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We Are One: A Phenomenological Study of the Self-Perceived Experiences of Black Students in the National Pan-Hellenic Council at a Predominately White Institution and Historically Black University in the Southeast

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WE ARE ONE: A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY OF THE SELF-PERCEIVED
EXPERIENCES OF BLACK STUDENTS IN THE NATIONAL PAN-HELLENIC COUNCIL
AT A PREDOMINATELY WHITE INSTITUTION AND HISTORICALLY BLACK
UNIVERSITY IN THE SOUTHEAST

A Thesis

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in

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by
Loryn M. Taylor-Johnson
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Abstract

For the purpose of this study, the researcher examined the self-perceived experiences for Black students in the National Pan-Hellenic Council on the campus of at a Predominately White Institution (PWI) and a Historically College/Black University (HBCU) in the Southeast, specifically examining the support provided by Student Affairs professionals. After examining current literature, the researcher sought to understand students' perception of support offered by Student Affairs professionals in Greek Life Offices.

Chapter 1: Introduction

Upon its creation, higher education, provided two services: (1) to train men that would either become clergy or (2) enter into the professional workforce (Duster, 2009). The way in which institutions would choose to educate their students varied from location to location, all colleges were charged to turn their colonial boys into men (Thelin, 2011). As the need and desire to encourage more formal means of education for different identities of individuals, universities were created to serve the educational needs for students who were not rich white men. The 1890 Morrill-McComas Land Grant Act created federal funding for institutions that would be primarily used to establish trade schools for African Americans (Duster 2009). Before the Civil War, very little opportunities for advancement were given specifically to African Americans in the South. Therefore, Historically Black College or Universities (HBCUs) were created to provide access to a privilege that had been kept from African Americans, trade training, in an environment free of prejudice (Brown & Davis, 2001).

Education has always been important for African Americans, but because of slavery they were not allowed to learn how to read or write. Built on the principles of helping and encouraging themselves African Americans in the South began to create formal education for themselves and future generations once slavery was abolished. Although African Americans did receive help from surrounding white American support groups, the desire to create an education that would continue for generations, relied on African Americans (Anderson 1995). While some whites supported the creation of these schools, some did not. Despite opposition, historically Black institutions granted nearly all of the degrees held by African Americans before the 1940s (Epps, Haniff, & Allen, 1991).

Navigating historically and predominately white institutions, constantly filled with racism and prejudice, proved difficult and mentally exhausting for Black students. On college campuses across the United States, African American students experienced racial and social inequalities (Ross, 2008) which negatively affected their retention because they did not feel connected to their universities or peers. White college students were able to benefit from organizations such as fraternities and sororities, that allowed students of common interest “*a social environment in which [they] could grow*” (Ross, 2008, pg. 6); however, African American students were not afforded these same opportunities. As a result, African American students created their own network of support, more formally known as the National Pan-Hellenic Council.

The National Pan-Hellenic Council

The National Pan-Hellenic Council (NPHC), houses the nine traditional Black fraternal organizations, more commonly known as the Divine 9. The sororities and fraternities within NPHC, as listed in Table 1, were all created at different universities across the United States to unify the African American community and to fight civil unrest during a period in which African Americans were tenaciously fighting for equality. Founded as a council 1930, NPHC’s purpose was to create a supportive environment for all of the Black Greek Letter Organizations (BGLOS) to assist each organization in fulfilling their own missions. Although these organizations are traditionally populated by and created for African Americans students, membership was not restricted to African Americans (Ross, 2008). The history of the nine organizations are further explained in this section.

Table 1.1 National Pan-Hellenic Council Fraternities and Sororities

Organization Name	Founding Date	Institution	Institution Type
Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc.	December 4, 1906	Cornell University	PWI
Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc.	January 15, 1908	Howard University	HBCU
Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, Inc.	January 5, 1911	Indiana University	PWI
Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Inc.	November 17, 1911	Howard University	HBCU
Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc.	January 13, 1913	Howard University	HBCU
Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity, Inc.	January 9, 1914	Howard University	HBCU
Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, Inc.	January 20, 1920	Howard University	HBCU
Sigma Gamma Rho Sorority, Inc.	November 12, 1922	Butler University	PWI
Iota Phi Theta Fraternity, Inc.	September 19, 1963	Morgan State University	HBCU

Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Incorporated

At Cornell University, seven men found it necessary to establish a fraternity for African American students for the purpose of giving civic meaning and social equity to former study group. These men established a fraternity for African American students and became Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Incorporated on December 4, 1906. Realizing that the fraternities were not only a good idea for students at Predominately White Institutions (PWIs) but would also be beneficial for students at HBCUs as well, the founders of Alpha Phi Alpha worked to charter a second chapter at Howard University, and then on college campuses throughout the county (Ross, 2008). Alpha Phi Alpha began to grow as an organization, as members held business meetings and began to strengthen the brotherhood that had been created. Beginning in 1922, Alpha Phi Alpha

began to expand the work they had been doing internally to their community as well by finding ways to meet the needs for other African Americans.

