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Wessel and Salisbury: Social Integration of Sorority Women Living in Residence Halls

SOCIAL INTEGRATION OF SORORITY WOMEN LIVING IN RESIDENCE HALLS

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College students find a sense of belonging at institutions in multiple ways. For college women, the relationships they form through their campus involvements are important. The purpose of this study was to gain an understanding of the social integration experiences of sorority women living in residence halls. The researchers found sorority women had positive community experiences and enriched relationship opportunities through their involvement in sororities and residence halls. The women felt more connected to people through the relationships they formed because of sorority membership, whereas they felt more connected to campus as a whole because they lived in the halls.

Both social and academic integration are crucial components to students' success in college and likelihood to persist to graduation (Tinto, 1993). Residence halls and fraternity/sorority communities work to achieve similar goals; they provide ways for students to be involved, form relationships, and become integrated into their campus communities. Additionally, students develop valuable life skills in both residence halls and fraternity/sorority communities. Although there are fraternity/sorority-affiliated students who live in residence halls, some of them do not actively participate in the events or leadership opportunities offered through residence halls. It would be helpful to staff working with them to know if their primary point of social integration is with their fraternity /sorority community or their residence hall community, or both. Thus, this study examined the social integration experiences of sorority women living in residence halls. Why are some students who are leaders and actively involved in their sorority communities not active in the residential communities in which they live?

The Importance of Social Integration

The theoretical foundation for this study rests with Tinto's (1993) work on the importance of academic and social integration in college. He suggested college students engage in a process of

becoming integrated into the academic and social communities of a particular institution when they successfully navigate three stages – separation, transition, and incorporation. Students who successfully navigate separation from their previous cultures and transition into the current higher education setting are considered to be incorporated into the collegiate academic and social settings. Tinto (2012) found that once students incorporate and assimilate to campus norms, they adopt these values and norms into their own value systems. Academic and social integration are considered most important to students' likelihood to persist to graduation. Students who successfully transition to their campus environments experience positive educational outcomes as well as build the foundation for future interactions with peers and faculty.

Most students make initial steps toward integration to the campus by becoming assimilated into campus sub-communities. Participation in fraternity/sorority communities and residence hall associations are both examples of sub-communities for college students. Social ties allow students to experience social integration and better social connectedness to campus as a whole (Bolle-Brummond & Wessel, 2012).

College Women's Social Integration

Gender differences have an effect on social integration and institutional commitment because of the likelihood of women, when com-

pared to male peers, to seek and create deeper, more meaningful social bonds with the people around them (Deaux & LaFrance, 1998). Integration is important for both sexes, but it may be more influential on institutional commitment of women because they tend to need and benefit from strong social connections (Jones, 2009).

While women benefit from social connectedness, they can also experience problems during their college experiences. For example, the lack of women represented in leadership roles at colleges and universities has made it difficult for women to relate at the institutional level because they did not easily have accessible role models and mentors who were of the same gender (Kinzie, Thomas, Palmer, Umbach, & Kuh, 2007). Some young women were unable to picture themselves in leadership roles because they lacked female leadership role models at an institutional level. Women who were active in single sex environments thrived, were more engaged, and formed better relationships with those around them when compared to women in co-educational environments. Women, especially those who are first-generation college students, need and benefit more from social support (Jenkins, Belanger, Connally, Boals, & Duron, 2013). In college, young women are able to experience social support networks in a variety of ways including on-campus housing and student organization membership.

Role of Sorority Communities

Sorority membership is associated with higher levels of social interaction and involvement (Walker, Martin, & Hussey, 2015), allowing students to engage in peer interactions, develop listening skills, and clarify their values through discussions with their fraternity/sorority-affiliated peers (Dugan & Komives, 2010). Students who are sorority-affiliated have a network of people with whom they are able to interact on a daily basis, which ultimately allows them to feel more socially integrated to their campus environment (Capone, Wood, Borsari, & Laird, 2007).

