to a violation of a minimum standard (Sasso, 2008). Additionally, practitioners may wish to consider a more educational approach to affirm, within the program, that those chapters that minimally do not meet expectations from the standards program must work with their inter/national headquarters to improve. Such an educational intervention approach may ensure that struggling chapters are supported in their endeavors to align with the standards and meet the program expectations.

It has been aforementioned that the initial intent of fraternity/sorority standards programs was to exert control as an intervention or response against negative behaviors scourging the student experience and causing significant institutional liability. This approach has been the ethos of fraternity/sorority programs as they have evolved; however, student affairs practitioners should consider a broader approach. This ethos is the notion that fraternities and sororities are slow to change and that an intervention must be facilitated to align with the institutional mission of the university (Gregory, 2003). However, these standards programs have simply encouraged the same homeostasis that they were initially designed to

transform. Standards programs have been established simply to reduce negative behaviors but have evolved in an attempt to legitimize interactions with students as the programs have increased in complexity and delivery as demonstrated within the comprehensive model. This has led to greater bureaucracy as a majority of the programs were found to be resource-intensive and did not focus on developmental outcomes for both individual students as fraternity/sorority members and their chapters.

Campus-based practitioners should seek to establish fraternity/sorority standards programs that operate as a smaller component of an integrated curriculum utilizing student development theory. Individual students, within their chapter, should interface with a sequence of programming connected to developing their chapter as a learning organization. Programs, with clear measureable outcomes, should be focused and facilitated to support student learning and not used to establish more administrative protocol, procedure, and policy. Within the sample, only comprehensive, accreditation, and evaluation programs demonstrated even moderate use of student development theory in their application. There were virtually no references, though it was clearly evident it was applied and mentioned within the programs. However, one program did cite the Astin (1993) *Input-Environment-Output* (IEO) model and several cited Astin's (1984) Student Involvement Theory.

Standards programs should be constructed with expected learning outcomes based on the values of the fraternity/sorority community. These programs should encourage chapters to set their own goals based on a set of agreed upon standards comprised within a rubric. For example, campus-based practitioners could easily utilize Magolda's (2004) Self-Authorship Theory and have chapters answer the questions across the continuous developmental areas of epistemological, interpersonal, and intrapersonal. These questions are: (1) how do I know; (2) who am I; and (3) how do I want to construct relationships

with others (Magolda, 2004). One could develop an accreditation program where chapters answer these questions through a comprehensive report or presentation, critically reflecting on how they demonstrate their values and provide for the development of their members. While just an example framework, such as approach may demonstrate learning through documenting developmental outcomes in chapters and would help codify chapters as learning organizations.

## Limitations

The GSPR is not a scientifically validated measure. It is merely a rubric devised to help guide qualitative inquiry to formulate a typology. It is intended to be utilized to comprehensively examine fraternity/sorority standards programs. Furthermore, though efforts were made to ensure representativeness, the sample size and sampling strategy limits generalizability. The results of this study should only be generalized to the population of college undergraduates who participated within these programs. One of the primary limitations of this study is the demand characteristics of the researcher. The researcher had extensive *a priori* knowledge and experience with fraternity and sorority administration and involvement. This may have unduly influenced participants to provide socially desirable responses in the submission of programs for the study.

## Future Research

The relationship statements set forth in broad terms the mutual responsibility of the institution and its recognized fraternity and sorority chapters. This approach led to even more serious liability concerns for institutions that poorly implemented them. What has worked is the development of fraternity/sorority standards programs effective in aligning the institution's mission with that of the fraternity/sorority system. This closes the gap that *A Call for Values Congruence* (2003) claims existed. Kohlberg (1984) echoed

this notion when he stated, “right action tends to be defined in terms of general individual rights and standards that have been critically examined and agreed upon by the whole society” (p. 39). Moreover, the current nature of standards programs for fraternities and sororities remains somewhat provincial. Measuring learning outcomes, the application of a developmental approach, and embedding a theoretical framework should be the next evolution of the traditional standards programs for a fraternity/sorority community.

Fraternity/sorority standards programs should work to frame their programs on student learning outcomes. Without this grounding, administrators may be merely encouraging programming and utilizing standards programs as a locus of control. However, the question remains what students are gaining from these programs. Incorporating te-

nets of fundamental student development theories would help frame desired learning outcomes embedded in a standards program. Documenting learning outcomes from participation would help address relevancy question raised by the Franklin Square Group (2003).

This research also provides advisors and other campus-based professionals a typology of programs with which they can navigate the vast landscape and offerings of standards programs with more ease. While this study is merely a baseline for the research regarding fraternity/sorority standards programs, it will hopefully generate future research. What exists currently with standards programs involves a complex set of policies and procedures. Thus, future research should examine the effectiveness of each of the categories within the typology established in this study.

