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Becoming a Sister: The Socialization of Women into a Sorority

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BECOMING A SISTER:
THE SOCIALIZATION OF WOMEN INTO A SORORITY

A Thesis
Presented to
the Faculty of the Department of Sociology
Western Kentucky University
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In Partial Fulfillment
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Master of Arts

by
Kathleen C. Hughes
December 2003
BECOMING A SISTER: THE SOCIALIZATION OF WOMEN INTO A SORORITY

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BECOMING A SISTER:
THE SOCIALIZATION OF WOMEN INTO A SORORITY

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December 2003

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Adult peer groups have become more and more a topic for sociological study. It is a phenomenon that is starting to gain interest. This research focuses on one sorority on the campus of a Midwestern university and how this sorority manages to incorporate the women that they pledge through formal recruitment into the sorority and how these women fully socialize themselves into this group of women who already have bonded with each other. A synthesis of symbolic interactionism and social exchange theory helps to break down the socialization process and shows how the new members move through the stages of sorority membership. By the time this research ended at the sorority formal, the new members were fully incorporated into the sorority through a variety of events including meetings, recruitment, sisterhood activities, social activities, and the ritual aspects of the sorority.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am a sorority member. "Sorority member" is how I have become accustomed to identifying myself over the last eight years. I joined a sorority when I first came to college. I traveled three hours away from home to go to college, and I did not know a soul when I first came to school. I figured that a sorority would be the best way to meet some people and to find some new friends. I completely underestimated the impact the sorority would have on me and on my future. Without the sorority I would not be where I am today, and I know I would not be who I am today.

I was a very active member while in the sorority. I held office after office. I participated in just about everything the sorority did during my four years of active membership. I gave my all to the sorority. I cheered for my sisters, comforted my sisters, had them comfort me, and celebrated when either one or the whole achieved something great. Even after I graduated and moved from active to alumna status, I remained involved. I currently sit as the Alumnae Club Treasurer and the Membership Advisor for the chapter. When I pledged eight years ago, I had no idea that I would still be as involved as I am, but I would not give up my involvement with this chapter and this sorority for anything else in the world.

It was not until I was able to step back and look at the group as a whole that I was able to see the processes each woman goes through in becoming a member of the sorority. There is a socialization process that I did not realize existed until I graduated and was looking at the chapter as an advisor and alumna. From this vantage point I was
able to see the ways that the active members influence the new members. I was able to see how the tangible sorority documents became a part of the inner workings and thoughts of every member.

All of the above reasons explain why I chose to do this research. When I started to think back over my time in the sorority, I realized that a lot of what the sorority did and a lot of what the sorority taught me helped me to become who I am today. The sorority had such a huge impact on my life; I began to wonder if it was just I or if the sorority impacted everyone in a similar way. The idea for this research came from that question.

Over the six-month time span that I spent watching and studying the new member class from fall recruitment, I saw that through formal and informal processes these new members transformed from individual women who just happened to wear the same letters into a cohesive, fully functioning part of the whole sorority. I learned a lot about the socialization process of the sorority. I even saw things that I had not seen while I was active. I hope that this paper will be able to give the outsiders and strangers to the Greek system insight into how individual women become completely socialized sisters.

I would like to thank Dr. Steve Groce, Dr. Joan Krenzin, and Dr. Doug Smith for sitting on my committee. Your insight and recommendations have helped to make this paper the best it could be. I would like to thank my classmates for listening to the rantings of a crazy graduate student trying to finish her paper. I would like to thank Josh and my family for putting up with me during this crazy time. Thank you to Sarah for being my eyes and ears when I could not be around. I would like to thank my sorority sisters. Without you not only would I be lost for this thesis topic but also I would not even be sitting here. You all helped me become the woman I am today. Thank you all so
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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

Groups are a part of all people's social being and become part of their lifestyle and their personalities. Throughout life people are involved with some type of group, into which they invest a notable part of their lives. Groups help a person develop and grow into a responsible and social individual and to feel accepted, needed, and wanted. Belonging to a group of individuals with whom a person shares things in common is the best way to fill these needs.

Groups help individuals socialize into society and can generate a sense of loyalty and group identification. A person who belongs to a group is more likely to change himself or herself based on the values of the group (Gecas 1981, p. 186). Membership in a social group requires a large commitment on the part of the individual. A person needs to feel a sense of attachment to the group in order to undertake what is necessary for membership (Lawler and Yoon 1996, p. 90). For a social group to survive, members must relate mutually with each other, and the individuals must realize that they need to have positive and successful interactions with the existing members of the group. If members interact with one another, then relationships will begin to form. Once a relationship starts, the members will feel a connection not only to the individual with whom the relationship was started but also with the group because the group is the reason why the relationship started in the first place. These relationships will be friendly,
trusting, caring relationships, and these relationships will give the individual members a sense of belonging and commitment (Argyle 1969, p. 223).

When undertaking the task of studying a group, it is necessary to understand the group culture, to be able to communicate with the group's members, and to take an unbiased look at how the group functions. An individual will have to decide what he or she stands for and where he or she wants to spend his or her time. The way a person learns and understands (Kitchener 1982, p. 21) will change along with the growth through life. Probably the most dramatic change in a person's life occurs when he or she leaves home for the first time. College marks a time when a new chapter in an individual's life is about to begin, and it is also a time when people have the chance to meet others with the same interests and desires that they have.

In college one way for students to get involved is through student organizations. These organizations allow the students to learn leadership, communication, and organizational and social skills and are seen as valuable in the eyes of the students (Fine and Holyfield 1996, p. 24). The individual needs to feel that the group is a very important part of his or her life (Dimock 1986, p. 32) in order for his or her membership to be effective and successful. The individual will come away from the group with traits and ideas he or she did not possess before joining the group. The most visible of the collegiate student groups are the Greek-letter organizations. These groups are formal and structured organizations that have existed for decades, and they help the individual members and the university through the education of the individuals (Winston and Sanders 1987, p. 6).
Each fall men and women all across the country make the move from home to college. "These organizations provide settings in which voluntary communities of rapport develop" (Fine and Holyfield 1996, p. 34). These groups can offer incoming members a new lifestyle. The question is then raised of how does the organization incorporates these individuals into the lifestyle and society of the group. This transition can be difficult for the incoming members and the current members of the group (Arthur 1997, p. 369). This researcher will try to answer that question.

I conducted an in-depth study of the socialization process of newly pledged members into a sorority on the campus of a university in the Midwest. The theoretical framework for this research was based on a mixture of symbolic interaction and social exchange. "Symbolic interactionism sees social organization as entering action only to the extent that it shapes situations and provides symbols used in interpreting situations" (Stryker 1981, p. 9). Each fall women pledge themselves to sororities. At first these women are unfamiliar with each other and the group. One way that they feel connected to the group is through the letters that they wear. It is the symbols of the sorority that first connect the new members to the group. It is through the pledge period that the new members will begin to interact and exchange with each other.

Social exchange emphasized relationships based on rewards and punishments group members give to each other rather than on the symbols of the group (Lawler, Thye, and Yoon 2000, p. 621; Molm 1994, p. 163). While the members may originally be there because of the letters they share in common, the group wants these members to be able to move past just the symbolic connection that they share and connect on an exchange level. I followed the new-member class of one sorority on a college campus from the day they
received a bid from the group through their new-member period and initiation and into the following semester when they became full members. The research culminated at the sorority formal during the spring semester. I feel that through this in-depth observation I was able to witness and document the socialization of the new members into a group that was already a close-knit organization.
CHAPTER II
THEORY

When studying the habits and rituals of groups such as a sorority there are many theoretical perspectives from which one can draw. According to symbolic interactionist theory, actors will relate to the group of which they are members through the use of symbols. Because actors share and understand the symbols that the group uses, they are able to make a connection, thus causing the actor to feel a sense of loyalty to other group members. On the other hand is social exchange theory. The more the rewards and the fewer the punishments the actor exchanges with other members of the group, the stronger the commitment from the actor to the group will be. When put together, symbolic interactionism and social exchange help to explain the mystique that lies behind the strong feelings of members in Greek letter organizations regarding their group and their letters. This feeling is so strong that members will begin to change certain aspects of their personalities, if not changing all aspects, to what other members of the organization expect them to be.

Symbolic Interactionism

"The term symbolic interaction refers, of course, to the peculiar and distinctive character of interaction as it takes place between human beings" (Blumer 1969, p. 79), with the key feature being the actor and his or her sense of self. An actor can have a social life only if he or she interacts with other people and the social environment the actors are in (Reynolds 1990, p. 7). Symbolic interaction can also be known as
A down-to-earth approach to the scientific study of human group life and human conduct. Its empirical world is the natural world of such group life and conduct. It lodges its problems in this natural world, conducts its studies in it, and derives its interpretations from such naturalistic studies. (Harris 1996, para. 4)

Herbert Blumer coined the term “symbolic interactionism.” These theorists feel that it is the responsibility of the actors to describe the actions of everyday life (Gonos 1977, p. 856).

There were three core principles in Blumer’s theory. First is meaning. Actors will act and react to actors and objects based on the meaning that has been given to the people and applied to the objects. This reaction includes everything that an actor might notice in his or her surroundings, whether that is an inanimate object or situations in which the actor is involved (Blumer 1969, p. 2). “Symbolic Interactionism holds that the principal of meaning is central in human behavior” (Nelson 1998, para. 3). The second principle is language. Without language, actors would not know the meanings of objects and actions because no one would be able to explain what each means. “It is by engaging in speech acts with others, symbolic interaction, that humans come to identify meaning, or naming, and develop discourse” (Nelson 1998, para. 4). The actor will base his or her definition of an object or situation on the interaction in which he or she has been involved in with others in the group (Blumer 1969, p. 2). The third principle is thought. “Thought is a mental conversation or dialogue that requires role taking, or imagining different points of view” (Nelson 1998, para. 5). Being able to think about the meanings of the symbols and what they have been told about the symbols, actors are able to make their own conclusions and assumptions about the objects and the behaviors that they witness on a daily basis (Blumer 1969, p. 2). Through meaning, language, and thought, symbolic
interaction in daily activities will begin to take shape. It is through these daily
interactions that actors will learn about others in the group and why they choose to
believe certain things about their group.

Symbolic interactionism is a theory that concerns itself with group situation. It
"underlies all realms of human activity" (Gonos 1977, p. 857). Symbolic interactionism
examines how actors interact with groups and how the group interacts with and reacts to
the behavior of the actor. It focuses on the symbols that groups can use when interacting
with each other and studies the influence of others on the behaviors and feeling of the
actor and how the actor affects the other members of the group and the society as a whole
(Thoits 1995, p. 1233). It serves to explain why a group can have such a dramatic effect
on what a person does, why, and how he or she will react to others in the group. "It
presumes that group action involves the fitting together of actor lines of action through
role-taking" (Stryker 1981, p. 8). This theory assumes that groups will influence the role
that actors will take within the group, and it concludes that actors will take on the ideas
and norms of the larger group because the symbols that they share in common with the
group will eventually become an intrinsic part of who they are as people.

"Symbolic interactionism sees social organization as entering action only to the
extent that it shapes situations and provides symbols used in interpreting situations"
(Stryker 1981, p. 8). This theoretical perspective pays specific attention to relationships
of the members of the society, how the society is organized, and what is expected of the
members of the society (Thoits 1995, p. 1233). "Symbolic interaction emphasizes social
process rather than social structure as the imagery appropriate to the study of ongoing
human group life" (Lal 1995, para 6). Lal continues:
The actor's understanding of his or her situation and his or her ability to make decisions and to express preferences, as opposed to the requirements of a social system or the dimensions of social structure or "variables" on the one hand or unconscious drives or "interests" on the other, are the basis of explanation of ongoing group life. The process of communication, and in particular language, socialization, and education, transmits the experience of the group (or groups) into the subjective world of meaning and value that directs actor effort and activity. (para 5)

“A basic assumption of symbolic interactionism is that rather than acting instinctively, human beings manipulate symbols, and through “minded behavior” or creative thinking, the actor interprets, defines, and attaches meanings to symbols in his or her environment” (Clarke 1997, p. 297).

In symbolic interactionism, the most important object is the self:

The self is the kind of object that a person makes of him- or herself. This is based on the way in which the actor has been treated by significant others, such as parents and teachers, as well as the way in which the actor interacts with others in the variety of situations he or she confronts –for example, as a friend, neighbor, patient, co-religionist, and the like. (Lai 1995, para. 10)

“It must be noted that the ‘self-object’ emerges from the process of social interaction in which other people are defining a person to himself” (Harris 1996, para. 18). An actor must have a sense of self from the beginning. A person who joins the group with a sense of self is more likely to be willing to adapt to the group. This person will be able to learn how to fit into the group, based on the behavior of the active members, without losing his or her core identity. The actor who comes into the group with a sense of self will be able to adapt to the meanings of the symbols and the standards of the group without becoming obsessive about the group. The end result will be the actor experiencing a role-merger within the group. “Role person merger speaks to the link between self and social structure” (Stryker 1981, p. 21). Eventually the actors will become so entrenched in the...
group's ideals, thoughts, standards, rituals, and symbols that they will begin to take on these characteristics outside of the group and will begin to change the way they view life.

**Social Exchange**

Social exchange theory is a relationship maintenance theory, which looks at how people arrive at their decisions in relationships. It posits a matrix system of measuring outcomes, taking into account the actions of others, rewards and costs, minimizing and maximizing costs, comparing results, dependence and control, prediction and transformations. (Sand 2001, para. 1)

According to George Homans, the father of social exchange theory, people are faced with decisions every day that could benefit them in different ways. As Homans suggests, “a thing is beneficial, rewarding, or of value if it is reinforcing, that is, if its occurrence strengthens the actions that produce it” (Emerson 1981, p. 30). This theory is based on the idea that every situation and interaction in which a person is involved is an exchange relationship (Gall 1996, p. 22). “Evidence is also accumulating that men [sic] can learn to act in a certain way even when, at first, the reward they get from the act is only vicarious” (Homans 1974). This idea is known as model learning. When an actor interacts with members of the group, the actor will begin to model his or her behavior after what he or she has witnessed through interactions with the group that have been rewarding to the model. “The success of any one action originally modeled on the action of another may lead to a generalization of modeling behavior” (Homans 1974.)