During a time in which education felt more like a luxury that could not always be afforded, the men of Alpha Phi Alpha worked to increase access and affordability for education past high school for African Americans within their community. The men began to create tutoring programs for high school students to encourage young African Americans to attend college. The skills the members of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Incorporated gained, would help them continue build the legacy of their organization as well as continue to help strengthen the African American community.

Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated

In the early 1900s it was not likely that women would be members of any higher education institution; indeed, many African American women would not finish high school. A group of young women on the campus of Howard University, wanted to not only change the trend of African American women shying away from higher education thus creating Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated on January 15, 1908. In the spirit of aiding both their members, as well as their community, the women began to work alongside many of the formally established organizations to make a difference; however, the students wanted to create an organization where they could develop their own programs that would aid their community. In addition to wanting to provide service to the community, the women wanted to make sure they paid special attention to their members and the sisterhood they had created through the creation of scholarship funds for members in need of financial assistance for school and studying abroad.

Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, Incorporated

At Indiana University, a PWI, African American students were small in number. Although the African American students were able to be admitted, they were not allowed to use many of the university amenities like their white peers. African American students were also not comfortable enough to be present on campus enough to see each other often enough to make meaningful connections with each other; students simply went to class with no extracurricular opportunities. Wanting to improve the African American experience, ten men created an organization as they began to research the steps needed to make their organization a long lasting African American fraternity (Ross, 2008). The men founded then named Kappa Alpha Nu on January 5, 1911, and with it “the sense of isolation left, and friendships were created” (Ross, 2008, pg.46).

The founders of the organization began to organize all of the background work to make sure that their organization would continue to grow and make a positive impact on their community, the men became leaders within their campus and surrounding community. They held social events that created safe spaces for African Americans to come together in areas they normally would not because of racism and mistreatment. In 1914, potentially because of racist remarks from their white peers, the men changed the name of the organization to Kappa Alpha Psi.

Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Incorporated

In 1911 on the campus of Howard University, three men believed that it was time for an African American fraternity to be established on a campus created solely with African Americans in mind; however, it was ever important for the men to decide what the ideals the organization would stand on that would set them apart from the other African American

fraternities that had been established. With the help of a faculty member, the three men founded Omega Psi Phi on November 17, 1911, with the principles “Scholarship, Manhood, Perseverance and Uplift” (Ross, 2008, pg. 75).

Although many would assume that the creation of a Black Greek Letter Organization (BGLO) on an HBCU would be done easily, that was not the case for the founders of Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Incorporated. Administration on college campuses across the nation, including the Howard University administration, refused to support fraternities and sororities because they afraid that these secretive organizations would create distrust amongst students (Ross, 2008). After remaining adamant and persistent against the many obstacles placed in their way by university officials, the men were able to grow their organization both on their campus, but to other campuses as well.

Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Incorporated

As society was beginning to change there were needs not being met by the other established organizations. In 1912, African Americans were demanding laws that would extend and protect basic civil liberties and twenty-two undergraduate women of Howard University wanted to be a part of the movement. (Ross, 2008) The women formed together to found Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Incorporated on January 13, 1913. As the organization began to expand, their work in the community began to increase as well as the women were interested in both national and international issues.

While working to grow as an organization internally, the women of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Incorporated, began to work with the federal government to create positive change for both the country and the world. Among the organization’s first programs the National Library Project helped to encourage reading to African American children.

Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity, Incorporated

The idea of Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity, Incorporated, began when one of the founders, a graduating high school senior was speaking with a Howard University graduate, four years before its founding day. With the motto “Culture for Service and Service for Humanity,” the organization was founded on January 9, 1914. As Phi Beta Sigma, Incorporated, began to grow, they also began to make a difference in their community, as well as their county. The fraternity also sought interest in making a difference internationally.

The men of Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity, Incorporated, saw a lack of economical understanding in the African American community and worked to create programs to fix this lack. During the Great Depression, when members as well as African Americans within their communities, began to feel the effects of the economic depression, Phi Beta Sigma came together to create scholarship opportunities for the members as well as opening business-related courses for members of the community so that they would be able to learn how to better defend themselves in this difficult time.

Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, Incorporated

In 1920, there were already two established sororities on the campus of Howard University when one of the founders of Phi Beta Sigma asked one of his peers if she would be interested in forming a “sister organization” (Ross, 2008) to his fraternity. On January 16, 1920, five women founded Zeta Phi Beta Sorority Incorporated, creating the only constitutionally bound relationship between their sorority and Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity Incorporated. The five women began to build their organization with the motto “Scholarship, Service, Sisterhood and Finer Womanhood” (Ross, 2008) allowing those principles to guide their programming.

The women of Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, Incorporated, began their service by assisting families in finding housing, specifically around World War II. (Ross, 2008). The organization also made their presence known in the African American community by supporting children who had gotten in criminal trouble. Zeta Phi Beta Sorority Incorporated's work within the African American community helped them expand and internally grow quickly.