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## Author Update

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**Table 1**  
*Fraternity/Sorority Standards Summary*

Qualification	Minimum Standards	Accreditation	Evaluation	Awards	Comprehensive
Theoretical Orientation					
Administrative framework	High	High	High	High	High
Student involvement/engagement theory	Low	Moderate	Moderate	Low	Moderate
Leadership development initiatives	Low	High	Moderate	Moderate	High
Chapter management	High	High	High	High	High
Housing management initiatives	Moderate	High	Low	Moderate	Moderate
Are the goals of the program well articulated	High	High	Moderate	Moderate	High
Purpose of the program, if no theory for basis of existence	Adminis- tration	Accreditation	Assessment	Awards	Assessment Rewards
Policy Elements					
Incentive program/rewards based	No	No	No	Yes	Yes
Residential (for Greek systems with housing	Moderate	Moderate	Low	None	Moderate
Minimum standards for continued recognition	High	High	Low	None	High
Competition for resources	Low	Low	None	High	Moderate
Ranking/sliding scale	None	Moderate	Low	Moderate	Moderate
Accreditation-style	Low	High	None	None	Moderate
Rating scale via standard metric	Low	High	High	High	High
Community standards	Low	Moderate	Low	None	Moderate

Table 1, Continued

Judicial council specifically for Greeks	Moderate	Moderate	Low	None	Moderate
Compliance described with state law	High	High	High	None	High
Compliance described with federal law	Moderate	Low	None	None	Low
Mandatory or voluntary participation	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory	Voluntary	Mandatory
Process and Administration					
Participation of chapters or governing councils	Chapters	Chapters	Chapters or Council	Chapters	Chapters
Alumni councils or chapter alumni boards involvement	Low	High	Low	Low	High
Extended to Greek system housing	High	Moderate	Moderate	Low	High
Resource intensive (requires additional staff members to coordinate)	Low	Moderate	Low	None	High
Number of staff members to facilitate	One	One to Three	One	One to Three	One
Constituencies are involved	Three or Four	Four to Seven	Two to Four	One to Four	Three to Six
Cost	Cost of paper	Cost of paper	Cost of paper	Cost of rewards; Cost of paper	Cost of rewards; Cost of paper
Administrator	Residence Life or Office of Greek Life	Office of Greek Life or Student Activities	Office of Greek Life or Greek Council	Office of Greek Life	Office of Greek Life

Table 1, Continued

Chapter Level Experience					
Duplication of efforts to both Inter/National headquarters and to administration	High	High	High	Low	High
Chapter members involved	As Needed	As Needed	As Needed	As Needed	As Needed + Chapter President
Resources expended (human, monetary, time)	As Needed	As Needed	As Needed	As Needed	As Needed
Procdeure					
Online process	Low	Low	None	Low	Low
Submission of three-ring, paper-based binder	Low	High	High	High	High
Presentation	None	High	None	Low	Low
Gradual implementation with submission of forms over specific time interval	High	High	Low	Moderate	High
Rewards for compliance or participation	N/A	N/A	N/A	Participa-tion	Participation
Rewards distribution	N/A	N/A	N/A	End of year awards	To highest achieving chapters
Do rewards, if any, establish fair equality amongst chapters?	N/A	N/A	N/A	High	Moderate

**Table 1, Continued**

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Outcomes					
Outcomes of the program	Recognition	Programming Certification Recognition	Programming Evaluation Administration	Awards	Administration Rewards Accreditation or Evaluation
Proposed learning outcomes	None	Low	Low	Low	Low
Results archived for future use	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Notification of Results					
Online posting	Low	Moderate	None	Moderate	Moderate
Conference	High	High	High	Moderate	High
Letter/E-Mail Notification	Low	High	Moderate	Low	Moderate
Presentation to a committee	None	Moderate	None	Low	Low

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# Appendix A

## Fraternity/Sorority Standards Project Rubric (GSPR)

### Theoretical Orientation

1. Student Development Theory?
2. Administration Framework?
3. Student Involvement/Engagement?
4. Leadership Development?
5. If no theory for basis of existence, then what, if any, is the purpose of the program?
5. What are the goals of the program?

### Policy

1. What is the structure of the program?
  - Incentive program/rewards based?
  - Minimum standards for continued recognition?
  - Competition for resources?
  - Ranking/sliding scale?
  - Accreditation-style?
  - Rating scale via standard metric?
  - Community standards?
  - Residential (for fraternity/sorority systems with housing?)
2. What are requirements?
3. Are chapters superseding international or national policies for local college/university policies?
4. What are the consequences for noncompliance? Is there a judicial council specifically for fraternities/sororities?
5. What is the congruence with state and federal laws?
6. Is program mandatory or voluntary?

### Process

How is the program is experienced at two levels: administrator and chapter?

#### 1. Administration

- Economy of scale?
  - a. Specific to ALL specific chapters or to just specific governing councils?
  - b. Does program involve alumni councils or chapter alumni boards?
  - c. Does program extend to Fraternity/sorority system housing (if applicable)?
- Resource Intensive?
  - a. How many staff members does it take to implement?
  - b. How many constituencies are involved?
  - c. How many other resources (monetary and time) does Program cause to be expended?
- Who administers the program?

## Appendix A, Continued

### 2. Chapter

- Redundancy? Is chapter duplicating forms to both international or national headquarters and to administration?
- How many chapter members must be involved?
- How many resources (human, monetary, and time) does chapter expend?

### Procedure

#### 1. How is the program is implemented?

Online process?

Submission of three-ring, paper-based binder?

Presentation?

Gradual implementation with submission of forms over specific time interval?

#### 2. Are their rewards for compliance or participation?

#### 3. How are the rewards, if any, distributed?

#### 4. Do rewards establish fair equality amongst chapters?

### Outcomes

#### 1. What are the outcomes of the program?

#### 2. Are there any proposed learning outcomes?

#### 3. Are the results archived for future use?

#### 4. How do people find out the results?