Social exchange theory, according to Kollock (1994, p. 315), has a long and fruitful history of examining the effects of different exchange structures on patterns of interaction. “The basis for exchange is that each side has something that the other wants” (Heath 1976, p. 19). Members, in groups, will interact with other members and with the group as a whole. “Exchange theory has as its focus the flow of benefits through social
interaction" (Emerson 1981, p. 33). When actors join a group, they want many positive rewards to come out of their membership and to have the group fulfill their needs. The person wants to make friends, to be part of a successful and respected group, and to reap the benefits that membership can bring. On the other hand, the group will give these things to its members in return for loyalty to the group, representing the group in a classy and respectable way, and, perhaps, financial gain in the form of dues or donations.

Social exchange happens in a uniform and constant pattern. According to Lawler and Yoon (1996, p. 90) it happens in this way:

The standard exchange-theory explanation for the causal chain—structural power—exchange frequency—commitment—is that frequent exchanges reduce uncertainty. Thus, actors who exchange frequently with each other come to know each other more, find each other’s behavior more predictable, and believe they have similar orientations to the exchange situation.

Once a member feels comfortable with the group, it is likely that that person will be more apt to take on the ideals of the group and be more willing to learn what the group stands for and why the group was created. The members who feel comfortable with the group will be willing to give themselves over to the group. They will want to do things for the group such as serve as officers, represent the group in social activities, and make the standards and rituals of the group part of their own lives. The actors see the benefits that the group can offer them once they have interacted with the existing members of the group. The actors can see why this group is able to offer them something—i.e., friendship, loyalty, and companionship—that perhaps another group was not able to offer them.

There are three core assumptions that Emerson (1981, pp. 31-32) discusses. These three assumptions provide the origin for exchange theory. First are the beneficial
events. These events provide the reason why the members keep returning to the group activity. Members like to be rewarded and recognized by the groups so the members of the group are likely to keep behaving in a way that will produce the rewards that the members strive for. Within formal groups such as Greek letter organizations rewards will come in forms such as scholarship cups, a highly respected office, nominations for coveted group rewards, such as member of the month or year, and in recognition at group meetings. Of course, there are deeper rewards. These organizations give the actors a sense of security and an idea of lasting friendship and offer the actors a place to feel comfortable to be themselves and to speak their minds. These groups are able to satisfy the needs of their members through the deep and constant interaction that the members will have with each other.

The next assumption is that "every class of beneficial (valued) events obeys a principle of satiation, value adaptation, or diminishing marginal utility" (Emerson 1981, p. 32). Members of the group will behave only in ways that they perceive will somehow benefit them immediately. If the members of the group know that a certain behavior will result in a specific reward, they will continue that behavior. The more a member performs the same behavior, the more likely it is that that behavior will become routinized. Behaviors within groups are usually the same; the more that a member behaves in the same way as the other members, the more he or she will feel a part of the group.

The third assumption is that "benefits obtained through social process are contingent upon benefits provided ‘in exchange’" (Emerson 1981, p. 32). Members of the group are not likely to do something or behave in a way if they feel that they will not
receive anything in exchange. If the active members are not willing to reward the new members, those new members will begin to lose respect for the letters and symbols of the sorority and, thus, loyalty toward group. Actors who feel they are not successful and functional parts of the group will eventually leave the group and try to find another organization in which to meet their needs.

"Although symbolic behavior may include past experiences in its repertoire of responses, its chief characteristic is the capacity to relate present activities to future possibilities" (Ekeh 1974, p. 107). The group must be able to make its newest members realize that membership in the organization will do nothing but benefit their future lives. Ekeh continues, saying that "in symbolic behavior, definitions and interpretations of the intentions of other actors serve as intervening variables between stimulus and response" (p. 108). The members of the group will help the actor learn appropriate behavior to receive the rewards and behavior that will cause the group not to give the member negative responses. "Symbolic behavior is normative behavior shared by persons within a value system" (Ekeh 1974, p. 109). The actors will learn that the group will disapprove of members who do not abide by the rules and standards of the organization, and they will see their rewards given to another group member. Members who want to continue within the organization will have to learn quickly to behave like all of the other members or risk losing membership in the group.

"An exchange will take place only if both participants believe that the exchange provides them with more utility than does any other option currently open to them" (Heath 1976, p. 19). As members interact with each other and begin to exchange rewards and benefits, a network will begin to emerge. "A network is a set of separate but
interconnected actors” (Emerson 1981, p. 46). The network will emerge once members trust the group and get to know the other members of the group. In a network the older members can teach the younger members about the meanings behind the organization and the symbols that represent the group to others who are outside of the group. “Uncertainty can have significant effects on the emergence of exchange structures, the level of interpersonal trust, and the concern actors have for their own and their partners’ reputation” (Kollock 1994, p. 342). When actors first come into a group, they will feel uncomfortable and out of place. It is to the benefit of the group to quickly incorporate these members into the group. From day one they need to teach these new members the meanings of symbols and standards of the group and to reward these members for appropriate behavior and to inform them of those behaviors that do not meet the standards of the group.

**Synthesis of theories**

From the first day that a woman walks through the door of a sorority house, the members of the organization will begin their efforts to include this woman in the group. They will teach her the history of the organization and the purpose and the significance of the rituals. These new members will also learn about appropriate behavior and what is expected of them now that they are members of this group. They will be rewarded for their successes and achievements by all of the active members, and the active members will learn that their behavior will need to be continuously rewarded for the new members to remain with the group and to remain active and positive members of the group. By the time these members are initiated, they will know everything about the organization. They will understand why things must be done in a certain way. What they learn will
become a part of who they are and who they will become. These women will give themselves to the organization of their choice and the organization will give back to them responsibility, friendship, and an introduction into the adult world of working with others in order to run a successful organization.

When women first join a sorority, the first things they are exposed to are the sorority letters and the mascot. The symbols are an avenue for the new members to begin their relationship with the group. On Bid Day new members will be given shirts with the letters of the sorority on them. These women will be deluged with rewards such as stuffed animals, pictures, signs, and cups with the sorority mascot and the sorority letters on them; for this particular sorority each new member will be given a towel on which her name and the sorority letters will appear. At the beginning of the new member period the new members will relate to each other and the active members because they share something in common—becoming symbolized by the sorority letters and the mascot. As time progresses these women will begin to exchange other things with other members of the group. They will move past having just the symbols and letters in common.

The socialization process is started through the use of symbols but will be completed through a deeper exchange, known as sisterhood. If it were not for the easily recognizable Greek letters that each member wears, the new member would not get the chance to interact with the other members of the group. The letters, mascot, and other symbols of the organization are the primary means of relationships when the new members first join the group. What was once the primary reason for interaction, though, will become secondary as the women are socialized into the group. When a new member becomes a fully active member, she will learn what the group really stands for. Once
these women become members, interactions and exchanges will be based on more than the letters. Once fully initiated members, the new members will begin to see what they can do for the group and what the group will be able to do for them. If the new members had not had the symbols with which to associate at first, they would not have had the opportunity to discover what the group could offer them. While others may see only that letters and mascot bond these women, the members know that there is a deeper reason for their membership in the organization.

In exchange relationships “persons may define and interpret the activities of others in terms of their usefulness in meeting their own needs” (Singlemann 1972, p. 419). Each actor will give the interaction and behavior its own meaning and interpretation based on rewards and punishments and perceived rewards and punishments. “Symbolic interactionism adds to exchange theory the idea that rewards can be defined situationally” (Gall 1996, p. 31). What each person makes of the symbols and the ideas of the organization is subjective. Groups want their members to have about the same ideals and morals. The group will try to make the ideals as uniform as possible, but that is not always a goal that is easy to attain. A combination of these two theories will make the explanation of Greek orientation and initiation a little easier to explain and to understand. These theories will allow me to delve into the reasons why the women who choose to pledge come to know the group initially and how that knowledge changes as they begin to experience life within the Greek organization.
CHAPTER III
LITERATURE REVIEW

Groups represent a social phenomenon. Every person is part of at least one social
group. Groups help us to learn to interact with others and to create the necessary social
bonds that we need in order to help us maintain our social selves. Groups are dense
nodes of interaction in networks in which individuals who have common goals interact
with each other through a common membership in a recognized organization (Stryker
1980, p. 68). Interaction, involvement, and participation in groups are exciting for
members; “the excitement and comradeship…can lead to stronger and stronger
affiliation with the society and with other members” (Erickson 1981, p. 201). Social
groups help us to see who we are through the eyes of others. Groups help us to create an
identity for ourselves, and groups help us to learn behavior and action based on the
behavior of other group members.

Groups

Groups are “an individual’s small, relatively intimate group of peers who interact
on a regular basis” (Ryan 2001, p. 1145). Since groups make individuals feel important
and wanted, the study of groups is important research. This research gives us insight into
the occurrence of group life and why it is so important to human social existence.

Nature of groups

People long to be part of a group that will meet their needs. “We may call these
circles or sociability groups because one of their main origins seems to be voluntary
social interaction among the members” (Back 1981, p. 331). Individuals are willing to do just about anything to gain acceptance into the social group of their choice. A group can have such an influence on members that the group can begin to affect the behavior and emotions of the individual members through its behavior (Raven and Rubin 1976, p. 299). It is believed that people formed groups originally because they found it necessary and useful to do so (Zander 1985, p. 14). Individual encounters with other people usually take place within some kind of group context (Raven and Rubin 1976, p. 250). The social group makes it easier for individuals to meet others who share the same interests and ideals as the individual does. Raven and Rubin continue:

Groups come in all shapes and sizes. They vary in their formality, purposes, and composition; indeed, they are as variable as their members. Yet, despite the differences, all groups, like the individual members who give them life, share certain important characteristics that enable the trained observer to understand their particular nature and the way they tend to function. (1976, p. 250)

Small groups make it easier for the individual members of the group to balance between individuality and conformity (Back 1981, p. 320). “A great deal of social interaction takes place in small social groups” (Argyle 1969, p. 216). These small groups come in the form of family, church, neighborhoods, and, most important, peer groups. It is through these groups that an individual can begin to discover the person that he or she is going to become. It is through these small social groups that individuals will learn to work together toward a common goal. But, in the quest to reach desired goals the individual members of the group will be involved in struggles and problems. Actors must go through trials in order to understand why this group seems to be so important in his or her life. Groups must be able to address the recurring problems and situations if
they are to reach their goals and to continue to exist as an organization (Longino and Kart 1973, p. 118).

Continuation in a group depends on the ideas of the members, but the members must be willing to align their actions for the good of the unit. Members will begin to be influenced by the group itself just through their membership. Group survival depends on the unit being able to exert a certain amount of influence over its members. Through this influence members will begin to look differently at themselves, the organization, and society as a whole (Raven and Rubin 1976, p. 278). Groups must be successful in five different areas in order to keep active members interested and to strike an interest in potential members. One such area, climate, touches on how the environment in which the group interacts. Involvement alludes to how active the members are within the society. Interaction refers to the development of relationships between members. Cohesion adverts to how close the members of the alliance are to each other. Finally, productivity refers to how successful the organization is at meeting its goals (Dimock 1986, p. 59).

For the most part, members of groups join voluntarily. Individuals can decide to be a part of the unit not because they have to but because they feel a connection with the group and its members and because they feel that the organization can reward them in ways that another group could not. The unit must show potential members that the active members enjoy the people with whom they spend their time, the places where they spend their time, how much the members do for the group and the other members, how friendly the members are toward each other, how close the members feel to each other, and how successful they are in reaching their goals. If a group can show potential members how
beneficial the group could be for them, then recruitment of these members will be easy, and the continued existence of the group will be guaranteed.

**Formation of groups**

A group organizes for one reason: it is useful for those who are organizing the group, those who will eventually become members (Zander 1985, p. 1). People join groups because it is just easier for them to join together than to remain alone. But, people will not join a group for the sole reason that they do not want to be alone. Those who become members must feel that there is a purpose behind the group, they can benefit from membership, and they have something to give to the group.

Those who make up the group are responsible for the maintenance of the group. "A group may be thought of as a social molecule whose atoms consist of individuals or of positions for which individuals have not yet been designated" (Raven and Rubin, 1976, p. 251). It is only when these individuals come together through interactions, shared bonds and symbols, and relationships that the group will come into existence. Social organizations are interesting because of how the members develop through their membership and how the group gives the members a sense of independence. People voluntarily join these "peer groups" because the individuals have the chance to make decisions for themselves and for others who are of the same status or class. The individual members of the society control all of the aspects of the organization. The unit can help the members create a self-concept based on the attitudes of the group members toward this person (Videbeck 1973, p. 331). They control who will become a member, who sits in positions of authority and power, and the standards of the group. "Through the creation of groups people develop new ways of making affairs satisfactory for
themselves, as time goes by, and better means for relieving difficulties” (Zander 1985, p. 2).

Once the organization comes together, the members will begin the task of getting to know the other members. At the beginning the newest members of the organization will begin the getting-to-know-you process. It is during this time that they will be able to determine who will accept them and whom they will choose to like and with whom to start relationships (Dimock 1986, p. 68). It is through these interactions that the members will begin to learn about others and to learn about themselves. The individuals will learn how they feel about the other members, how the other members feel about them, and what their place will be within the group. It is also through these interactions that the members will begin to learn who is interested in helping to run the group and who they feel will do the best job at maintaining a successful organization.