Sigma Gamma Rho Sorority, Incorporated

In Indiana, seven school teachers felt another sorority was needed to encourage acts of service and scholastic achievement for the African American community. On November 12, 1922, Sigma Gamma Rho Sorority, Incorporated was founded as an organization of young African American women with the vision to help other African American women (Ross, 2008). Of the four established BGLO, Sigma Gamma Rho Sorority Incorporated, is the only sorority founded at a PWI, Butler University, in very close proximity to the Ku Klux Klan. Not allowing obstacles to get in their way, the women worked to grow their organization as well as grooming leaders both within their organization and their community as well.

The founding members focused on growth and expansion and knew that it would not be easy with the opposition of the Ku Klux Klan, but they did not allow that to stop their progress. Sigma Gamma Rho Sorority, Incorporated was at the forefront of the fight for women's rights, specifically focusing on African American women (Ross, 2008). By creating programs focusing on the importance for understanding literature for children, and access for employment for women, the organization began to make their mark nationally.

Iota Phi Theta Fraternity, Incorporate

In 1963, across the United States, African Americans experienced difficult times as many white politicians would undermine the hard work and progress that was done by Civil

Rights activists. During this time, twelve men, students of Morgan State University, felt that it was time to change the direction in which many of the established fraternities had taken. As older and nontraditional college students, the men felt that an organization needed to be established to speak to the new attitude that African Americans had taken on at this time and founded Iota Phi Theta Fraternity, Incorporated on September 19, 1963. Growth was initially difficult for the young organization as they were older than many of their peers, but not impossible. As they continued to grow, they continued to be “in the forefront of the African American struggle” (Ross, 2008, p. 136) locally and nationally as well.

Statement of the Problem

Student membership in a National Pan-Hellenic Council organization provides a higher level of community engagement and leadership development compared to peers who are not members of these organizations (McClure, 2006). It is important for Student Affairs Professionals to continue to educate and develop students after their induction so that students are confident in their leadership abilities and may continue to increase their influence in their communities.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to look at the experiences of Black students in the National Pan-Hellenic Council at a Predominately White Institution and Historically Black College/University in the Southeast to assist Student Affairs professionals in addressing the needs of Black students in BGLOs. The in-depth look will focus on the perceived resources and support given to students to understand if there is a perception regarding resource allocation and distribution and how information about this perception might be helpful to Student Affairs professionals.

Framework

The researcher used Sanford's Challenge and Support Theory (1967), to answer the following research questions:

1. What do Student Affairs Professionals do well to support Black Students in the National Pan-Hellenic Council?
2. What resources do Black Students in the National Pan-Hellenic Council think they need to be able to carry out the mission of their organization as well as the mission of their school?

In this theory, Sanford explains students' success is contingent upon the amount of support that students receive. According to Moore and Upcraft (1990)

The extent to which students are successful at this task depends on the degree of support that exists in the collegiate environment. Too much challenge is overwhelming; too much support is debilitating. The challenge-support cycle results in growth and change. (7)

While utilizing a qualitative phenomenological method, the researcher conducted individual interviews with participants to learn about their perceptions of the support they receive from the Student Affairs professionals on their campuses.

Significance

This study is significant because there is limited current research on students in students in BGLOs and the support they need to successfully reach their personal and organizational goals. As student populations grow and change, it is important to continue to study this population to ensure that Student Affairs professionals are able to support students in BGLOs on all campuses. With more research about this population, Student Affairs professionals will be better trained on how to engage, support and develop students in BGLOs.

Chapter 2: Review of Literature

Many researchers have conducted studies on the benefits of membership in BGLOs as an undergraduate student (e.g. Patton, Bridges, & Flowers, 2011; Greyerbiehl & Mitchell, 2014). Through this literature in this review of literature, the researcher seeks to understand why students choose to get involved and how professionals support student involvement to date.

Student Engagement

Joining a student organization can be one of the best components of the collegiate experience. When included with what is learned in the classroom, experience in student organizations can prepare students with intangible tools that will better equip them for the workforce (Kuh, 2009). More specifically, for Black students, joining organizations created to support them increases their sense of belonging and confidence as they navigate on a campus where they might feel they do not matter (Sutton & Kimbrough, 2001). There are significant differences in the way in which Black students interact with PWI campuses, according to Givens (2016),

While Black students and their peers share the same university campus, they have different experiences and historical ties to these institutions. In other words, Black students occupy their university campus alongside other racial peer groups (intertwined belongings), yet they exist on these campus with different relationship to the institution themselves (parallel lives). (58)

For Black students at PWIs, joining student organizations, more specifically organizations that were made specifically for students from marginalized communities, helps students realize their purpose on campus which may positively affect the matriculation of students from underrepresented identities and can help students feel connected to the greater campus community (McClure, 2006). As members of multicultural organizations, Black students at PWIs also report greater academic success (Britt, 2014). Involvement in BLGOs have been found to

not only have improved Black students' experiences at PWIs socially but has also helped students build relationships with their professors as well (Patton, Bridges, & Flowers, 2011).