There are particular benefits for women associated with membership in all-female organizations such as a sorority. Sorority members are more likely to be successful at building consensus and finding a sense of ownership in their work and membership than their non-affiliated female peers; they are also better at facilitating decision-making processes within their organizations (Martin, Hevel, & Pascarella, 2012). Sorority membership has also been found to afford women unique leadership skills that could be transferrable to other organizations and future employment opportunities. Another benefit of sorority membership for women is an increased awareness and sensitivity to gender norms and stereotypes. Sorority members endorse more non-stereotypical attitudes in areas of female political leadership and belief in differential work roles when compared to their non-fraternity/sorority-affiliated peers (Robinson, Gibson-Beverly, & Schwartz, 2004).

Role of On-Campus Housing

Willoughby, Carroll, Marshall, and Clark (2009) suggested residential life communities have significant impact on students' development in college. The activities and social interaction that happen within a hall help facilitate campus social integration (Utter & DeAngelo, 2015). Within residence halls students have a natural support system from those they live near and have meaningful relationships with people who help them in dealing with stress, anxiety, and loneliness (Schudde, 2011). Students find solace in peers and form a close social network with people with whom they are able to interact regarding classes, campus resources, and other information. Additionally, students who live on-campus are more likely to use campus resources because they were referred either by someone who lives near them or by a campus housing professional with whom they interact. The sense of community offered by a residence hall contributes to successful social integration, thus encouraging students to persist to graduation (Erb,

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Sinclair, & Braxton, 2015).

Women are more likely than men to value and seek out female friendships and social connections in order to feel supported during their college transition (Enochs & Roland, 2006). Since residence halls have climates similar to families, with boundaries and an atmosphere of care and concern, the hall staff can serve in pseudo-older sibling roles by providing mentorship and guidance during a student's transition. This type of environment is important for the adjustment of all students in college, but especially for women. Residence halls provide women with the environment necessary to create support systems and form relationships.

Method

The purpose of this study was to better understand the social integration experiences of sorority women living in residence halls. The research question was, how do sorority women who live in residence halls describe their lived experiences of social integration?

This study was grounded in qualitative phenomenological methodology (Creswell, 2013), which attempts to understand the point-of-view of participants to make a common meaning of their lived experiences. Qualitative methodology was used because it is "inductive, emerging, and shaped by the researcher's experience in collecting and analyzing data" (p. 22). This approach was chosen because the researchers believed they would be able to learn most about the social integration experiences of sorority women who live in residence halls through in-depth interviewing. Phenomenology "describes the common meaning for several individuals of their lived experiences of a concept or a phenomenon" (p. 76). The lived experience being evaluated in the current study is the experiences and social integration of sorority women who live in residence halls. Participants were selected using purposive and snowball sampling (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). The selection criteria included sophomore, ju-

nior, or senior women who were members of a sorority, and lived in a residence hall at the time of the interview; the sorority women did not necessarily live together in the residence halls. This criterion was selected to ensure participants had a full school year immersed in on-campus housing and sorority membership, which allowed for richer discussion of their social integration experiences.

Data were collected from seven college women who were from a mid-sized, public, research institution in the Midwest. It was classified as a research-based university with an undergraduate profile consisting of full time, four-year, residential, and selective with a primary function of serving undergraduate students (Carnegie Foundation, n. d.). The campus has limited opportunity for sorority women to live in residential sororities, thus most of them either live in residence halls or in off-campus housing. The inclusion criteria established by the researchers were that the population included traditional college-aged women, ages 18 to 24, who belonged to a sorority, held at least sophomore standing, and lived in a residence hall. An interview protocol was created to help facilitate semi-structured interviews. Semi-structured interviews were chosen because they "offer the interviewer considerable latitude to pursue a range of topics and offer the subject a chance to shape the content of the interview" (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007, p. 104). The questions related to participants' experiences living in the halls, and as a member of a sorority. Participants were asked to compare both types of experiences and describe if one experience had a more prominent influence on the way they connected to the university. For both on-campus housing and sorority membership, the questions asked about impressions of their involvement, activities the participants were involved in, relationships with other members in their community, and favorite memories. To improve the trustworthiness of the interview process, a panel of experts knowledgeable in sorority life, university housing, and qualitative