The most efficient and successful societies have some type of hierarchical framework. The easiest way for a unit to function is to establish some type of power hierarchy. Sometimes those chosen to lead the group will not be the most appropriate persons for the positions, but the social structure will allow the group to function effectively (Raven and Rubin 1976, p. 282). Groups need order, and the hierarchy helps to establish that order. A society is more successful when the social structure is easily identifiable. A hierarchy helps to keep all of the members on the same page when it comes to information that they need to know. Once the chain of command is established, the members can begin to give purpose to their group and to what they feel they need to do to make their group a success.
Purpose of groups

Groups organize for a variety of reasons: to find solutions to problems, to set rules and standards to follow, to set in place an administration, and to make certain resources available to the members of the group (Zander 1985, pp. 24-25). In order to come together, though, there must be a reason or purpose for the members to join the group. The purpose is important because it allows the members to see what will happen if they behave in certain ways and meet certain goals (Zander 1985, p. 3). The purpose behind the group can become imbedded in the members. In fact, these purposes can become so much a part of its members that members will seldom question where the purpose came from. The purpose can either bond members together or make them realize that they do not want to be associated with the group. The purpose of the group will lead to norms and group structure, which provide the members and the group a sense of order and help to create a focus for the members of the group (Dimock 1986, p. 35). Once the members of the group feel a tight-knit bond with each other, the members will be more open to the ideas of the group, and the group will be able to exert more influence on its members.

One will find all types of relationships within groups, but there are five concerns that are considered more important than the rest, regardless of the type of group that is being studied. The first type is evaluation. Individuals will form relationships based on how they feel others are evaluating them. The second type of concern is the idea of interdependence. This dependence, and how much the individual needs the relationship, will determine the kind of relationship that will come forth (Raven and Rubin 1976, p. 251). Individuals depend on each other to decide with whom they will build relationships and how these relationships will be built. Next is the idea of influence.
“Interdependence is transformed into behavioral reality through the language of power and influence” (Raven and Rubin 1976, p. 251). People want to be associated with those members who are considered to be those in power and those with influence over the rest of the group. They will build relationships with other members based on this idea.

The fourth process is communication. The communication process boils down to the question of to whom the individual will choose to talk (Raven and Rubin 1976, p. 251). Individuals will form relationships with people with whom they can talk and those who will talk to them. Last is the idea of roles. The group will create certain positions within itself, either because the group was told to or because they feel it is necessary (Raven and Rubin 1976, p. 251). Group members who carry the same roles and positions are more likely to build relationships with each other than with those who have different roles and positions.

**Function of groups**

Groups are important to individual development. The group is a source from which its members can draw values, attitudes, and beliefs that will help them develop into the individuals that they are supposed to be (Gecas 1981, p. 186). Groups will help provide members with a way to evaluate themselves as compared to the rest of the members of the group (Tarrant 2002, p. 120). As the members of the group develop and grow, the group will come to identify him or her as a necessary and vital part of the organization (Reynolds 1990, p. 36). People will learn social behavior through groups. This educational process can be achieved by asking questions, giving out pertinent information, becoming a leader, participating fully in the group, and helping those who
need it (Cartwright 1979, p. 92). The members will learn those behaviors that are considered appropriate and how to act in certain situations.

Groups are organized for different purposes, but all units are alike in one respect; they are intended to be useful to members, nonmembers, or both. If groups are to serve a specific function, it follows that the purposes of groups shift as the desires of those who have a stake in the group change—different wishes or interests cause new requirements. (Zander 1985, p. 33)

Groups will help an individual to develop a new self-concept. The self-concept will begin to develop as the person starts to have interactions and relations with others (Rosenberg 1981, p. 593), and these relationships are a result of membership and group dealings. People will learn how to act by witnessing other members of the group behaving appropriately (Bandura 1977, p. 39). As individuals change groups as they mature, their self-concept will change along with the change in the types of groups to which they belong.

As a person moves from one status to another within society, he or she will begin to experience a “rite of passage.” Young adulthood is the time in which the individual is between social statuses (Karp, et al. 1998, p. 256). Changing groups can be a stressful situation. In the beginning people will feel out of place and will experience a sense of loneliness, at least for awhile. As the members progress through the group and spend more time with the organization, they will begin to get to know each other and to change their personalities. Individuals will use the other members of the group to assess their behavior, attitudes, and beliefs (Raven and Rubin 1976, p. 255).

In order for any organization to move effectively toward its goals, there must be common agreement on certain basic principles as well as shared attitudes, values, and opinions. The group serves as a means for establishing and maintaining social reality. Everyone needs to believe that his [sic] opinions, attitudes, and actions are correct and appropriate. If one belongs to a group that is valued and respected, but finds that the members
of the group differ from him [sic] in their opinions, attitudes, or actions, this discrepancy is seen as a threat to his [sic] own conception of reality. (Raven and Rubin 1976, p. 319)

The most effective way to keep a group operating is to make sure that the members of the group are interrelated with respect to the goals of the group (Raven and Rubin 1976, p. 258). A group will be successful if its members feel that they are reaching their goals and being useful. If a member feels that he or she is not succeeding at meeting the goals and ideals of the group, he or she will begin to question his or her membership within the group.

Once the members feel confident in their membership and their purpose, they will begin to take control of the group so that it remains a success. In the most successful groups, members are able to decide on behavior regulations, obtain the necessary information, make decisions, and take responsibility for the goals and actions of the group (Thoms, Pinto, Parente, and Druskat 2002, p. 4). Groups will give the members a sense of responsibility, something of which to be proud, and something on which to look back once their membership is finished. When a person switches groups as he or she grows up, he or she starts at the beginning and works his or her way through until it is time for the individual to move to another group. “Persons are acutely aware that they stand at a crossroads in their life—that a change is imminent which will definitively alter the shape of their futures and how they will define themselves” (Karp, et al. 1998, p. 259). Groups teach people how to function in society and behave in a way that will enable them to interact and learn from other members in their group.
Group Functions

Once a group has been formed, membership is the next essential key to remaining in existence. Groups must ensure that the members they choose will be loyal to the group and will be knowledgeable about the group so they can teach other individuals about the group. Certain characteristics need to be in place so that the group can begin to function as an organization.

Socialization

Recognition has been given to the fact that membership within an organization will have an influence on the attitudes and ideas of the individual member (Longino and Kart 1973, p. 121). People want to be part of a group; but in order for the group to accept the individual, there must be a sense of trust between the two. The best way to achieve this trust is to socialize the new members into the group. Socialization is necessary not only to the new members but also to the leaders of the group (Fine and Holyfield 1996, p. 28).

Socialization has two fairly distinct meanings. One point of view stresses the individual’s adaptation and conformity to societal requirements; the other emphasizes the individual’s development into a self-assertive, distinct human being. (Gecas 1981, p. 166)

Socialization involves learning the principles, rules, expectations, and roles within the group’s structure (Zurcher 1977, p. 28). In order to keep its members involved and interested, the group must be willing to do what is necessary to keep its members around. The group needs to live up to the expectations of the individuals in order to maintain their membership in the group (Dimock 1986, p. 25).

The group must be willing to learn about its new members. Each individual is different in the way that he or she learns and what he or she is willing to do. These
groups must find the best way to socialize the new members as to what behavior is appropriate and what they are expected to do (Fine and Holyfield 1996, p. 33). As a whole the group behaves in a certain way and follows certain rules and standards. The socialization process is very important to the individual member and to the group as a whole, but what these members learn may not be close to the major purpose behind the group (Gecas 1981, p. 168). The group must be able to get its members involved with the group and interacting with others in order to be able to fully socialize the members into the group. Involvement is the extent to which the members are engrossed with the group (Dimock 1986, p. 60). One can see how involved a member is in the organization by how fascinated he or she is with the group and the activities in which he or she is involved as a result of group membership. The more the members interact with each other, the more likely it is that the group will unite and succeed at the tasks put before them (Dimock 1986, p. 61).

If members are interacting with each other, they are building relationships with each other. A strong relationship makes it easier for members of the group to give themselves to the group as a whole.

As members speak with each other, several things will often happen: people begin to disclose information about themselves—what they themselves are really like and what they would like others to think of them; they begin to form attachments, liking some, disliking others, and remaining indifferent toward the rest; they begin to sound themselves and others out; they try to get a better sense of their own identity in the group—whether they are viewed as powerful, competent, friendly, likable, secretive and so forth. (Raven and Rubin 1976, p. 267)

Developing a bond between members through interaction is the initial way that groups can begin to socialize their members but there need to be other occurrences to ensure that
the members will stay interested in the group. Integration into the group needs to be done as quickly as possible. This process is known as rapid socialization.

"Rapid socialization is inherently good for new team members because it will enable them to more quickly contribute to the team. It also prevents them from being alienated from the group" (Reinertsen 2000, p. 58). The first thing the group needs to do is to make its members feel as though they are a part of the group. One way to ensure that new members feel included is to make them look like the active members of the group. Giving the individuals t-shirts and cups with the group name on it can help to achieve inclusion (Reinertsen 2000, p. 58). The group should also give the new member roles. Assigning them smaller projects and titles until they have learned exactly how the group functions can help members learn their roles in the organization. The group should also give the new members guidelines to follow. Last, give the new member a mentor or sponsor (Reinertsen 2000, p. 58). If a new member knows there is someone to whom he or she can go for answers, it makes it easier for this individual to learn about the group and to become a part of the organization.

One consequence of group cohesion is that the new members will be susceptible to influence from the older members of the group (Raven and Rubin 1976, p. 255).

To the extent that a group member desires the friendship of his colleagues, each of them has some degree of potential norm-enforcing power over him, but this power will exert a consistent influence toward norm internalization only to the extent that a common norm is shared and, especially, to the extent that it is shared by high-status members. (Scott and Scott 1965, p. 193)

The group strives to have its members follow the rules and norms that the group sets down. By giving an individual a group of people with whom to identify, this person will be more willing to take on the norms of the group than someone who did not feel as close
to the organization. Members are likely to act in ways that are looked on in a positive light by the organization and will continue to act in such a way so that the group sees the member is assuming the standards and ideals of the group (Raven and Rubin 1976, p. 296). Raven and Rubin continue:

The individual who is aware of the collective behavior of his group forms a judgment about what is “correct” and evaluates his own behavior against that standard; as a consequence, he may alter his own level of activity upward or downward. A person will improve his performance because of increased stimulation from others. (p. 310)

People want to be part of a group that will challenge them, stimulate them, and create a core group of friends that will help the individuals in validating who they are and who they want to be. Each group will have its own goals, values, image, and standards. The more that the group can stimulate its members, the more dramatic the behavior change will be in the individual member (LeVine 1966, p. 122).

**Bonding**

All people have the same needs—the need to be accepted, to be loved, to feel secure, and to be recognized through awards, positions of power, and words of praise (Dimock 1986, p. 24). These needs are satisfied through a social bond with other individuals who share common interests with the individual member. Individuals can fill the need for this love and acceptance through group relationships (Dimock 1986, p. 41). Groups may find it easier to start individual bonding between one active member and one new member before trying to get the new member to feel a bond with the entire group, but the new member must be willing to adopt the ideas, images, and symbols of the organization in order to feel the strongest bond possible.
Some groups go about socialization through a mentoring-type program. “Mentoring refers to a situation in which a more-experienced member of an organization maintains a relationship with a less-experienced, often new member to the organization” (Campbell and Campbell 2000, p. 516). The more-experienced member will provide the newer member with the knowledge that the member needs to survive in the group, the support system that the individual desires, and the guidance to be a successful member in the group (Campbell and Campbell 2000, p. 516). This interaction with a member who has been a part of the organization for awhile is the first chance that a new member will have to actually get to know someone in the group. In an ideal situation the mentor/sponsor relationship will be the first bond that a member has in the group and, ideally, this first relationship will lead to many other interactions, relationships, and bonds with other members of the organization. The bond can begin, though, only when the new member is ready and willing to grow into the type of person the organization expects him or her to be. This “rite of passage” occurs in three different phases: “(1) the individual’s separation from the previous status, (2) transition to the new status, and (3) incorporation of the new status into the group” (Arthur 1997, p. 369).

As members of the organization become more and more a part of the group, the roles that they fall into will lead them to embrace the group and to commit themselves fully to the organization (Arthur 1997, p. 373). The bond between the group and the individual members can be complete only when the group feels that the members are completely loyal and that they can be trusted with the information that the group will reveal to them in future interactions. Trust is essential in these groups. The best way for a new member to gain the trust of the current members is to follow their advice and to
follow the rules of the organization (Fine and Holyfield 1996, p. 26). The group must see that the individuals will be appropriate members and that they will not do anything to tarnish the name of the organization. They must be willing to follow the rules and abide by the standards that have been set forth by the governing body of the organization. Membership within the group will create certain effects for its members, and these effects are what make the group important to the individuals and to society as a whole (Back 1981, p. 338). A group can come to have an abundance of power over each individual member. Because individuals want to be a part of a group and feel a bond with a group of their peers, they will be willing to abide by the norms, follow the rules, and grow into the person that the organization wants them to be.

Education

Only in groups can individuals learn about working with others, diversity, success and failure, and what roles they will play in the group. The group can control the course of their lives in ways that they will not predict (Karp, et al. 1998, p. 266).

When joining an organization, most new members simultaneously express interest and ignorance. As a result, the first goal of membership is information, which is provided by group members. For a novice, organizational legitimation is crucial to trust. (Fine and Holyfield 1996, p. 28)

A member wants to join the group in the beginning because he or she has seen something in the group to which he or she can relate and not because he or she knows all about the organization. It is the responsibility of the active members to teach the new members about the meaning behind the group and why they feel that the organization deserves their membership.