The desire to be a part of a multicultural organization, more specifically, a BLGO can stem from many different areas. BGLOs at PWIs provide safe spaces for African American students, which positively affects their experience on campus and in the classroom as well (McClure, 2006). Black students on PWI campuses attest to having experienced racial tension and no connection to their campus community whereas Black students at HBCUs report feeling supported academically and psychologically (Reeder & Schmitt, 2013). The self-perceived exclusion from the campus community and on campus organizations encourages Black students to create their own community with the use of on campus involvement (Bentley-Edwards & Chapman-Hilliard, 2015). Multicultural organizations allow for students to realize that they are not alone on their campus and that there are other students who may share similar feelings. As described by Museus (2008),

Ethnic student organizations also served as sources of cultural validation by functioning as environments that send signals to minority students indicating that they are accepted and supported at the university. This validation, therefore, consisted of two components. First, ethnic student organizations constituted campus subcultures where students felt automatically accepted by their racial/ethnic minority peers. Second, participants expressed how those organizations and their members provided them with critical sources of support. Some participants actually went as far as referring to their organizations as a family, home base, or home away from home. (579)

Much like the student experience, student engagement can vary both dependent on the campus as well as the campus type. Researchers have found that students who attend HBCUs have less negative experiences on their campus than their peers who attend PWIs which allows them to get and remain involved on campus as they have an easier time doing so (Patton, Bridges & Flowers, 2011). The immediate sense of comfort that students feel in these spaces, multicultural

organizations, or HBCUs, encourages them to continue or increase their involvement and leadership experiences.

Leadership Development

Leadership development also plays an important role in the collegiate experience as well and is particularly important as strong leaders are the individuals who make positive changes for themselves and others (HERI, 1996). Joining Greek Letter Organizations allows students to experience specific leadership opportunities, and often encourages students to seek additional opportunities on their campus that will further allow students to refine their leadership abilities. Upon induction into a Greek Letter Organization, they encounter leadership opportunities on campus as well as within their surrounding communities that are otherwise not offered to their peers who do not belong to such organizations (Patton, Bridges, & Flowers, 2011).

Community service, encouraging academic achievement and leadership development are often highlighted amongst the community of Greek Letter Organizations. Leadership should be an important part of Greek Life experience as well, if it is not researchers believe that students do not receive the greatest impact of their involvement (Dugan, 2008). Although leadership is often highlighted as a perk of membership in Greek Letter Organization, there is a lack in current literature and studies on leadership styles that might be used to help develop students within Greek Life organizations (Martin et. al, 2012).

Membership in a Black Greek Letter Organization helps students develop as leaders by learning from role models within their chapter as well as organization (Kimbrough & Hutcheson 1998). Students in BGLOs are often provided leadership opportunities that their peers who are not members of these organizations are not, which increases students desire to join these organizations. Greek students are also more likely to hold leadership positions in other

organizations outside of their organizations, and even more so at HBCUs because of the immediate sense of comfort on their campus (Kimbrough & Hutcheson 1998). Researchers have also found benefits for African American students on PWI campuses. According to Harper, Byars and Jelke (2005),

At PWIs, BGLOs tend to be the primary source of involvement for African American undergraduates; they sponsor most of the culturally appealing social activities that members and nonmembers alike come to enjoy; and they provide a haven of sorts from the racism, isolation, and underrepresentation that African American students often experience. (409)

Support from Student Affairs Professionals

Student affairs professionals have been instrumental in developing students outside their classrooms. According to the HERI *A Social Change Model of Leadership Development Guidebook* (1996),

Student Affairs educators have a long history in academe of fostering leadership development among students. They also are the ones responsible for campus functions that offer excellent possibilities for encouraging and shaping leadership potential in students (e.g., residential facilities, student clubs and organizations, fraternities, sororities, and community service programs). Student affairs educators have for many decades been committed to inclusion, to the empowerment of diverse students, and to the goal of developing students' full talents and potential. (13)

According to Long and Snowden (2011), support from Student Affairs has positive effects on student's personal development when that student holds a leadership position within their Greek Letter Organization. Long and Snowden revealed the importance for Student Affairs professionals to be intentional when developing organization leaders as well as general members.

According to Hotchkins (2014), a positive relationship between Student Affairs professionals and African American student leaders, specifically, can be a major component of student success as well. The participants shared that professionals empowered students with encouragement during positive and negative experiences (Hotchkins 2014). While advising multicultural organizations, Student Affairs professionals should work to make the experiences

intentional for members, (Museus, 2008) and support students while they learn from their own mistakes (Hotchkins 2014).

Summary

Previous research has been done to express that there are many experiences Black students can benefit from after joining a BGLO. These articles were chosen to help the researcher learn more about benefits of membership as well as how professionals currently support Black students in BGLOs.

Chapter 3: Methods

Phenomenology is a qualitative research method that allows researchers to share a fuller version of a participant's story by allowing researchers to get a close view of the participant's experiences (Pfadenhauer & Grenz, 2015). First person interviews are shared that are expected to be a clearer version of one's experience (Mapp, 2008). Data from phenomenological studies are gathered mostly from purposeful sampling, as researchers need to know who they are talking with; this ensures that the stories that will be shared will be relevant to what is being studied (Mapp, 2008). Through this study, the research seeks to answer the following research questions:

1. What do Student Affairs Professionals do well to support Black Students in the National Pan-Hellenic Council?
2. What resources do Black Students in the National Pan-Hellenic Council think they need to be able to carry out the mission of their organization as well as the mission of their school?