methodology reviewed the interview protocol, and questions were revised based on the suggestions of the panel. The protocol was then tested with the assistance of women who were in the population but not in the study. Final revisions were made to the protocol based on suggestions from the initial test. After the study received IRB approval, individual interviews were digitally recorded and transcribed. Participants were assigned pseudonyms.

The data were prepared and organized by using interview transcripts to analyze and find consistent themes among the participants (Shopes, 2011). The transcripts were typed and checked for accuracy using the digital recording. The researcher reviewed the transcripts and “uptalk” and “fillers” were edited out of the transcripts to make the participants’ messages more coherent. Cameron (2001) found “uptalk” and “fillers” to be declarative utterances found in discourse, especially in sorority women. The researcher then used the transcripts to see if there were any common themes or answers to the research question. After the data were collected, data were coded using two types of codes – a priori codes and inductive codes (Creswell, 2013). The codes were combined into broad themes, interpreted, and analyzed. Once all of the themes were identified, a narrative of the themes and experiences shared by the subjects through interviews was compiled. Lincoln and Guba’s (1985) evaluative criteria (i.e., credibility, transferability, dependability, and conformability) were used to evaluate the data collection and analysis processes to ensure trustworthiness. The evaluative criteria were met in a variety of ways. Credibility was established through triangulation. The researcher used a review of literature and semi-structured, in-depth interviews to gather information about the social integration experiences of sorority women who lived in residence halls. Transferability was established through thick description. Dependability was established when the research advisor performed an inquiry audit of the raw data. Conformability was established

through triangulation and reflexivity in which the researcher kept a reflective research journal throughout the research process.

The seven participants were White, traditional-aged undergraduate women, between the ages of 18 and 24, and who had attended the same college for at least one full academic year. Three of the women were Resident Assistants (RA) and also members of a sorority. The participants represented four different sororities of varying sizes. The participants were as follows:

- Sarah – a junior, Public Relations major. She joined a sorority her sophomore year, unlike many of her peers that joined in the freshman year, because she was looking for more leadership opportunities.
- Hillary – a sophomore, Elementary Education major with a focus on Special Education. Her interest in joining a sorority came during the spring of her first year after she watched her close friends enjoy their sorority experiences.
- Dottie – a junior, Public Relations major. She joined a sorority after she decided to return to the institution for her sophomore year and was looking for ways to become connected to campus.
- Chelsea – a sophomore, English and Spanish major with a minor in Linguistics. She was interested in joining a sorority to meet new people and to feel more connected to campus.
- Anna – a sophomore, Journalism and Telecommunications double major. She was interested in joining a sorority in order to meet new people.
- Elizabeth – a sophomore, Psychology major with minors in Spanish and Psychology of Human Development. She was interested in joining a sorority immediately after arriving on campus.
- Heather – a sophomore, Chemistry major with a pre-physical therapy interest. Her goal in joining a sorority was to get more involved on campus.

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The authors interact with undergraduates on a personal level and witness their growth and development over their time in the residence life, campus ministry, student activities, and sorority life. Our passion for our work with undergraduates comes from witnessing the impact involvement and leadership has on their collegiate experiences. The experiences that were most influential included being an executive officer in a sorority and serving as a Resident Assistant. Both of these experiences contributed to our individual persistence to graduation, while also aiding in personal development. We believe the college student experience is shaped by the different communities and environments to which they belong, giving them the opportunity to grow and develop. If we are to serve students in the residence halls, we need to better understand how to construct an engaging living environment. If our sorority students are not participating in the residence halls, is there something stopping them? Or, what can we do better to ensure they have the best experience possible? Student Affairs educators, especially those who work closely with sorority students who live in the residence halls, have an obligation to learn more about the experiences of this student population in order to better meet their needs.