In practice, expert members teach novices because of the belief that one should repay one's own socialization with the socialization of others, the
satisfaction of generating shared interests, the status rewards of contacts with less knowledgeable persons, and the claim that one’s own community will be extended by creating other experts. (Fine and Holyfield 1996, p. 28)

Active members in the group will teach these new members so that they will succeed in reaching their individual goals and the goals of the group (Campbell and Campbell 2000, p. 518). The active members will feel a sense of satisfaction through their teaching of the new members. They will be pleased at how much information the new members are willing to learn and how the new members will pass on what they have learned to other new members that come into the organization. The active members of the group want to create a set of members that will be able to carry on the ideals of the group once they have moved on from the organization, and this continuation of ideals is done through extensive education.

**Group Cohesion**

Groups depend on members getting along in the society to function and be a success in their own eyes and the eyes of others. Cohesion within a group will create a bond between members. They all share something that those outside the group either do not have or do not understand. By allowing individuals to learn about the group, the organization as a whole is saying to these people that there is something inside of them that could benefit the group and benefit from membership in the group. Cohesion helps the members feel a part of something important and, in turn, will give the group some power to instill the beliefs and ideals of the group into that person.

**Components**

Cohesion is created when the characteristics of the group lead to the success of the group (Fine and Holyfield 1996, p. 22). Cohesion is one of the most important
characteristics of social groups (Argyle 1969, p. 220). While cohesion is a phenomenon of groups, it is the individuals who belong to the group that will make the organization a close-knit, cohesive group. As the organization becomes more attractive and interesting to the members, togetherness and cohesion multiply (Dimock 1986, p. 25), and the better the members feel about the organization, the more likely it is that they will be interested in taking part in all of the different aspects of the organization and what it has to offer. Group cohesion relies on the individual caring about the existence and success of the group and will reinforce the character of the voluntary organization (Fine and Holyfield 1996, p. 25).

Cohesion depends on the group and its existence. The culture of the group helps to create group interaction and encourage constant participation in group activities (Fine and Holyfield 1996, p. 23). Cohesion gives groups the ability to encourage the members to follow the rules and standards of the organization and to follow the norms, which have kept the group running for many previous years.

Without solidarity there is little group influence over members' behavior and unless the group has some coercive power available, the group can end up a collection of individuals all doing their own things. As a group develops standards about what is acceptable member behavior it also develops forces that put pressure on members to conform to these standards. (Dimock 1986, p. 28)

Cohesion gives the group the opportunity to exert its influence on its members. Group membership will lead to an influence by the group that the members do not expect (Back 1981, p. 339). By becoming part of the cohesive group, the individual members are giving themselves to the group. They are willing to learn and behave in the ways that they are expected to behave. As a result of the cohesive form the group will take, certain behaviors and attitudes of the group will begin to be witnessed in the individuals—
members may begin to wear the symbols and the name of the group. They may begin to behave as the rest of the group does, and they may begin to have more interest in the organization than they had at first. The members must feel that the group shares the same values and interests that they do and that the group will support its members. Supporting each other is the only way for a group to function as a cohesive unit (Fine and Holyfield 1996, p. 34). Cohesion is created through interaction, and interactions will make each member feel closer to the group. Cohesion is necessary in order for a group to function successfully.

**Process**

Individuals in the group must be able to feel that the group is a cohesive unit. Cohesion is connected to a set of cultural processes that regulate the organization (Fine and Holyfield 1996, p. 22). Cohesion is an element that is essential to the survival of all groups. If members do not feel that the group is a tight-knit organization in which they can fully participate, they will leave the group to find another one with whom they feel the bond. The process of investigating the cohesiveness of a group differs from organization to organization. The best measure of group cohesiveness is the closeness of connections among members. Other measures are the number of times an individual mentions "we" when talking about the group, time spent with the group, how the group gives awards to the members, retention, or turnover of its members (Back 1981 p. 338). People want to be part of a cohesive group. They want to feel a sense of commitment, loyalty, and acceptance. Individuals are willing to do what is needed in order to be part of a cohesive group that allows them to be active members.

The link between trust and secrecy supports group cohesion while leaving room for personal investment. Collective spheres of knowledge are
compatible with private information, which in turn creates a satisfying competitive culture among those who are perceived as sharing interests. (Fine and Holyfield 1996, p. 35)

People who want to become part of the group will develop the “self” that the group expects them to develop. Through interactions with other members of the group, the self will develop as people live and learn in society (Zurcher 1977, p. 29).

**ADULT PEER GROUPS**

We think of peer groups mainly in the sense of childhood development. Peer groups are also essential to adults and young adults. Adult peer groups can help people learn about the adult world and their role in it.

**College**

School is the place where people learn to socialize with others (Gecas 1981, p. 178). Humans spend the majority of their young adult lives in school. School is the place where we learn about how to work with others on a daily basis. School is the place where individuals will look for their peer groups, and it can be assumed that individuals will look to those with whom they are in school as people with whom to build a bond and persons with whom they can start meaningful relationships with others.

College is seen as an institution that can have a major effect on the shaping of an individual’s attitudes, values, and beliefs (Lottes and Kuriloff 1994, pp. 31-32). College becomes the place where individuals will learn about who they will be as adults. College is the first time for most students that they are on their own. In college students are exposed to new things. They see new behaviors and discover new ideas. These occurrences can make the student look at things in a new light and to question what he or
she has previously established in his or her own life (Waterman and Waterman 1973, p. 168). During the college years students will begin to discover who they really are. Students feel that they will find the adult identity that they are moving toward (Karp, et al. 1998, p. 258). College is the time when students have a large selection of peer groups to join. Students will choose peer groups who represent what they believe in. They will choose the group that they can relate to and with which they can identify (LeVine 1966, p. 108). While in high school students are expected to be a part of the popular group, even if they do not have much in common with the other members of the group. College gives the students a chance to find a group with which they do have things in common.

College for most people usually lasts for four or five years, a short time in the life span of people (Kitchener 1982, p. 20) so the students must find a group to join quickly.

"The early adult transition, which occurs between 17 and 22 years of age, represents a period in which an individual works to terminate his or her adolescent life structure and take preliminary steps into the adult world" (Glover 2000, p. 506). In this stage students are looking toward their future as adults when they will become independent from their parents (LeVine 1966, p. 110). They anticipate what college is going to bring, but they are also concerned that they will fail at meeting the challenges of college and the adult life (Karp, et al. 1998, p. 260). It is during the college years that students will learn the behaviors and the skills that will benefit them once they leave college. While in college, students begin to deal with adult issues that they may not have had to think about before college. Friendship patterns will change when an individual leaves for college (Karp, et al. 1998, p. 260; LeVine 1966, p. 113). College students are looking for a group of friends that will not necessarily make them popular but that share
the same interests and ideas as they do. The groups that the students join while in college will help them to develop into the adults that they want to be.

**Collegiate Peer Groups**

Collegiate peer groups can come in all forms and sizes. Students will join these groups as part of their rite of passage into the college society. "Rites of passage, the recurring social mechanisms that a society provides for the orderly transitions in its social relationships and that serve its revitalization, comprise a series of events that include rituals and ceremonies" (Leemon 1972, p. 1). The groups that individuals will join in college will help them to discover their true social identity. There are certain elements that groups will have; and when others outside of the group see the groups’ members they will be able to ascertain characteristics and ideas of that individual.

Collegiate peer groups can also help the students make the hard transition from living with their families to living alone or with a stranger on a large college campus.

Many students describe themselves as lonely and isolated during their first weeks or months at college. This may be more pronounced for those who live on campus and are cut off from their families and old friends. Such feelings of isolation can lead to a strong drive to be affiliated with, and dependent on, other students. (Lane and Daugherty 1999, p. 7; LeVine 1966, p. 119)

While students may long to be a part of a group, they will not choose to belong to a group just to avoid loneliness and isolation. Students will be selective about those with whom they choose to associate, which is why college is the forum in which the students can make this transition. Colleges have a wide variety of organizations so that almost everyone can find a group to join (Longino and Kart 1973, p. 118).
Student organizations are a large part of the college culture. Student organizations are open to all students of the college and can help those individuals who cannot find a group of friends with whom to identify on their own.

Not only do student organizations and related activities provide educational and developmental benefits generally unattainable in the classroom, there is evidence to indicate that they may be important factors in involving students with their colleges in a way that enhances retention. (Abrahamowicz 1988, p. 237)

Student organizations play an important role in the development of leadership in the students. It is in these groups that students learn about success and failure in a large group setting. It may also be noted that student involvement can help to improve the education of the students at the college or university (McCannon and Bennett 1996, p. 312). People do not want to affiliate themselves with a group to which they cannot contribute and with which they do not feel to be a part. The groups allow the students to learn leadership and organizational skills (McCannon and Bennett 1996, p. 312). Once individuals find a group with which they feel comfortable, there will be a sense of a loyalty to the group (Fine and Holyfield 1996, p. 23).

College students need a group of people on whom to rely in times of emotional need. They look to the group to give them advice and validation when they feel it is needed. The students will leave behind what they had previously known as relationships and they move into a world that they are not familiar with and, thus, leave themselves open to rejection and failure (Leemon 1972, p. 5). People need to feel that the benefits of membership will be worth participation in the group (Fine and Holyfield 1996, p. 23), or they will not continue their participation in the group. The more that the person desires a
group to belong to, the more likely it is that the group will be able to change certain aspects of that individual (LeVine 1966, p. 119).

Students will use these peer groups as sources of validation and commitment. In deciding on things like a major, what course to take, and where to live (Taub 1995, p. 150), students will look to the peer group to help them make these decisions. The behavior of the students shows that others are influencing them. This behavior is evident in the ways that these students build relationships in the group and obey group rules because that is what they choose (Testerman, Keim, and Karmos 1994, p. 487). It has been found that the students who participate in these organizations are not only more likely to have greater involvement with the college as a whole but also to get more enjoyment out of their educational experience as well. Members rely on the group to provide them with all of the relevant information pertaining to the group (Fine and Holyfield 1996, p. 26). By showing its members that the group does have a reason and a purpose, the members will become loyal to the group and will hold the ideals and standards high and will keep the secrets with which they have been trusted.

**Greek-letter Organizations**

"Voluntary allegiance depends on the existence of both a public and a private sphere" (Fine and Holyfield 1996, p. 24). Greek-letter organizations are one type of organization that exists in both the public and private sector. Greek organizations have existed on college campuses for decades. These groups are the most visible groups on campus so they are one of the first places that new students will look to try to find that group that will accept them and help them grow.

The Greek system is a powerful vehicle for socialization. Whether membership in a Greek organization enhances student involvement and
promotes cognitive development, or whether membership in a fraternity or sorority hinders student development by de-emphasizing academic experiences or achievement and emphasizing behaviors that are not conducive to learning, may depend on the institutional culture within which fraternities and sororities exist. (Pike 2000, p. 137)

Once an individual joins a Greek-letter organization, he or she will then be known solely, in the eyes of others, as a member of this group. Any achievement that an individual member makes is seen as an achievement for the whole group. Membership within these organizations can mean that these members will have to give more thought to the goals of the group than to their own personal goals, depending on the situation (Shaffer 1983, p. 17).

What these groups are able to provide the members seems to outweigh the time and energy needed to be members, at least in the eyes of the members of the groups. Greek-letter organizations are able to provide members with the necessary characteristics of most adult peer groups (Scott and Scott 1965, p. 191). These characteristics include a high rate of personal interaction between all members; loyalty and motivation; and a clear differentiation between those who are members of the group, those who are members of other groups, and those who do not belong to any Greek letter organizations. Greek organizations traditionally have taught members to become a unified organization through rituals and ideals (Longino and Kart 1973, p. 121).

There are certain characteristics that are necessary within these organizations if they are to survive on college campuses.

First, the characteristics that students should develop, as a result of participating in the Greek experience must be articulated in a fashion that students and alumni can comprehend. Second, meaningful encounters between chapter advisors, student affairs professionals, alumni advisors, national officers, and student members should be frequent and focused on the enhancement of students’ educational
experiences. Third, incentives for involving the Greeks in ways that promote intellectual and character development must be prevalent in the campus environment. Fourth, assessment and feedback about the development of groups and members in ways valued by the institution must be provided frequently and systematically. (Winston and Saunders 1987, p. 13)

These groups are able to provide members with experiences and traits that other groups cannot and that cannot be taught in classrooms. Those who support the Greek-letter organizations commend these groups because of the ideals that they teach. They promote friendship, leadership, a sociable personality, morals, and community service (Testerman, et al. 1994, p. 486).

Membership in Greek-letter organizations has become more and more popular. This popularity shows that these groups can positively influence the students enrolled in the institution (Winston and Saunders 1987, p. 6). These groups allow students to become strongly involved and active on the college campus. Fraternity and sorority members have been shown to be more involved than their independent counterparts, and this involvement leads to greater social and cognitive development and to a better time while in college. Greek members also feel less alienation than their independent counterparts while in college. These groups involve the members from the first day of membership so the members have little or no time to feel lonely and without friends.

Programming within these organizations serves a greater purpose than just plain education. What these members learn in their respective chapters will benefit not only the chapter but the university as well (Shaffer 1983, p. 15). These groups provide their members with the support system that they need in order to make it through the rigors of college and adulthood.
Fraternities and sororities can provide their members with a support system and with education that cannot be taught in the classroom (Winston and Saunders 1987, p. 8). These organizations stress academic success. Greek organizations have a standard for the grade point average their members are expected to carry. If a member falls below this standard, then they will receive certain punishments. These groups will also give the members emotional support. While the groups never had the intention of playing the many roles they do, they have come to represent all of them.