Research Design and Data Collection

A phenomenological approach was selected for this study to ensure that participants' stories were explored. Emails were sent to gauge willingness to participate and thirty-minute one on one interviews were conducted to invite participants to share their experiences. In order to participate, students had to identify as Black/African American and hold active membership in a NPHC Fraternity or Sorority before August 2017.

After receiving approval from the Louisiana State University Institutional Review Board (Appendix A), the researcher began to use multistage cluster sampling, which allowed the researcher to use multiple sampling options to gauge participants interest from this large population (Creswell, 2015). Because the study was held on two sites, the researcher used

convenience sampling to gain participants from the large-sized PWI and snowball sampling to gain participants from the medium-sized HBCU. Convenience sampling allowed the researcher to study participants based on their availability and desire to participate (Creswell, 2015). Once participants were gathered from the large-sized PWI, the researcher used snowball sampling by asking participants if they knew any students at medium-sized HBCU who met the required qualifications and might be interested in sharing their experiences. The researcher interpreted results from this study based on individual interviews during which the researcher asked the questions indicated in the Interview Protocol (Appendix C).

Data Analysis

With the use of individual interviews, participants were able to share their experiences with the researcher. There were four total interviews, two for each school each participant with a different story to share. There were a number of themes found within their experiences. As students in the NPHC council, and for two of the participants the same organization, the participants shared many similar stories despite being on different institution types and campuses. The individual interviews provided the researcher with qualitative data that was later analyzed and themed.

Researcher Bias

It is important to explain any possible research bias prior to uncovering this researcher's findings. As a member of a NPHC Sorority, fraternities and sororities have always been an interest of mine. I believe that it is important to continue to study this population of students, all councils included, to ensure that professionals are providing intentional supports to students to not only help them achieve any goals they might have for their organization, but more importantly to help students grow into young professionals.

I joined my organization at a medium-sized PWI, so I had a general idea of the Black NPHC student's experience at a PWI but interested in learning if that experience would be different at a large-size institution. Although I had no first-hand experience with HBCUs, I had preconceived notions of what the Black NPHC student's experience could be like at an HBCU.

Limitations

The participants from this study only come from two universities, one PWI and one HBCU both in the Southeast. The four participants were also all sorority women, this study does not highlight the experiences of fraternity men. It should not be assumed that the experiences expressed by participants are uniform in full of experiences with all Black students within the National Pan-Hellenic Council at all or similar universities.

Chapter 4: Findings

Table 4.1 Study Participants

Pseudonym	School	Organization
Ashley	School A	Organization A
Renee	School A	Organization B
Olivia	School B	Organization A
Sabrina	School B	Organization C

Individual Interviews

Ashley

Prior to being inducted into Organization A, Ashley was moderately involved on campus. She started her involvement with major based organizations. She has always looked at herself as a leader because she has always had initiative to volunteer when things needed to get done, or to allow for others to take the lead. Ashley wanted to join a BGLO because her roommate who was a member of a BGLO spoke highly of her experience and Ashley wanted to have a different, more intentional experience on campus. She shared,

The friends I made were really just friends for a semester, because either we lived in the same hall, or we had classes together it was easy to study with, or just friends from work...I definitely didn't feel as connected or as involved with the people around me. I didn't feel impactful.

After joining her organization, Ashley began to use more of the resources offered on campus and make deeper connections within and beyond her organization.

The researcher asked Ashley what the professionals at School A did well to support Greek Letter Organizations. Before answering, Ashley asked if the question was specifically about BGLOs or all Greek Letter Organizations on campus. She felt like the Greek Life office tries to treat all of the councils the same, however NPHC does not function the same. When the Greek Life Office creates policies for intake or recruitment processes, Ashley does not believe that the Greek Life Office does so with NPHC's size in mind. She believes that their direct

advisor attempts to advocate for the students in NPHC and get them involved within the department, she shared,

He tries to make sure that members of NPHC go out for those leadership roles, because otherwise there's nobody there to represent us. There's only so much he can do. He tries to get us to motivate our members, and just motivate us.

Ashley shared that her organization also receives a healthy amount of support from the alumni members of her organization. Although the alumni members are not on campus with Ashley, they want to see Ashley and her chapter do well. When asked if her organization needed anymore support, Ashley shared that there was more that the alumni in her organization and the Greek Life office can do to help her organization achieve their goals. She believed that if the alumni members in her organization had a greater presence on her campus, it would help the chapter's recruiting efforts.

In terms of more that the professionals at her school could do to support her organization, Ashley shared that it would be helpful if the Greek Life office did more to understand NPHC and all of the organizations within the council. The NPHC organizations are small and not able to reach and maintain membership requirements that are set by the Greek Life Office.