Findings

The findings are organized into three thematic categories: experiences of community, enriched relationship opportunities, and patterns of social integration.

Experiences of Community

The participants reported the sense of community felt in the residence halls and sororities as important to their feeling of connectedness to campus. For the participants, a sense of community was felt when they knew the people who lived near them, had a good relationship with their RA, had positive experiences in their hall, and felt committed to participating in events

and activities offered in their community. The participants noted that hall events and philanthropy events stood out as memorable to their community experiences. Additionally, they felt a sense of community living in the halls because they were located on campus and were close to campus resources and amenities. The open door communities in halls made them feel connected to the people they lived near. The women spoke about the relationships they had with their RAs and how the relationships influenced their overall experience of community in the halls. Three different aspects affected their experience of community in the halls – convenience and proximity to campus resources, the type of community, and the influence of their RAs.

The women explained the various ways that living on campus was convenient for them. Many of them identified the residence halls as being in prime locations on campus. Campus resources, such as the health center or the library, were closer to them than to their friends who lived off campus. Hillary shared, “I like everything that is here. We have so many resources available to us that wouldn’t be available if you lived off campus.” Additionally, their location on campus allowed participants to get to classes or on-campus meetings more quickly. The ease of access and proximity to their hall rooms made living on campus easy and convenient.

Some of the participants mentioned the type of community – either first year or upperclassmen – influenced how often they interacted with other people in their hall community. Involvement tended to be higher in first-year communities, when compared to the halls they lived in during their sophomore year and above. Anna suggested:

When you get to your sophomore year you stop branching out. Like, freshman year you go to all that stuff because that’s how you meet people and that’s how you start conversations. But then sophomore year [you’ve] found your friend group. You don’t need to branch out more, and you’re so busy.

The participants further explained that their levels of involvement differed depending on the type of community in which they lived. As they spent more time in both the halls and sororities, they found their overall involvement in residence halls decreased. Many of them attributed this to their busy schedules or events being scheduled at conflicting times.

The communities formed in the residence halls offered students opportunities to experience a wide variety of people, including those with different majors, ethnicities, and family backgrounds. Additionally, their RAs had significant influence on the students' hall experiences. For those who had a positive experience with their RA, the communities thrived. Sarah shared: "having an RA, especially if they are one that's around a lot, can make a big difference on knowing where your resources are." It was also her experience with her RA that made her want to become an RA. Negative experiences with RAs also shaped hall environments. Chelsea explained that her RA was rude and unhelpful once in a situation involving her roommate who was sick and needed medical attention. Her RA did not help in the situation, and, instead, assumed the women had been drinking, so she treated them poorly. Chelsea had difficulty finding positive experiences in her community because she felt disconnected to her RA due to the negative interaction; she felt that her RA did not care about her or her roommate. The negative experience affected how Chelsea viewed her relationships with her peers in her living environment. When she felt that her RA did not care about her, she no longer wanted to participate in activities directed by her RA.

Although living in the residence halls offered opportunities for students to meet a diverse group of people of various majors, ethnicities, and backgrounds, women who belonged to a sorority made connections with a variety of people across campus. They suggested they felt part of the greater campus community because of their sorority membership. Sarah said, "I think the fact

you can see 100 people on campus . . . makes you feel like you're more at home. You're more familiar with different people." Many of the women talked about how their sorority sisters helped them to feel more connected to campus simply based on the number of people they knew. Additionally, the women noted that because of their sorority membership, they became involved in the larger campus community activities including student government, organizations related to their major, and service and philanthropic opportunities.