These roles include providing a home away from home, providing leadership for student activities, providing an environment for close interpersonal relationships, encouraging scholastic excellence, encouraging community service projects, helping orient Greek freshmen to the university, and providing good fraternity and sorority relationships. (Shaffer 1983, p. 13)

All of these roles and activities will lead the members to feel a sense of pride and loyalty in their organization. The fraternity relies on commitment. The group will remain meaningful only to those who help in the success of the group—its most loyal and committed members (Longino and Kart 1973, p. 119).

Greek-letter organizations can open many doors for members. Through these groups they can create relationships, learn the necessary skills, develop teamwork skills, exchange ideas, and develop a sense of autonomy and a personal identity (Winston and Saunders 1987, p. 6). Greek students feel that they have more social involvement and gain more from college than do independent students. Greek affiliation has a direct effect on the experience an individual member will have while in college. These groups have the opportunity to

provide small-group living for students; provide assistance during the transition period as a student comes to campus; set standards following ideals and principles and set guidelines for behavior; help members learn
to respect other people and the rights of others to develop self-discipline and self-reliant behavior; and to instill good citizenship, personal integrity, and respect for individual freedoms. (Winston and Saunders 1987, p. 12)

By providing these ideas and settings for its members, the group can ensure that its members will stay loyal and active to the organization. Individuals will learn what it takes to keep the group functioning and who is responsible for the different aspects of the group, and groups guarantee that the society will continue to survive for many years to come.

Sororities will be the main focus of this paper. “First formed at the end of the 19th century, sororities did not burgeon until the 1920s. Their growth coincided with an influx of nonelite students and the consolidation of fraternities’ political power on college campuses” (Handler 1995, p. 236). Sororities are governed by the National Panhellenic Conference, which serves as a primary leadership organization for many national and international women’s fraternities and sororities (Alpha Gamma Delta 1999a). Sororities are selective. Members have to be invited to join, and invitations are extended only during rush (Arthur 1997, p. 370; Handler 1995, p. 248). If an individual accepts the invitation, she will become a pledge or new member. Then these women have to learn about the roles of the group and how to embrace the organization before they will be initiated (Arthur 1997, p. 370). “When a young woman accepts a sorority’s bid and begins pledging, she enters a ready-made network of people who come to define her operative social context” (Handler 1995, p. 250).

There are certain phases through which a member will go when rushing and pledging a sorority. The first phase is known as the separation phase. In this phase the women who choose to pledge an organization begin to drop the old identities with which
they came and begin to learn about the women who they will become through membership. Events in this stage will include Bid Day; the first pledge ceremony; and the first pledge meeting, which includes pledge-class elections. These events mark the beginning of the pledge’s relationship with the group (Leemon 1972, p. 48). The next phase is the transition phase. In this phase the new members will experience sorority life. They will learn what is expected of them and how they will come to benefit from the group and provide for the group (Leemon 1972, p. 52). Events in this phase include weekly pledge-class meetings, sisterhood activities, intra-Greek activities, and, most important, Homecoming. The last phase is the incorporation phase. Rituals and ceremonies characterize this phase. Incorporation is the time at which the pledges will become full members of the organization (Leemon 1972, p. 190). This phase includes pre-initiation-week activities, initiation, initiation banquet to which parents and family of the new members are invited, the choosing of the big sister, officer elections and the option of moving into the sorority house. Through all of these phases the active members of the sorority will incorporate these women into the group and will teach them about the group and how it remains successful.

The sorority will give its members the chance to get to know women they otherwise might never have met. The sorority provides them with a group with whom they can have strong, close, personal relationships (Handler 1995, p. 244). Sororities show women that they can rely on each other. They help the women to navigate through college, friendships, and the adult world. Sororities are an example of positive female relationships (Handler 1995, p. 252). These groups show that women can trust each other when it comes to personal aspects of their lives. "Sororities provide college women with
a social universe in which their friendships with each other are valorized and a form of sisterhood is created" (Handler 1995, p. 252). Women need to feel validation and support throughout their lives, and while in college the sorority will provide them with what they need, and they can go to the group without fear of being ostracized or ridiculed for their beliefs or ideas.
CHAPTER IV
RESEARCH METHODS

In exploring the lives of new sorority members and their socialization process into the organization, the methodology of the research is a key aspect. "Members may come and go in a group, but as the culture belongs to the group, it stays put" (Dimock 1986, p. 23). In-depth observation is the best way to research the socialization process of new members into the sorority. The only way to reach the population in question is “through ever-evolving research procedures that result in in-depth accounts of social phenomena” (Gall 1996, p. 33). This research deals with how the new members of a sorority on a college campus will begin to take on social identities within the group. Being a member of this organization may give the members enough reason to take on a new identity within the group (Lawler and Yoon 1998, p. 877). Socialization begins when the new members start to cooperate together and function as a subgroup of the original organization (Molm 1994, p. 165).

Sororities are strict and formal organizations. They allow only initiated members to attend ritual ceremonies and initiation. Coming from a Greek background myself, I knew this would be the situation. I had to choose to study the new members of the sorority in which I was an active member for four years. Because I am familiar with the group itself and some of the members, this research is referred to as “opportunistic, complete-member-researcher” (Adler and Adler 1987, p. 67). This particular type of research refers to the individual doing the research sharing a common bond with those
being studied (Gall 1996, p. 34). Everything that these new members will be
experiencing during their time as new members I also experienced. I went through the
same meetings, decisions, and ceremonies with which these women will be dealing
during the eight-week new-member period. These organizations remain staunch in their
rituals and ceremonies from year to year. No matter what the dynamic of the members of
the organization, the way that the members are introduced to the society remains the
same.

The purpose of this study was to look at the socialization process in which these
new members participated, which was important because socialization was the only way
these women could become fully functioning members of the sorority. The social
process for these women took some time. Friendship within a sorority is the same as
friendship in general; it is created within the group and takes some time to obtain the
friendships (Handler 1995, p. 240). The organization relies on its members for survival
(Longino and Kart 1973, p. 120) so the active members want the new members to feel
that they are wanted and needed. The need for committed and loyal members explains
why these new women must begin to feel as though they are a part of the group from the
first day that they are members. If being a member is important to the women, then they
will want to remain members of the group and will do what it takes to stay in the group
(Arthur 1997, 367). This research allowed me to take a step back and look at the process
through which this group goes in including members in the group. The new members
learned all about the organization and what was expected of them through this
socialization process. They needed this knowledge in order to become full members of
the group.
The analysis of this research was conducted while I was gathering data. The only way to fully succeed at reaching my goal of understanding was to immerse myself in the population for an extended period of time. I analyzed the situations in which the new member class, as a whole, interacts with each other, the other members of the sorority, and the other members of the other Greek organizations on campus. I looked at how each ceremony and meeting and sisterhood activity affected the group and how it made them bond together as a subset of the whole organization and to the organization itself.

The group on which I conducted this research was the new member class of a sorority in a Midwestern university. The Greek makeup at this university is eleven fraternities and seven sororities. This particular sorority is one of the smaller groups on campus. They came into recruitment week with forty active members. Recruitment week started the week before classes. The women who participated in the recruitment process either were on campus participating in freshman orientation or were permitted to return to campus earlier than the rest of the student population. This sorority was also the newest of the seven sororities, having been on the campus for only fourteen years.

A majority of the members came from within the state but not from the town in which the university is located. The members varied in their chosen majors. Most of the women came from smaller towns. Those who came from a big town came from one of the largest cities in the state. The members ranged in age from 18 to 22.

This sorority has been known to pledge women who are in their second or third year in college, which could either be a hindrance or a blessing to this research. From the minute that the new members join the sorority, the members begin to incorporate them into the group. The new members get shirts with the sorority's name and letters on it.
They take pictures with the active members, with each other, and with the sorority as a whole. They attend a cookout with the rest of their new sisters. Bid Day is the first chance the new members have to get to know the active members of the group and to see if the group is the place they belong.

My research was conducted from Bid Day through the formal dance held by the sorority every spring semester. In this six month time span I watched these women move from being independent individuals to being part of the collective whole of the sorority. I attended their ceremonies, meetings, dinners, and retreats. Social functions such as dances, mixers, and Homecoming were also included in this research. Measurement of the socialization process occurred in three ways. The first was the new member program. Each woman was expected to complete the program in the allotted eight weeks. The program involved certain achievement in academics, community services, social activities, Intra-Greek activities, and sisterhood activities. Each week the women filled out a certain form to tabulate what they had achieved in the previous week. Through this tabulation the New Member Coordinator was able to see which women were succeeding and which women needed some help in the different aspects of the sorority membership. At this point the New Member Coordinator was able to contact the appropriate individual so that the struggling new member could get the help that she needed in order to be able to maintain membership in the sorority.

I tried to show the pattern in formal and informal occurrences. Formal interaction occurred at meetings and ceremonies. Informal interaction occurred at other events in which the organization participates. This social interaction helped the new members become comfortable with the social aspect of the organization and, thus, helped them
socialize into the group in a productive way. Through this in-depth research I planned to
discover how these women became a part of a group that has a tight-knit bond. I did not
limit myself as to what I attended and to whom I talked about what they were
experiencing. Through this research I was able to explain a process that most people do
not know about and do not experience themselves.
Sorority recruitment occurs on college campuses all across the country before school starts in the fall. Women who go through recruitment are trying to find an organization into which they can fit, a group that will accept them for who they are, and a group that will help them adjust to life at college. Recruitment is held the week before classes start at the university at which the research was conducted. It was held from August 14-17, with Bid Day being held on August 18. These women had just spent a week meeting women from every sorority on campus. The previous week had been four long and grueling days of traveling from sorority to sorority, trying to figure out with which sorority they would best fit.

During the week women attended three rounds of parties – Getting to Know You, Theme, and Preference. The “Getting to Know You” was a thirty-five minute party. This party was held on the first two nights of recruitment. The sorority members wore stitched letter shirts and either khaki skirts, Capri pants, or khaki shorts. The potential new members dressed in a causal style. They wore anything from sundresses to khaki pants to skirts and blouses. These women wanted to make a good first impression on the sorority members, and this impression would be made by the attire that they chose to wear. The women visited three sororities the first night and four sororities the second, or vice versa. This party functioned as an introduction to the sorority. The recruitment guests asked questions about the sorority, or they could wait for the members to tell them
about the organization. The sororities showed the potential new members videos of the activities and sisterhood of the sorority.

The second round of parties included the “Theme,” which lasted approximately fifty minutes. This event was the time for the sorority members to show off their talents. The sororities performed skits about half way through the party. The skit performed by the sorority being studied for this research was a sort of Grammy show. The members sang songs about the sisterhood of the sorority. The skit dealt with the issues of sisterhood and what the sorority could offer the women that participated in recruitment. Each individual skit helped the recruitment guests get a better understanding about what the sorority stood for and what they could offer their new members after they joined. The skits helped the recruitment guests decide with which groups they felt they could be comfortable and with which groups they knew they would not be comfortable. These skits lasted from ten to twelve minutes. They sang, acted, and showed the potential new members, through these skits, why they should want to be a part of this sorority over any other. The skits and songs included references to sisterhood, activities, Greek life, and parties. The sorority members wore costumes that complimented with the theme they had chosen. The recruitment guests were not only entertained but were also given more insight into the sorority and what it would offer them.

The third round of parties was the Preference Day ceremony. Preference was the day the recruitment guests decided which sorority they wanted to join. This party was an hour and ten minutes long. The Preference ceremony was very serious and solemn, and the members of the sorority talked about the bond of sisterhood. The recruitment guests were paired with one sorority member with whom they had talked during the last two
parties. The sorority member tried to make each woman see why she should want to join this sorority above all of the others. The members shared personal stories with the recruitment guests about how the sorority had benefited them. The members wanted these women to feel an overwhelming emotion toward the sorority so that they would want to become members. The members would try to get the potential new members to express emotion by making them either laugh or cry. The members wanted to see that these women could feel the sisterhood before they were even members. This expression of emotion was a good indication of whether or not the woman would seriously consider joining. Once the recruitment guests were finished with all of the parties, they went to sign their bid cards. They ranked the sororities in order of preference. They then waited until the next day to find out which sorority had also picked them.

Recruitment was the time for the women to begin building relationships and starting connections with the active members of the sorority, and they had to base their decision on the last four days, as did the sorority when deciding to whom to extend bids. Based on recruitment and the few members they met, the recruitment guests had to decide on the group with which they felt most comfortable, the group that could offer them everything they were looking for when they decided to go through with the recruitment process.

**The New Member Period**

The new member period began on Bid Day, which was August 18. Bid day was the day when they found out with which sorority they were matched. This day marked the unofficial beginning of sorority membership for these women.
Selection

The current sorority members stood outside of the student center cheering and singing songs while they waited for their newest members to come out and join them. The singing and cheering helped the active members to get excited for the women that were about to join their sorority. The singing and cheering also made the new members inside of the student center excited to become members of the sorority they had chosen to join and to know that their new sisters wanted them and that they should be excited about becoming members of the sorority. While no one inside the student center could distinguish one sorority cheer from another, all of the women knew that their new sisters were excited to meet them and make them a part of the group. The women who went through the recruitment process gathered in the student center. By this time they had received their bids from the recruitment counselors so they were waiting to be told to join their organization. The actual bid was the first representation the recruitment guests had of the sorority they were about to join. This small piece of paper showed these women they had been chosen to join this group based on the interactions and the connections they managed to establish over the previous four days.

Once the potential new members find out with which sorority they are matched, the socialization process begins. It is crucial to integrate these women as quickly as possible. The active members needed to make sure that these new members wanted to become members of the sorority in order to maintain their status on campus and to be able to consider this a successful recruitment.
Running Out

When the new members heard the name of their sorority announced by the Greek Affairs Coordinator, they got up from their seats and followed the women from the chapter who had been Recruitment Counselors outside. They came out of a side door of the student center to the happy and excited screams of the members of the sorority. The sororities did not know in which order the new members would be coming out of the door so all of the sororities paid close attention to the women as they appeared. Once the active members saw their new sisters run out of the door, they ran over to meet these new members. The new members and the women that had been the recruitment counselors got hugs from the active members, and they all began talking about the previous week and how the new members felt about this day. Then the active members encircled the new members and sang several sorority songs to these women.