Renee

Renee was involved in three student organizations prior to joining her BGLO, two of which were Black student organizations and the other about facilitating conversations about social justice within residence halls; Renee identified herself as a leader before joining her BGLO. Both of Renee's parents are members of BGLOs and shared their experiences of growing closer with peers and being able to do community service. As an out of state student, Renee desired to have a deeper connection with the people on her campus and continue the community service projects she began in high school. Renee did not experience any social change after

joining her organization, but she learned how to work with people in a professional setting and how to advocate for herself, her organization and all of the NPHC organizations on her campus.

Renee shared that as a member of her organization, and now a member of her organization's executive board, she has to learn how to work with people who have different personalities. Renee, as a member of a BGLO, has been able to work with departments on campus to put on programs for the campus community. Renee struggled to identify what the professionals on her campus do to support her organization. She shared that the Greek Life Office help her organization's programming efforts by allowing them to invite speakers on campus or sharing their expertise as speakers as well. However, when she was asked to specifically thin of what the Greek Life Office professionals do to support NPHC organizations, she shared that the Greek Life office does not provide any other help her organization. Renee believes that with more support from the professionals on campus, her organization would be able to make a bigger impact on campus, she wishes that there would be more faculty and staff support for BGLO and their events.

Renee says that her organization receives a good amount of support from the alumni members of her organization. In terms of what her organization would be able to do with more support she believed that her organization would be able to make a bigger difference on campus. She determines the impact her organization makes by the amount of people who attend her organization's events.

Olivia

Olivia was not heavily involved on her campus prior to joining her organization. She joined an academic organization and would attend football games, but otherwise stayed in her

on-campus room and did not self-identify as a leader. Olivia shared that she is a “legacy” to her organization. The word legacy in this context meant that someone in her family was a member of her same sorority before Olivia was inducted. Olivia remembers growing up around members of the organization and knew that she would want to be a part of the organization when she was able to do so.

Olivia was not able to identify anything specific that the Greek Life office on her campus does to support her organization, or the other NPHC organizations on campus. Specifically, she shared

They [The Greek Life office] support everybody, but they don't really show up to the events, as far as I've seen. They'll let you put up fliers by the offices and stuff, and say that you should come, even though they don't go.

Olivia also shared that the other professional on her campus support the BGLOs they belong to, but not all of the organizations on campus. She expressed a desire for all professionals on campus to support all of the NPHC organizations on campus. Specifically, she shared,

I personally would like if they supported all of the D9 [NPHC] organization's that are on campus, instead of just the specific ones, and try and convince more people to come out to each organization's event, instead of their organization. The teachers that aren't in ones, they don't really care if you go or not. They don't really support the other orgs, just really theirs.

Olivia believes that support that is more specific support for her organization would help her organization achieve their goals. Because of their size, it is difficult to operate in the same manner as the larger organizations on camps.

Sabrina

Sabrina was moderately involved in on campus organizations prior to joining her organization. She identified herself as a leader primarily because of her interest in joining her BGLO which is a smaller organization that often has negative stereotypes attached to it. Sabrina is a member of a smaller organization that has less notoriety than the other sororities on campus.

Sabrina has many family members who are members of her organization as well as the other organizations in the NPHC council, because of this Sabrina was excited to join her organization despite the negative comments students on her campus, Greek and non-Greek, would often make about it.

Sabrina spoke of many social aspects that have changed her collegiate experience after joining her organization, many of them having to do with the perception of her organization by students in comparison to the larger organizations on campus. Sabrina has learned how to educate others about her organization to dispel many of the stereotypes that are often believed as opposed to learning more about the organization. In Sabrina's opinion, the Greek Life office on her campus is proud of the work that the NPHC organizations do on her campus, specifically sharing

They really like to brag on us on campus. They expose you [NPHC members] a lot on campus and off campus. We're always going to high schools, or we're always having to do some high school expo. You could tell that they're really proud of Greek Life, because anything that goes on on-campus, they want to participate in.

Sabrina also shared that she would feel more supported however, if she felt like the professionals on her campus supported all of the NPHC organizations equally and not just the organizations to which the professionals belong. Sabrina also shared that she receives a good amount of support from the alumni members of her organization.

Sabrina believes that with more support from the Greek Life office, and more unity amongst the NPHC organizations on her campus individual organizations and the NPHC council as a whole, could make a bigger impact on campus. Sabrina thinks that it is important for the campus community to believe that all of the NPHC organizations respect and support one another, the NPHC organizations will gain more members and be able to put on more programs for their community.

Themes

Throughout the interviews, three themes emerged. In this section, the researcher will explain the themes, and how they relate to the participants and this study.

Second-Hand Experience

All of the participants expressed that their knowledge of BGLOs started through their relationship with someone else who was a member of a NPHC fraternity or sorority. This second-hand experience shaped the participant's expectation of their experience after their induction into their organization.

Three of four participants mentioned that many of their family members joined a BGLO while they were in college and the fourth participant shared that her college roommate shared her experience as a member of a BGLO on their campus. Many of them expressed that their initial attraction was because of the stories their family members and friend shared about their social and professional growth after membership in their organization.