Another effect of sorority membership was that the women used their experiences to jumpstart their leadership in the campus community. Some of the other leadership experiences including being involved with Dance Marathon, serving as RAs in residence halls, and leading organizations related to their majors. The participants noted that when their sisters were involved in an organization, they were more likely to pursue their outside interests because of the example set by other sorority members. Sarah pursued an executive position on the campus Panhellenic Council. She said the following about why she wanted to apply for an executive position, "I really liked the idea of all the sororities working together on one council. It was no longer working to make just your sorority better, but to make Greek Life on campus better."

Many of the women noted their hesitance in joining a sorority was based on prior misconceptions they had about fraternity/sorority life. They suggested the negative media perceptions and conversations with peers, at times, portraying fraternity/sorority life as full of alcohol, drugs, and partying to be reasons why they were not originally interested in joining. The participants stated that it was after they spent more time with their sororities in weekly chapter meetings, regular social events, and through recruitment preparation. It was after the participants began to prioritize in order to spend time with their sisters and, as a result, formed deeper, more meaningful relationships that their percep-

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tions about the fraternity/sorority community changed. The participants felt that their sorority sisters became like family and were relationships in which they felt truly known, loved, and respected.

Enriched Relationship Opportunities

The women referenced the relationships they formed with the people they lived near in the residence halls and with their sorority sisters as being memorable to their college experiences. The friendships made with the women on their residence hall floors, as well as with the other women in their sororities, helped them to feel part of the campus culture. They noted their relationships with the people around them helped them cope with their college transition, provided them with new opportunities, and offered a support network of women on whom they could depend.

The relationships the women formed in the residence halls were convenient because they were close to their friends who often lived right down the hall from them. The halls offered them the opportunities to meet and become friends with people they would not have otherwise met. Since the women lived in close quarters, they had a group of people who were physically close to them and could offer support, if necessary. Chelsea noted that when she received notice of her admission to a study abroad program, she was unable to contact her parents, “so I just ran down the hall and there [are] four other girls who are in our sorority, as well as my roommate, and ... celebrated with them.”

The women often talked about the relationships they formed in the residence halls as being their first connection to campus. Hillary shared, “a lot of people I had classes with, so I got to know people that way. And then the girls that lived next door, I actually live with now. It was just kind of like networking I guess.” There was always someone with whom to talk, share exciting news, or vent about a bad day. Another benefit of living in a hall was that it gave students the

opportunity to live in close proximity to people with whom they would not typically interact. Chelsea said, “you really are exposed to a lot of different people – people that are different than you and what you’re used to.”

However, based on time and energy spent, the relationships the women formed with their sorority sisters were deeper and more meaningful than those formed with the people who lived with in their halls. They felt more connected to their sisters, and, thus, continued to prioritize the time they spent interacting with the sisters. More time and energy allowed for deeper and more authentic relationships and conversation. Many of the participants commented that the relationships formed in their sororities were the most influential of their college experience. Sarah said, “the difference is the deeper connections. Yes, you’re not going to like everyone in your sorority ... but you care about them ... Even if you don’t know them really well you would do a lot more for them than you would for a random person on your floor.” Furthermore, Chelsea described how her commitment to sisterhood motivated her to be a better version of herself, holding herself to a higher standard, because she was representing her entire sisterhood. For Anna, going through recruitment solidified her relationships with the women she called sisters. “You really get to understand your sisters, and why you’re in this, and understand the deeper meaning to it all.” The relationships they made through their sorority allowed them to feel socially integrated into a community of people and allowed them to feel like they had successful experiences in college.

Patterns of Social Integration

The research question asked how sorority women who live in residence halls experienced social integration. Students who successfully adopt the prevailing norms of the institutional community are considered to be incorporated. Tinto found once students incorporate and assimilate to campus norms they are integrated

on campus, meaning they adopt the values and norms of the broader campus community into their own value systems (Tinto, 2012). Students who interact with their campus environments experience positive educational outcomes. Additionally, involved students build a foundation for future interactions with peers and faculty which could enhance their academic and social affiliations. The women experienced stronger social integration depending on how their experience was delineated – either in talking about how they felt connected to the campus community in general, or how they felt connected to their peers. The women felt more connected to campus as a whole because they lived in the halls, whereas they felt more connected to people through the relationships they formed because of their sorority memberships.