“We Are Part of a Circle”
We are part of a circle that will last forever.
We are part of a circle that is bound forever in love.
Hold on tight and don’t let go.
Don’t want to break that circle.
Stand out wherever you are.
Keep it going strong.

“Today”
Today as we gather in our sisterhood,
Remembering the moments and times that were good,
To you, __________, we’ll always stay true.
Remembering the moments and times that we spent with you,
I’ll be sister to all of the others.
You’ll know who I am by my pin set with pearls.
We’ll strive for perfection in all we endeavor.
You’ll be proud, you’re and __________ girl.

These songs helped the new members feel as though they were completely welcome by the active members and that they were already members even though they had just joined
the sorority. The new members would learn soon enough that the songs the sorority members sang to each other represented the love and loyalty they felt for and toward each other and the sorority as a whole.

Before and after the songs there were dozens of concurrent conversations. The active members went from new member to new member, telling them how happy they were that these women were now members of this sorority. The new members were immediately given the T-shirts that the active members were wearing. All of the new members put the shirts on over what they were already wearing. By giving the new members a T-shirt with the sorority name and letters on it, they were making these women feel that they were already considered members of the organization, thus starting the socialization process. This representation of letters helped the new members not to feel as out of place and to help the sorority members show the rest of campus who they had pledged. The active and new members left the student center and went back to the sorority house for pictures and a Bid Day celebration.

The Selection process and Running Out process were norms on this campus. This process was the technique for new members revealing themselves to the sorority. It helped the sorority to remain excited to meet the new members and helped the new members to be able to surprise the rest of the sorority. Right from the start they got to surprise their new sisters. They got to set the tone and the demeanor for the rest of the day and for the rest of the year. If the women were excited about meeting the sorority and becoming members, then this would show the active members that they were serious about membership and learning what it takes to become a successful member of the sorority.
This Running Out process helped begin the socialization and bonding process for
the new members. This activity was the first thing they did as a group, and it would be
the first memory they would make as a group. By running out together to meet their new
sisters, the new members showed the rest of the chapter that they were ready to get
started on their journey as members of this sorority. It also showed that they were willing
to open themselves up to the chapter and to each other.

The class consisted of seven women, ranging in ages from 18 to 21. All of the
women came from different towns, and none of them knew each other prior to this
experience. Three of the new members were incoming freshmen. One was a returning
freshman. Two were sophomores, and one was a senior. Two of the new members had
previous experience with a sorority. One was a legacy to this chapter. Her sister had
recently graduated from the university and had been a very active member. The other
had been a legacy to another organization on campus. Her mother had graduated from
this university and had been a very active member of her sorority when she was in
college.

**Back at the House**

Once the new members got back to the sorority house, they were immediately
included in conversations and group pictures. Even at this early stage, these women
already looked as if they were a part of the sorority; everyone was wearing the same
shirts so that the new members would not feel that they stood out. The T-shirt
symbolized their membership. The shirt showed other students which group these women
had chosen and which group chose them and allowed the new members to start their own
set of interactions and relationships within the group. By giving these new members a T-
shirt with the sorority letters on it, the sorority was entrusting these women with the ideals and standards of the sorority. Even before the new members realized it, they were expected to represent the sorority in a positive way.

A photographer came to the sorority house take the Bid Day pictures. The new-member class took dozens of pictures with each other and as a group. The pictures would function as additional tangible symbols the women would have that they were actual members of this sorority and to help others to know that they were members of this sorority and that they were proud of their affiliation. The pictures symbolized a sense of sisterhood and loyalty that the active members wanted to instill in the new members.

After the pictures had been taken, the sorority ate dinner together. Then the new members had their first meeting. The New Member Coordinator, the sister who would be guiding them through the next eight weeks, informed them about the Pledge Ceremony. She told them where they needed to be, what time they needed to be there, and what to wear. They also talked about the finances that would be required over the next eight weeks. Once this meeting was over, the new members rejoined the rest of the sorority and spent time together at the sorority house, watching movies and getting to know each other by talking with each other and other members about their background, classes, family, and various other topics.

The new members seemed nervous while at the house. All were very quiet and did not take the initiative in starting conversations with other members. Most of the time they sat on the couch unless they were invited to go elsewhere by an active member of the sorority. Once one woman decided to leave, the rest followed her lead. The Bid Day festivities lasted about five hours.
Bid Day helped the new members become accustomed to the ways and practices of the sorority, for it was the day the new members threw themselves fully into the sorority. They got their chance to dress and look and act the part of the sorority member, which helped to further the bond that had been started when they ran out to meet the sorority. They knew that they were the representation of the future of the sorority. At the sorority house the new members got their chance to start moving past the symbolic aspect of the sorority into the sisterhood aspect. This time was their chance to meet women they had not had the chance to meet during recruitment. They were able to start connections with the rest of the sisters and to begin to incorporate themselves into the sorority. By starting these bonds, the women were beginning the cohesion process which would make them a unified new-member class but also unified with the sorority as a whole.

**Official Pledge Ceremony**

The next night the official Pledge Ceremony, marking the official beginning of their life in the sorority, was held at the sorority house in the formal living room. The Pledge Ceremony was the new members' first glimpse into the ritual and ceremonial aspect of a sorority. The new members waited in another location while the chapter set up the ceremony. In the center of the room there was one table with a white tablecloth. On the table were three candles and the ritual book. At this ceremony the new members would meet their Sister-Mothers. The Sister-Mothers, or Sis-Moms, would be the women who would be the go-to person for each of their Sister-Daughters, or Sis-Dots, for not only the semester but also the rest of their time in the sorority. The Sis-Moms were active members who could help the women move into full membership. The Sis-Moms would not only teach the new members about the sorority and the history behind it but
they would also be responsible for helping them learn how to be good members and sisters. They were expected to be the role models for their Sis-Dot. The active members formed a horseshoe in front of the table. The Sis-Moms stood slightly in front of the rest of the chapter.

As the chapter prepared for the start of the ceremony, the President and the New Member Coordinator took their place behind the table in the center of the room. The chapter sang “The Pledge Song” as the new members entered the room.

“The Pledge Song”
Take up thy shield and helmet.
Fraternal guardian be
For lives and hearts entrusted
Forever unto thee.
Oh __________,
Protector guide thou art
For every pledged sister
In all her life, her heart.

The Pledge Song is the official sorority welcome to membership. The New Member Coordinator, who was in charge of the ceremony, performed most of the ceremony and read from the ritual book. At one point the entire sorority recited the Purpose, which is the pledge that members must learn during their new-member period. The Purpose was the verbal representation of the ideals for which the sorority stood and to which the members strive to achieve. It will become crucial to know once they are initiated. The new members were informed that “you may be entrusted with things that repeated outside the group may come to harm” the organization. The President had the new members, as a group, repeat a pledge in which they promised to “carefully guard any confidences” they may receive. This pledge basically showed the new members that they were expected to give their loyal cooperation to the chapter from this time forward. The words of the oath
symbolized a trust that the chapter has given to the new members in this early stage of their membership. After the pledge the Sis-Moms revealed themselves to their Sis-Dots and presented their Sister-Daughters with their pledge pin. The pledge pin was to be worn by the new members to their meetings and any other occasion in which they will be representing the sorority. The Sis-Moms explained to their Sis-Dots how to put the pin on and where they are allowed to wear it on their person. The new members learned about this meaning at the ceremony. The Pledge Pin was a sign that the new members have been and would continue to be entrusted with the ritual of the sorority.

After they received their pledge pins, each new member signed the ritual book on the date they pledged while the chapter sang “The Pledge Song” again. As this song was sung, the new members exited the room with their Sis-Moms. The rest of the chapter followed them out, formed a circle around the new member class, and performed the sorority cheer, otherwise known as “Haydiekaydie.”

“Haydiekaydie”
Haydiekaydie Kalowadie
Kalowing Dingodadie
Oshkosh Calowash
Calowingo Dingodosh
Osh Kitty Wah Wah
Sis Boom Bah
__________ Rah Rah Rah

This cheer was a fun cheer that the members did after every event or pledge ceremony. It helped the women bond together because the cheer itself was hard to understand and the words were hard to pronounce. Only the members of this sorority would know the words and the order. Even though the cheer was complete nonsense, the new members still realized that it was important to the members and important for them to learn. They would hear the cheer over and over again. They would eventually learn the words and
when it was to be used. It was also at this time that the New Member Coordinator gave each new member a sorority bag that she could carry around campus. This bag was another representation of the sorority the new members had joined. Every sorority member on campus was given a similar bag. It was another way for the women to show the rest of the student population the sorority they had chosen.

Throughout the ceremony the new members looked a little confused and lost. They were unsure what was expected of them; but by the time the ceremony was over, the nervousness seemed to have disappeared, and the women looked more relaxed than they had at the beginning of the evening. Their posture was not as rigid as it had been before they entered the ceremony. They were laughing and joking around with each other, which they had not done before the ceremony. They mingled with other members instead of sticking together in a protective group.

After the ceremony the sorority members gathered to talk to each other and to the new members. It was clear that the new members had been overwhelmed by the evening. They were glad that they had completed their first ceremony and that they could now relax and fraternize with other sorority members. The new members had already started making plans with each other and active members for the upcoming week, which included fraternity recruitment and other such parties. The active members encouraged the new members to stay around campus for the weekend and go to these events. They were trying to keep the new members busy and involved with the sorority and other Greek activities so that they would want to continue being members of the group.

The ceremony helped the new members to start the process of moving from interaction based on the symbols they shared in common to a deeper sisterhood
relationship. By entrusting these women with the information they were given at the ceremony, the sorority was showing these women that they had started to establish a trust with the rest of the sisters. This ceremony helped to establish the first step of the socialization process.

**First New Member Meeting**

Six days later the new member class had their first meeting. It was held at the sorority house. As the new members arrived, each new member had multiple gifts of sorority memorabilia from various sorority members waiting for her. They were given the gifts as symbols of their membership. The gifts, which consisted of cups, pins, pens, pillows, and decorated jars, were symbols that the new members could use to show others the representation of their membership in the sorority. Before the meeting started the new members talked about what they had done over the last week. One of the new members had participated in a fraternity rush pageant representing the sorority. A bond was beginning to form between these women at this point. The exchange process had begun for the new members; they were able to represent the sorority in a positive way while the sorority benefited by getting their name out on campus through the new members. They were more relaxed around each other for the first time. By sharing weekend events and upcoming plans with each other, these women had become very comfortable with each other in a very short period of time.

Once the meeting started, it was conducted in a round table format. The New Member Coordinator gave the new members their sorority education notebooks. These notebooks contained the information that they would need for the next eight weeks. The meeting started with the opening ritual, conducted by the Ritual Coordinator. She
explained that ritual would signify the start of every sorority meeting, even after they
were initiated, and that they needed to learn the ritual for the time when they would
become active members. All of the new members and active members who attended the
meeting gathered in a circle. They said the Lord’s Prayer, sang one of the sorority songs,
and recited the purpose. Opening ritual at this meeting was the first time that the new
members had taken part in any type of ritual so they stood around and watched the active
members perform the ritual. After the ritual was finished, the new members returned to
the table to start the meeting. They were given several things, including the chapter
calendar. The calendar showed them that they were already considered full members of
the sorority, even though they were not. It showed them that the chapter wanted them
completely involved in all aspects of the group and that they did not have to feel as if
they could not take part just because they were not initiated members. The calendar
provided them with the dates of sorority events for the entire semester. Then the New
Member Coordinator invited them to the Advisor Dessert Potluck that week. They were
invited so that they could get to know who the advisors were and which offices they
advised. This information would eventually become useful if they decided to run for an
office in November.

Once all of the announcements were finished, the Vice President-Scholarship
informed the new members that they would be required to do six study hours per week.
Academic excellence was stressed to these women from the beginning. It was made very
clear to them that they were expected to maintain good grades. They would have to go to
the library, sign in with the proctor when they arrived, and sign out when they left. They
also signed grade release forms and were told about the rules they were expected to
follow during study hours. The President invited the new members to attend the active member’s meeting that followed their meeting. The New Member Coordinator informed them of the time when initiation would be held, where it would be, and what they would need to wear.

After all of the formalities were finished, the New Member Coordinator began the education process. She started the meeting by teaching the new members about the Fourteen Pearl Program. This program promotes sisterhood and incorporation into the sorority through loyalty, health, scholarship, and other various activities. During the eight-week new-member period, these women would be expected to complete the Fourteen Pearl Program (see Appendix A). There are ten categories in the Fourteen Pearl Program: scholarship, personal health, friendship, sisterhood, philanthropy, ritual, responsibility, standards, fraternity education, and public awareness. Each woman is expected to complete at least one activity from each of the ten categories and then four others. The Fourteen Pearl Program must be completed by the week before initiation for a woman to be considered eligible to be initiated. Two of the new members had already completed one pearl by participating in the fraternity rush pageant. The Fourteen Pearl Program would help these women become well rounded members, which is what the active members wanted. This program helped the new members learn about the group and how they would benefit from completing this program.

The New Member Coordinator delved into other aspects of the chapter. She handed out a sheet with ten songs that every sorority member should know. She also gave them the alcohol policy and the code of standards (see Appendix B). By receiving these policies at their first meeting, the new members were shown that they were
expected to behave like the active members and that they were expected to follow all of 
the same rules as the active members. The new members elected their officers. The 
offices are President, Vice President-Operations, Ritual Coordinator, Vice President-
Finance and Social Coordinator.