Support from Greek Life Professionals

Another consistency amongst interviews was the desire for Greek Life professionals offer more structured support to their NPHC organizations. The most telling portion of this desire is the inconsistency in the students' ability to share what the Greek Life professionals on their campuses do to support NPHC students.

Ashley and Renee, both students at School A, shared different understandings of the support offered to the students in NPHC. Ashley asked if the question was specifically for support offered to Greek Letter Organizations or Black Greek Letter Organizations. Ashley's perception that the NPHC advisor tries to advocate for NPHC however, the overall she feels office creates policies for all of the councils within the office ultimately ignores NPHC

individuality. Renee had difficulty thinking about what the professionals do to specifically support the NPHC students at her institution.

Olivia and Sabrina, both students at School B, also had different perceptions of their Greek Life professionals. Olivia's perception is that the professionals talk about the NPHC organizations' events and encourage other students to attend however the professionals do not attend unless the event belongs to the undergraduate members of their organization. Sabrina also shared that the Greek Life professionals talk about their programs but did not specify if the professionals attend NPHC events.

Support from Other Stakeholders on Campus

All of the participants expressed a desire for more support from on campus faculty and staff members outside of the professionals in the Greek Life office. All four participants expressed that they felt like they did not matter to professionals on campus outside of the Greek Life office on their office. The participants believe that with more support from other faculty and staff member on campus, the NPHC organizations will be able to reach out to a bigger portion of the student body, more specifically students who do not automatically believe they would benefit from events hosted by NPHC. Support from the greater community might help students in the NPHC achieve their organizations personal and national goals and mission.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Implication, and Recommendations

Throughout the course of this study, by listening to the perceived experiences of the students in this study, the researcher began to understand what Student Affairs professionals can do to better support Black students in NPHC on their campuses. This chapter will discuss the findings in greater detail and how the researcher believes they can be used on college campuses.

Discussion

This study sought to answer the following research questions:

1. What do Student Affairs Professionals do well to support Black Students in the National Pan-Hellenic Council?
2. What resources do Black Students in the National Pan-Hellenic Council think they need to be able to carry out the mission of their organization as well as the mission of their school?

The participants expressed overall satisfaction in regard to joining their respective organizations. The participants understand the importance of their organizations and believe that the impact NPHC organizations would have on their campus would increase if they were to have more support from the professionals on campus, including professionals who do not directly work in the Greek Life office. The participants believed that with more representation from faculty and staff members on campus, specifically Black faculty and staff members would allow them to engage more students with their programming.

Implications

This research is intended to inform Student Affairs professionals on best practices to support Black students in NPHC on their campus. Researchers should continue to study this population of students to ensure that Student Affairs professionals are supporting students in

ways that will increase student learning and efficiency. Most Greek Life professionals are alumni members of Greek Life organizations but often have no training on how to advise undergraduate students in Greek Life organizations (Sasso, 2012). This research can be used to show the importance for training Greek Life professionals, and the importance to specialize training for NPHC organizations.

Recommendations

After analyzing the findings in this study, the researcher identified recommendations that may be used within the field of Higher Education to further support Black students in NPHC on college campuses.

The first recommendation is for Greek Life offices to work closely with the alumni members that advise the undergraduate students to support the undergraduate members. Black students in NPHC organizations are very fortunate to be advised by two groups of professionals who can help them achieve and exceed any goals the students may want to achieve for their organization. By maximizing this support and being more intentional on what the Greek Life professionals will do to support students and what the alumni members will do to support students so that students feel adequately supported on both sides.

The second recommendation is for Greek Life offices to educate themselves on the specific culture of the National Pan-Hellenic Council and the organizations within it. In order to adequately support students, professionals have to understand how organizations operate in order to create on-campus policies such as membership requirements and intake/recruitment regulations that are fair for all organizations. It would be important to still respect the sacredness of organizations and not impose on them, but professionals need to understand that not all organizations or Greek councils can be expected to operate in the same manner.

Conclusion

This study was designed to identify potential ways that Student Affairs professionals can improve supporting Black Students in NPHC organizations on PWIs and HBCUs. On both campuses included in this study, students desire more support and understanding from the Greek life professionals. In conclusion, this study shows that more research must be done to continue to support students that will allow students to achieve their organization's goals.