The participants were asked if living in the residence halls or being a member of a sorority made them feel more connected to campus. Four of the seven participants reported that the halls made them feel connected because of their on-campus location and their knowledge of campus events through in-hall advertisements. However, they experienced a deeper sense of connection based on the relationships they made in their sororities. For the participants, the stronger pattern of social integration in relationships was found in their sorority membership and the relationships they made because of it. This integration caused many of the students to grow closer to their sororities through activities and relationships.

Discussion

Influence of Community on Connectedness

The community experiences of sorority women who live in residence halls are influential in their feelings of connectedness and belonging to campus. The more positive experiences the women had in their residence halls or sororities, the more likely they were to feel connected

to the campus community; they had a desire to form relationships with the people around them and to participate actively in events and activities. When women find a community – be it through the residence halls or through their sororities – they find a home. It is the feeling of home and closeness that allows them to feel connected to the larger campus community.

The participants in this study had two main communities to which they belonged – their residence hall and fraternity/sorority communities. The women found a home in their residence halls, and they found other women with whom they could connect their sororities. The more socially integrated the women became through their hall and sorority experiences, the more connected they felt to the campus community as a whole. Their closeness and proximity to campus resources influenced their feeling of connectedness to campus. Additionally, their network of personal connections expanded as they got more involved. As sorority women who live in halls assimilated, they had better experiences with their communities.

Tinto (2012) suggested students who were socially integrated into their campus communities were more successful and more likely to persist to graduation. Their transition into college might be difficult, but if they are successful in their pursuits to get involved and find a community to suit their needs, they will be more successful. He noted both residence hall communities and fraternity/sorority organizations give students the opportunities to integrate into their communities by providing them with a subgroup of people who shared similar identities and values (Tinto, 2012). Bolle-Brummond and Wessel (2012) found social integration helped college students feel better connected to campus. In varying degrees, both living in a hall and being a member of a sorority were means of social integration and allowed the women to feel connected to campus. Students experience social integration in a number of ways (e.g., interactions in classrooms, residence halls, student organizations, etc.),

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and once they are socially connected to campus, they are typically successful in their persistence to graduation. Utter and DeAngelo (2015) and Pike (2003) discussed the importance of students becoming integrated and connected to campus through the sub-communities of residence halls or fraternity/sorority life. For the participants, both their hall and sorority experiences affected their sense of social integration.

Importance of Relationships

The relationships that college women form because of their involvements are important in making them feel integrated to campus (Deaux & LeFrance, 1998). Therefore, the deeper and more meaningful connections they have, the better their collegiate experiences are (Jones, 2009). The relationships the women formed in their residence halls and sororities were important in their collegiate experiences. Enoch and Roland (2006) found female friendships help women transition into college. As they spend more time together, the casual interactions with the people who live around them often turn into friendships that are more meaningful.

The researchers found the residence halls served as a home away from home, and the people they lived with represented a pseudo-family during their time at college. The women find they can depend on their newfound friends for support through their college transitions. Living near their friends made it easy to share their excitement or disappointment. Baxter-Magolda (1999) cited extra social pressure women face when transitioning into college. However, residence halls provided built-in support systems through the friendships made with the people who live around them.

Transition issues emerge for women when they first enter college, and they benefit from the support of the people around them, especially from other women (Jenkins et al., 2013; Kinzie et al., 2007). The women found solace and comfort when they interacted with the other people in their residence hall communities,

who were often similar issues. They were able to form a support system and a network of people on whom they could rely to help them in their transition to college. The communities formed in their halls served as the foundation of series of experiences that allowed sorority women who lived in halls to feel connected to the campus community.