The New Member Coordinator gave them their new-member manuals. In the 
manuals was all the information that they would need to know for the new-member test 
before initiation and the answers to all of the questions they would be asked. These 
manuals were a symbol of trust. She let them know that they needed to start learning all 
about the founders and to memorize the first two lines of the purpose. Also in this book 
are a Sis-Dot information form for the new members to fill out and give to their Sis-
Moms, the Fourteen Pearl Completion Chart, and the Post Recruitment Survey, in which 
they can give their feedback about their past recruitment experience to the chapter for 
them to use for the next year’s recruitment.

They filled out a medical form and a car information form. They were told where 
they could park, where they were allowed to smoke, and how to answer the phone at the 
sorority house. They filled out a committee interest sheet. They were invited to play flag 
football and were informed about practices and games. Before the meeting ended, the 
New Member Coordinator told the new members to feel free to come over to the house 
any time, just to hang out or if they needed some help with something. The New Member 
Coordinator then adjourned the meeting.

These new-member meetings served as the formal education that the new 
members would receive before becoming initiated members of the sorority. At this first 
meeting the new members started to learn about the tradition and formality of the chapter
meetings. The New Member Coordinator informed them that, aside from the education they would receive at these meetings, the new-member meetings would run as the active member meetings did. The new members also saw socialization at work. The active members presented the new members with these gifts and trinkets at the beginning of the meeting so that the new members could have representations of the sorority. By giving these gifts to the new members, the active members were showing these women that the members wanted them and that the members wanted them to express their membership in the sorority to other students on campus. The new members were rigid in their posture and were quiet before the meeting started. These women were not comfortable with each other so they were not prone to conversation and intermingling with each other. It was evident that these women were not comfortable with their position in the sorority, but that would soon change.

Chapter/Advisor Meet and Greet

Two days later was the Chapter/Advisor Meet and Greet. A new chapter advisor had been appointed, and this Meet and Greet gave the chapter and the new members a chance to meet the new chapter advisor and other various advisors and for everyone to talk about the direction in which the chapter was headed and how to get the chapter to where they wanted to be. All but one of the new members attended this event. Because it was not a mandatory chapter event, the initiative taken to come to the meeting showed that the women who chose to come wanted to be there for the good of the chapter and that, even at this early stage, they had already become emotionally attached to this organization and that they wanted to see it succeed in the future. Each member introduced herself to the advisors, and the advisors introduced themselves to the chapter.
Two of the new members took advantage of this opportunity to earn a pearl; they took the initiative to introduce themselves to the alumnae that were present. While the new members were included for most of the meeting, they were eventually excused so that the chapter could discuss other business. Their inclusion, and eventual exclusion, showed that while they were a part of the chapter, they could not be privy to all of the chapter business yet. The inclusion/exclusion process kept the hierarchy secure without alienating the new members.

**New Member/Active Dance**

There was no new-member meeting the following week because of a holiday. The next time the new members had a chance to be together was at the Active/New Member Dance held on September 7. When the members arrived, everyone, including the new members, stood around and waited for someone else to start dancing. It was evident that the new members were not as comfortable in this situation as they had seemed to be at their new-member meetings. Most of the new members waited by the door for others to arrive or sat in chairs and waited for someone else to “start” the event. Thirty-five minutes into the dance the members finally hit the dance floor, but none were new members. Only a few of the new members brought dates. While they might not have been dancing, the new members were socializing with active members. They were all in different groups participating in conversations and having their pictures taken. Finally the DJ played the unofficial sorority song. This song, “Gimme That Nut,” got the majority of the women out on the dance floor. While the new members might not have understood why the active members went crazy for this song, they still got out on the dance floor to join the women who were dancing. Because the sorority mascot was a
squirrel, the members made a connection with the song based on the mascot. Most of the time the new members had to be encouraged by the active members to dance. At one point two active members grabbed a new member and dragged her out onto the floor to dance between them. When “Friends in Low Places” was played, all of the women formed a circle on the floor and sang together. This song was one that the members liked to sing at the top of their lungs. They stayed out on the floor together as a group and sang “Dixieland Delight” and “Family Tradition” together. “Family Tradition” is another song that the women liked to sing very loudly, but they would replace the word “family” with the name of the sorority. “Dixieland Delight” was a sentimental favorite with this sorority. It was the favorite song of a man that had been a good friend of members of the sorority years before. He was killed in an accident so the sorority adopted this song as a tribute to this man.

As the night drew to a close, the new members seemed much more comfortable in the setting, in the sorority, and with each other than they had been when they had arrived at the dance. Most of them were out on the dance floor or walking back and forth between different groups of sisters. Only one woman separated herself from the group while she waited for the vans to come back to pick up more women. For the most part the dance was successful, and the new members seemed to have a good time. They were all laughing and joking with each other and with the other people at the dance. This dance had helped these women see the sorority from a social aspect and establish a tie with the sorority. The dance had given the new members a new way to look at the sorority and how they bonded with each other.
Second New Member Meeting

The next night was the second new member meeting of the semester. One notable person missing from this meeting was the New Member Coordinator. The Vice President of Operations conducted the meeting instead. It was interesting to note that the members had a different feeling that night than they had had at the first meeting. It may have been because the New Member Coordinator was missing and they were not as comfortable with this other member or that they were tired from the night before or any number of reasons. The meeting started with opening ritual. The Ritual Coordinator for the new-member class was not comfortable with ritual yet and had to be reminded of the order to do things. It was interesting to note that, when the new members recited the purpose, they were still very quiet but they were slowly gaining confidence in themselves and in learning the ritual aspect of the sorority. They slowly, but surely, learned ritual. Once they sat down, they had gifts awaiting them from various members of the sorority. These women were learning that the active members spoiled the new members with gifts and notes and candy. This week was a busy one for the new members. It was Pledge Week on campus. All new members of every organization were expected to attend Pledge Olympics on Friday and the Pledge Symposium on Saturday morning. They found out that the Sisterhood Retreat was that weekend. They were informed that they needed to bring something special for a sisterhood activity.

Then they started reviewing the chapters in the new member manual. They learned about scholarship information and the history of the organization such as the name of each founder, the intentions of the founders, the code of standards, and chapter history and information. Before the meeting was adjourned, they were quizzed about
chapter information. They were asked about many different things, which included the chapter advisor’s name, who the President was, who the current Executive Council officers were, and who the women that currently lived in the sorority house were. For getting the answers right, they were awarded sorority t-shirts that had been donated by an alumna. Each girl received at least one shirt and other trinket. The meeting was then adjourned.

The behavior and interactions between the new members this week was much different from that of the previous week. They were talking to each other and to the active members who were in attendance before the meeting started. They were rehashing all of the events of the night before and talking about how much fun they had at the dance. It was clear that this social event was what the new members needed in order to start to feel comfortable and to know that they could be themselves when in the sorority setting.

Pledge Olympics

At the end of the week Pledge Olympics were held. Pledge Olympics provided the first chance for the new member class to represent the sorority and to show the rest of the campus the pride that they had in their new organization. A large part of membership in the sorority was being able to represent the organization in a positive light to other students on campus. The new members were expected to put themselves out there for other students to see so that the other students could get a positive impression of the sorority. They were paired with a fraternity pledge-class and participated in different games and races. The new members seemed very uncomfortable in the representation role. They did not put themselves out there as much as the active members would have
liked. It seemed as if they wanted to fade into the background and let the active members be in charge of the representation aspect at this event. They kept to themselves and managed to move toward the back of the group when everyone was just standing around. The active members did their best to keep the new members interested in representing the sorority, but it was probably too early to thrust these women into that role.

While these new members wore the letters, they had not had enough interactions with the sorority to feel comfortable being the first impression that some other student would get of the sorority. They felt that they had not been around long enough to be representing the sorority in an event such as this. They were very quiet and hardly cheered. They did not really intermingle with the fraternity with which they had been paired and kept to themselves in a small group. These girls wore jerseys borrowed from active members so that they could look the part of full members of the sorority. The jerseys were bright-lettered shirts. The active members insisted that the new members wear them so that they would stand out at Pledge Olympics and so that they would be seen by the other organizations on campus. While the women were starting to feel more at ease in their role as sorority members, it was clear that they were not ready for the role of representatives. By keeping to themselves the new members were making sure that they did not do anything wrong at this event. They did as the active members told them to do, but they did not take the initiative to go above and beyond what was expected of them. They wanted to represent the sorority in a positive light because of the fact that everyone in the Greek community was at this event, but they were still unsure of the appropriate behavior and how they should act at events like this. The new members had
not had enough interactions with the active members in situations like this in order to understand what was fully expected of them.

This event helped to foster the bond that was building between the new members. They were all in the same position at this event; they were nervous and unsure of how to behave. None of the other members had this feeling at this particular time. It was something the new members shared at this event. They were able to see that they were all in the same position. They also knew that they could rely on each other to help navigate this event as best they could.

**Pledge Symposium**

The next morning was Pledge Symposium. Symposium was the time that all of the new members of all the Greek organizations learned about the different aspects of Greek life. Seminars included binge drinking, anti-hazing policies of the University, leadership opportunities, time management, and academic achievement. The new members stuck together throughout the morning. They all went to the same seminars. Once again, they seemed nervous without the active members around to guide them. They were expected to represent the sorority through their dress and manner that morning; but, because they were so new to the organization, they were unsure of exactly what that meant. The new members used each other as buffers to ensure that they were behaving correctly. These exchanges helped the women learn from each other about behavior and representation of the sorority. By sticking together they also felt more at ease in this situation.
Sisterhood Retreat

After Pledge Symposium the chapter left for the annual Sisterhood Retreat. It was being held at a cabin owned by an alumna’s family. The Retreat was the first time that the entire chapter had gathered together in this type of function since the new members pledged. The Sisterhood Coordinator put sisters into “carpool groups.” Each new member was placed in a different car with various active members. This division was done so that the new members could get to know different active members in the sorority. The division helped to promote group cohesion—the new members were split from each other and placed with women that they may not know very well for an hour and a half drive. The new members were forced to get to know the women they were riding with, just as the active members were forced to get to know the new member that was in the car.

Once they arrived at the cabin, they all interacted with each other and ate dinner. After they ate, the new members got to pick the place they wanted to sleep and whether they wanted to share a bed with another sister. After that the Sisterhood Coordinator divided the women into their car groups to have them come up with a short skit about anything that they wanted. Some of the groups created skits about the car ride to the retreat, while others made up skits based on different songs. Once again, the new members looked uncomfortable and unsure of their role. Because they had been separated, they did not have each other to rely on so they sat back and let the active members take over the skits.

Once the ice had been broken, the group came together in a large circle for a time of the night known to the active members as “Something Special.” The sorority members
formed one large circle around the room. Each brought out the one special item she had been asked to bring. When her turn came, she was asked to explain why this item was special to her. The purpose of this activity was to let the group learn about each other on a personal level. Every new member participated, but they were not comfortable with this much interaction and sharing this early in the evening. There were two who were at the beginning of the circle who asked to be passed over until the end. Asking to go at the end, showed that they wanted to share but that they were not comfortable speaking and sharing at the beginning. All of the items belonging to the new members had very personal stories behind them. Most of the women got emotional when telling their stories. One woman shared a story about the dolls that she had brought with her. She told the rest of the members about how these dolls were the only things she had left by which to remember her father because the dolls came from him. The story evoked a lot of emotion not only from this woman but also from the rest of the chapter. It was surprising to see this woman share a story like that because she was normally very quiet and reserved. Without this experience she might not have gotten the chance to share stories with all of the women in the chapter. She might also not have gotten the chance to interact and bond on an individual level with some of the older members. All of the members showed their appreciation for this member, sharing the story in some way throughout the evening, and this woman gained a little more confidence in her status as a sorority member.

This expression of emotion showed that the new members felt that a trust had been established. When that trust was established, the new members felt that they were finally beginning to gain something from their experience in the group. They felt that
they could share and become emotional without fearing ridicule or laughter. They also felt that the active members could be trusted with these stories and that what was said in this circle would not be discussed any other time. The new members held nothing back. Through this event they felt an exchange of sisterhood through the explanation of the symbols each woman had brought to the retreat. They wanted to share the entire story behind the symbol; but until they saw other members sharing fully, they did not know that this expression would be accepted. Once the new members had seen the active members share so much emotion, they knew that this expression was not only permitted, but also expected.

The “Something Special” circle took a couple of hours to complete. After the circle was completed, the members were free to do as they pleased. A couple of the new members opted to go to bed. The rest headed with the active members to the basement to play games. Most of the women chose to participate in a game of “I Never,” which was a game in which a member would say “I’ve never” done this or done that. If one of the women had engaged in this particular behavior, she would have to do something. This game can become very embarrassing, especially as it progresses, but most of the new members chose to participate in the game. This behavior reinforced the idea that the new members trusted the rest of the chapter with personal information about themselves. It showed that the new members had become so relaxed around the women that they felt they could share details they may have held back before without having to worry about the active members thinking negatively about them.

After playing “I Never,” the group began to split up. Some of the new members went to bed while others chose to play another game known as “Mafia.” In this game a
couple of women are chosen to be members of a “Mafia.” The rest of the group would have to figure out which sisters were the members of the “Mafia” before being “killed” by the members of the “Mafia.” After this game was completed, the rest of the members went to bed. The next morning all of the members ate breakfast together, cleaned up together, and proceeded back to the sorority house. The members went back to the house in the cars in which they had come to the retreat. It was evident that the new members were much more at ease going back than they had been on their way to the retreat. They interacted and conversed with the active members with whom they rode. The retreat had served its purpose – to establish a bond between the new member class and the active members. The new members went to the retreat just as women who shared the letters of the sorority with other women, but they returned with the beginnings of the sisterhood bond that they had been hearing so much about. The interactions at the retreat helped the new members to see that there was much more to the sorority than just letters and a mascot and gifts. The active members treated the new members very well. While it took most of the night, the new members came out of the retreat with a new sense of sisterhood, what the sorority could mean to them if they gave it the proper chance, a very positive outlook on the sorority, and a definite sense of the sisterhood they had been hearing about since they had become new members.