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Appendix A: Institutional Review Board Approval



ACTION ON EXEMPTION APPROVAL REQUEST

TO: Jennifer Curry
Human Sciences and Education

FROM: Dennis Landin
Chair, Institutional Review Board

DATE: December 11, 2017

RE: IRB# E10819

Institutional Review Board
Dr. Dennis Landin, Chair
130 David Boyd Hall
Baton Rouge, LA 70803
P: 225.578.8692
F: 225.578.5983
irb@lsu.edu
lsu.edu/research

TITLE: We Are One: A Phenomenological Study of the Self-Perceived Experiences of Black Students in the National Pan-Hellenic Council at a Predominately White Institution and Historically Black University in the Southeast

New Protocol/Modification/Continuation: New Protocol

Review Date: 12/11/2017

Approved X **Disapproved** _____

Approval Date: 12/11/2017 **Approval Expiration Date:** 12/10/2020

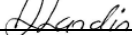
Exemption Category/Paragraph: 2a

Signed Consent Waived?: No

Re-review frequency: (three years unless otherwise stated)

LSU Proposal Number (if applicable):

Protocol Matches Scope of Work in Grant proposal: (if applicable)

By: Dennis Landin, Chairman 

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: PLEASE READ THE FOLLOWING –

Continuing approval is **CONDITIONAL** on:

1. Adherence to the approved protocol, familiarity with, and adherence to the ethical standards of the Belmont Report, and LSU's Assurance of Compliance with DHHS regulations for the protection of human subjects*
2. Prior approval of a change in protocol, including revision of the consent documents or an increase in the number of subjects over that approved.
3. Obtaining renewed approval (or submittal of a termination report), prior to the approval expiration date, upon request by the IRB office (irrespective of when the project actually begins); notification of project termination.
4. Retention of documentation of informed consent and study records for at least 3 years after the study ends.
5. Continuing attention to the physical and psychological well-being and informed consent of the individual participants, including notification of new information that might affect consent.
6. A prompt report to the IRB of any adverse event affecting a participant potentially arising from the study.
7. Notification of the IRB of a serious compliance failure.
8. **SPECIAL NOTE: When emailing more than one recipient, make sure you use bcc. Approvals will automatically be closed by the IRB on the expiration date unless the PI requests a continuation.**

* All investigators and support staff have access to copies of the Belmont Report, LSU's Assurance with DHHS, DHHS (45 CFR 46) and FDA regulations governing use of human subjects, and other relevant documents in print in this office or on our World Wide Web site at <http://www.lsu.edu/irb>

Appendix B: Consent Form

1. Study Title: We Are One: A Phenomenological Study of the Self-Perceived Experiences of Black Students in the National Pan-Hellenic Council at a Predominately White Institution and Historically Black University in the Southeast
2. Performance Site: Louisiana State University and Agricultural and Mechanical College and Southern University and Agricultural and Mechanical College
3. Investigators: The following investigators are available for questions about this study, M-F, 8:00 a.m. - 4:30p.m.
Loryn Taylor ltayl41@lsu.edu
Dr. Jennifer Curry jcurry@lsu.edu
4. Purpose of the Study: The purpose of this study is to take a look at the experiences of Black students in the National Pan-Hellenic Council at a Predominately White Institution and a Historically Black College/University in the Southeast. The in depth look will focus on the resources and support given to students and assess if there is a lack in resources provided for these students to better inform future practices.
5. Subject Inclusion: Individuals at least 18 years old and has been inducted in an National Pan-Hellenic Council before August 2017.
6. Number of subjects: 10
7. Study Procedures: If you choose to be in the study, the investigator will meet with you to conduct an in-person interview. During this time, you will be asked a series of interview questions. Your interview will take approximately 30 minutes and will be audio-taped. Interviews will be transcribed and coded with a fake name to replace the participant's real name. All data will be destroyed 3 years after the study is completed.
8. Benefits: There is no compensation or direct benefit for participating in this study
9. Risks: There are no known physical or psychological risks associated with participating in this research.
10. Right to Refuse: Subjects may choose not to participate or to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty or loss of any benefit to which they might otherwise be entitled.
11. Privacy: Results of the study may be published, but no names or identifying information will be included in the publication. Subject identity will remain confidential unless disclosure is required by law.
12. Signatures:

The study has been discussed with me and all my questions have been answered. I may direct additional questions regarding study specifics to the investigators. If I have questions about subjects' rights or other concerns, I can contact Dennis Landin, Institutional Review Board,(225) 578-8692, irb@lsu.edu, www.lsu.edu/irb. I agree to participate in the study described above and acknowledge the investigator's obligation to provide me with a signed copy of this consent form.

Subject Signature: _____ Date: _____

Appendix C: Interview Protocol

Interview Protocol:

1. Can you describe your level of on campus involvement before you joined your organization?
 - a. At that moment, did describe yourself as a leader?
2. Why did you choose to join a Black Greek Letter Organization?
3. How would you describe your college experience prior joining your organization?
 - a. Has your overall college experience changed after joining your organization?
How so?
4. What do the professionals at your university do to support your Greek Lettered organizations?
5. Is there more you wish they can do to support your organization?
6. How much support does your organization receive outside of what you receive from the professionals at your institution? For example, from alumni.
7. What impact do you see yourself or your organization having on your campus?
8. What goals might you achieve as a Greek Lettered Organization with more support?
What type of support would you need?

Vita

Loryn Taylor is originally from Arlington, Texas and graduated from Texas A&M University- Commerce with a Bachelor of Science in Liberal Studies: Concentration in Psychology and Counseling in August 2016. Loryn is currently a second-year student at Louisiana State University in the Higher Education Administration Master of Arts program and plans to graduate August 2018.