Martin et al. (2012) cited many benefits for women involved in all-female organizations such as sororities. The opportunities for development, relationships, and leadership are important to sorority women. Although the relationships the sorority women formed in the residence halls their freshmen years are important to their original social integration, the relationships they have in their sororities tend to last beyond those formed in the halls. The more time the women spent with their sisters, the closer they felt to them. Dugan and Komives (2010) found that fraternity/sorority members engaged in deep and meaningful relationships with their peers. In support of this claim, the sorority women said they experience an almost familial bond with the other women in their sororities. The women could imagine themselves interacting with their sorority sisters in the future, but they did not share similar sentiments when talking about the relationships they had with the women by whom they lived in the halls.

Implications and Recommendations for Practice

How do student affairs educators wrestle with the need for connection and involvement in residence halls? Student affairs professionals may enlist the sorority women who live in their residence halls to collaborate on events; for example, the hall in which a sorority woman lives could sponsor her team at sorority philanthropic events, or her RA may take a group of residents from her floor to attend an event sponsored by her sorority. Alternatively, fraternity/sorority educators might consider co-sponsoring events in their members' halls. These types of events

were memorable to the participants and enhanced their positive experiences of community. It would be beneficial for student affairs educators to explore ways to connect the residence hall and fraternity/sorority communities.

Additionally, for institutions that do not have sorority-designated housing, it is worth considering providing housing options for sorority women to live together on one floor in a residence or have an entire residence hall available in which sorority women may live. If sorority women have the opportunity to live in a residence hall in close community with their sorority sisters, they could enjoy the benefits of living in a sorority, and the benefits of a residence hall. This living situation could potentially create more interest in participation in hall activities and programs. Looking at the experiences of women and giving them opportunities to share their voices is important for their personal development, social integration, and persistence to graduation. In particular, if we allow sorority women who live in residence halls to speak of their own experiences, to learn from their experiences, and to adapt to their needs, it moves us closer to helping in their social integration and getting them actively involved in their communities.

For those student affairs educators who do not identify as part of the fraternity/sorority community and may not understand the associated culture, it may be difficult to connect or advocate for fraternity/sorority affiliated students. Unfortunately, for some, experiences with fraternity/sorority affiliated students may be negative. It is critical to understand the good that comes from the fraternity/sorority-affiliated population and their service, leadership, and friendship. This includes authentic and familial-like bonds, increased likelihood of participation in on-campus activities, and feelings of connectedness to peers. It is also important to recognize the challenges associated with the fraternity/sorority community. Designing appropriate challenge and support around these issues is essen-

tial to build a quality residential community for fraternity/sorority students. Additionally, it is important to understand the benefits of living on campus, which include convenience to on-campus locations, ease in interacting with those that live in close proximity, and the influential relationship with RA. Both fraternity/sorority life and residence halls greatly affect the collegiate experience by enriched relationship opportunities and social integration into campus community for women. Women have the opportunity to form relationships, participate in leadership opportunities, and make lasting memories.

This study was limited by a lack of racial/ethnic and geographic diversity. Future research could be longitudinal exploring how feelings of residence and sorority life changes over time, and the experiences of fraternity men who live in residence halls. The study was also limited because three of the seven participants were RAs who had received significant training in how to connect to a group of peers. This training likely affected their experiences.

The intent of this study was to examine the social integration of sorority women who lived in residence halls. Living in on-campus housing provided a springboard for sorority women to get more deeply involved in their sorority organizations and to form relationships with those around them. Sorority women who live in residence halls experience positive social integration to their campus communities and benefit from the communities in which they are involved. Their first integration experience comes from living on-campus, getting to know their neighbors, and being closely connected to activities and events. Their deeper integration experience comes from their sorority membership, and forming deeper bonds with their sisters.

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