This retreat helped to entrench the idea of sisterhood in the new members. All of the interactions throughout the night helped to establish a sense of sisterhood and loyalty for the sorority. The retreat was the first night that the new members were able to see this idea of sisterhood and action and to get something out of the sisterhood that they had been hearing so much about. The new members for the first time were able to move past
the interactions based on letters and mascots to something deeper. Sharing private stories and intimate details from their pasts helped the new members establish trust and friendship with the active members of the sorority.

**Third New Member Meeting**

The night the sorority got back to the house the new members had a meeting. The meeting started with the opening ritual. By this point most of the new members began to remember the order of the ritual and had memorized the purpose. Before the New Member Coordinator started on the units that were to be covered that night, she asked the new members if they wanted to discuss anything. One of the new members seemed to be rubbing the rest of the members the wrong way. This woman had been saying things that were improper and unnecessary and had alienated a few of the active members with her actions. The New Member Coordinator had been hearing some grumbling from the rest of the new-member class and had begun to see the tension in the group. Instead of discussing the situation and clearing the air, the new members did not want to discuss the situation. They chose to gloss over it instead of being open and honest about how they were feeling at this point. They did not want to hurt this woman’s feelings so they chose to ignore the situation. It was interesting to note that, even after all of the trust activities that had happened the night before, the new members still did not feel comfortable being completely honest with each other. After that the New Member Coordinator began discussing the next set of chapters in their new member manuals. They learned more about the organization as a whole. Once the units were finished, the meeting was adjourned.
Even though there was some tension between the new members, they behaved the same as they had at previous meetings. By choosing not to confront this sister, they showed that they wanted to protect each other and that they did not want to hurt a sister’s feelings. By wanting to protect this woman, the new members were showing that they were learning about sisterhood and how to deal with members that may need some help. Instead of yelling at her and making her feel bad, they wanted to help her grow into a sister of whom everyone could be proud.

**Fourth New Member Meeting**

The next week another new-member meeting was held. Before the meeting started, the women discussed how their classes were going. The New Member Coordinator and one of the new members had a class in common. The New Member Coordinator was able to give her advice on the class and how to study for the tests. The new member began to take advantage of one of the perks of belonging to a sorority—having someone older be able to tell her about classes that were important to her major and how to navigate the classes. This conversation between the new member and the New Member Coordinator represented the first time that there had been in-depth conversation about nonsorority material. This conversation showed that the women were becoming more and more comfortable with each other. Once everyone arrived, the meeting started with the opening ritual. They discussed the units. This week the new members learned about executive council officers; how the chapter operates; bylaws of the chapter; chapter council and its purpose; House Association; recruitment; Target Achievement from International Headquarters; and the Five Star Program, which focuses on chapter leadership, membership, philanthropy, scholarship, and sisterhood.
After finishing the review of the chapters, the new members set goals for the class. They all decided that they wanted to get to know the active members better. Each new member was assigned an active member to get to know. They were supposed to come back the following week with five interesting things about that person that the rest of the class would like to know. By finding out five interesting facts, the new members might have been able to find something that they shared in common with this woman, or something that another new member would share in common with this woman. This activity helped to enhance the sharing of personal information between sisters, and it helped to reinforce the idea that interaction would help the new members move into the roles as sisters in a better way. It was clear that the new members had a growing interest in the active members whom they might not know as well; this interest came from the bond that they were beginning to feel with the women that they did know well. These new members wanted to get to know all of their sisters before they were initiated, and they felt that these interviews were one way to do that. The New Member Coordinator stressed the importance of getting involved with non-Greek organizations such as Student Government, Campus Activities Board, and the Pep Club. One new member had already taken advantage of the other groups on campus. She also announced that the sorority would be participating in a fraternity philanthropy event that week and what they needed to do to win. She announced flag-football practice for those who were interested in playing on the team. The meeting was adjourned.

There were a couple of interesting events at this meeting. The first was the conversation between the New Member Coordinator and the new member. They were talking about a nonsorority subject, which showed that the interactions had moved past
the formal, sorority-based interactions and had moved to a deeper, more meaningful aspect. While the subject was not life altering, it was a subject that had not been discussed before. This conversation showed that the women were moving into their roles as sorority members with ease and that they felt comfortable talking about all aspects of their lives with each other. The other interesting event was the assignment to “interview” chapter members. The new members expressed the thought that they wanted to get to know everyone before they were initiated. The need to get to know all of the sisters better showed that they were interested in moving to the next level of interaction with everyone, not just those women with whom they felt comfortable.

Fifth New Member Meeting

Another new-member meeting was held the next week. As the new members entered the sorority house for the meeting, two of them were wearing t-shirts from a festival they had attended over the weekend. These two had not known each other before they pledged so it was interesting to see that in this short time span they felt comfortable enough with each other for one to take the other to meet her parents and stay in her house. They talked about the fraternity philanthropy event in which they had participated the previous week and how much fun they had had competing against the other sororities. The meeting started with the opening ritual. The girls were still unsure of the order in which the ritual should be conducted so the New Member Coordinator had to prod them along. At this meeting all of the new members had the purpose memorized. Before the New Member Coordinator started reviewing the next set of chapters in the new member manual, the new members picked out their badges. They would receive these at the initiation so each woman chose which kind of badge she would like to purchase.
Before the meeting officially got under way, each new member shared what she had learned about the active member she had been assigned the week before. These interviews helped the new members establish a connection with the active members that they may not have known very well. They also ordered their jerseys. Each member of every sorority on campus has a sorority jersey. Each woman’s jersey had the sorority letters on the front. On the back were their name and the number of women that were in their new member class. The jerseys pointed out that these women were about to become full-fledged members of the sorority because only the active members were allowed to have the jerseys.

The new members learned about International Council, chapter visitors, Headquarters, and the biannual sorority convention. They were also told about chapter inventory, the sorority’s foundation and philanthropic cause, and how they could get involved once they became alumnae of the sorority. Last, they learned about National Panhellenic Council and what the campus’ Panhellenic Council does for the Greek organizations on campus. Upcoming events for the new members included the sorority’s annual philanthropic event and initiation.

This meeting was their last official meeting, for the next week they took the New Member Test. They had to pass this test in order to be initiated. All of the new members knew the importance of this test and took it very seriously. They had to have their fourteen pearl sheets completed and turned in to the New Member Coordinator. She reviewed the initiation requirements (see Appendix C) to make sure everyone had completed what they needed to have done. They were told about an upcoming informal recruitment event right after initiation. This recruitment event would be the first chance
these women would have to be involved in the membership selection process. Before the
meeting was adjourned, the new members compiled a list of the four women they would
like to be their big sisters. The big sisters would not be revealed until one week after
initiation, but they had to be chosen now.

**New Member Test**

The new member test was held one week later. The test evaluated all they had
learned over the previous eight weeks. It was a measure of how seriously each woman
had taken the new-member-education process and how seriously she had studied the
history of the sorority. These women were reviewing with the New Member Coordinator
up until the last minute possible. The women were nervous because they knew that they
could not be initiated if they did not pass this test. One of the new members voiced her
concerns about being able to pass this test on the first try. The test consisted of
answering multiple-choice questions about the sorority, listing the executive council
offices, listing the names of the founders, and matching a sorority term to the correct
definition. The test had sixty questions, and the new members had to get at least fifty-
four correct to pass. All but one of the new members started the test at the same time;
this woman continued to study by herself. One by one the new members finished the test.
All but two passed on the first try. These two women passed the second time they took
the test. The learning process had been completed for these women when they finished
the test. The next week would be full of pre-initiation ceremonies leading up to Saturday
morning, which was the time the initiation was held.

The last eight weeks culminated with this test. Passing the test showed that these
women had established their place within the sorority and that they had fulfilled all of the
requirements in order to be considered for initiation. The women had already established a sense of sisterhood within themselves over the last two months. They had already begun to move from interactions based solely on symbols and mascots to interactions based on sisterhood, and they were able to gain something from the experience of being a member of the sorority.

It was easy to see how the new members had progressed in their bond and socialization over the last eight weeks. Instead of sitting around quietly, as they had done when they first joined, they walked around the house and talked with other sisters once they were finished with the test. They were not afraid to strike up conversations with the active members. They felt very comfortable walking into a sisters’ room and sitting down to talk to her or to watch television.

**Initiation Week**

The pre-initiation activities began the night after the new-member test. At this point these women had moved from new members to novitiates. The ceremonies were conducted at the sorority house. On the first night the Red, Buff, and Green ceremonies were held.

**Red Ceremony**

The Red Ceremony was the first ceremony of the evening. This ceremony stressed friendship and loyalty to the sorority. The new members came into the house in initiation order, which is oldest to youngest. The Sister-Mothers were waiting for the new members when they walked into the house. The new members formed a semicircle in front of a table. On the table sat three candles and a silver platter with red strips of paper on it. During this ceremony the new members were “encouraged to think about
friendship” and to share in the love of sisterhood. The president recited a ritual poem about sisterhood. “So Many Ways” was a representation of all of the ways the sorority could benefit its members if the women are willing to open themselves up to the sorority. After the poem the chapter sang one of the sorority’s songs, “We are Part of a Circle,” while the New Member Coordinator handed out the red strips of paper to each new member. This song helped to reinforce in the new members that sisterhood was a bond that would continue forever, even after they left the chapter and college.

“We Are Part of a Circle”
We are part of a circle that will last forever.
We are part of a circle that is bound forever in love.
Hold on tight and don’t let go.
Don’t want to break that circle.
Stand out wherever you are.
Keep it going strong.

The New Member Coordinator passed a candle around while each new member read what was written on the paper that she had been given. After each new member read her quote, everyone joined hands and sang “Our Time is Short”.

“Our Time is Short”
Our time is short, our moments fleeting.
Like flowing grains of sand,
But wherever you go and whatever you do,
Take the love of ____________.

After the song was over, the new members exited the house. As they left, the New Member Coordinator presented each with one red rose. The new members waited outside while the chapter prepared for the next ceremony. This ceremony was the first of three ceremonies that would express the ideals that the women would learn about during initiation. The ideas of sisterhood and loyalty were the underlying tones for this ceremony.
Buff Ceremony

The next ceremony was the Buff Ceremony, which dealt with loyalty and dedication to the sorority. The Sister-Mothers were waiting for the new members again as they had been in the last ceremony. As they entered, the members sang the sorority hymn. Each woman was presented with a yellow rose. This ceremony is supposed to express the tie that binds each woman to each other woman and to the sorority. As a candle was passed around, each new member was asked to express how she felt about the sorority in either a word or a phrase. Some of the responses included "sisterhood," "friendships that would last forever," and "trust." This exercise was done so the new members could express how they felt about this chapter that had begun to be a part of their lives. It also was done so that the chapter could recognize the impact that they had had on these women and the impact that these women would have on the chapter in the future. All of the new members used words like "sisterhood," "loyalty," and "love." These were terms that the new members had heard over and over during the eight-week new-member period. They used these words because they had learned that these words, along with others, are the best representation of how the sorority impacted its members. After this part of the ceremony the entire chapter, including the new members, recited the purpose together. The new members then exited the house. The Buff Ceremony represented insight into the sorority and the ideals for which the sorority stood.

Green Ceremony

The final ceremony of the evening was the Green Ceremony. As they entered, their Sister-Mothers once again greeted them. This ceremony enlightened them to the sacred ideal to which each woman should aspire. As they entered, each woman was
presented with a green candle. The New Member Coordinator lit each candle as the woman entered the room. Sitting on the table was a silver platter with green strips of paper on it. Each new member was asked to step forward, pick a piece of paper from the platter, read it to herself, reflect on it, and then read it aloud to the chapter. Once each woman completed this, she returned to her spot in front of the table and the chapter sang another sorority song. At the end of the song each woman blew out her candle. They exited the house. The Green Ceremony represented the ideals of strength and standing strong for the ideals upon which the sorority was based when the organization was founded. The rest of the members followed them outside and performed the sorority chant, “Haydiekaydie,” while encircling the new members. The chant marked the end of the evening.

The new members took the ceremonies very seriously. They all wanted to learn about the ritual behind the sorority, and they knew that these ceremonies were part of that learning process. They were not as nervous at these ceremonies as they had been at their first ceremony on Bid Day, but they were still a little nervous because they were unsure of their position at this point and what was expected of them throughout this week. They kept their behavior more reserved than they had over the last couple of weeks, but not as reserved as it had been at their first ceremony. They had become comfortable in their role as new members, but they had moved out of that role when they completed their new member test. This role that they were entering was new and strange to them. They needed some time to get accustomed to this role. These women had already learned to respect the ritual of the sorority, which made them respected by the rest of the chapter.
The active members wanted to see their new members remain loyal to the group. That loyalty had already been established. These ceremonies just reinforced that fact.

**Pinning of the Petals**

Four days later the Fireside and Pinning of the Petals ceremony was held at the sorority house. The first of the ceremonies was Pinning of the Petals. Pinning of the Petals was the last official ceremony before initiation. As the new members entered the room, they formed a semicircle in front of a table that held two candles on either side of a silver platter covered with red rose petals. The President then asked the Sister-Mothers to take the pledge pin off of their Sister-Daughters. The pledge pin had represented a promise the new members made to the sorority during their pledge ceremony. It had been given to the new members at the beginning of their new member period as a representation of what they would learn when they became initiated members. The new members were asked to place their pledge pins on one of the rose petals. The return of the pledge pin represented the fact that the new members were about to be entrusted with more information about the ritual than they had been when they were given the pins eight weeks ago. The return of the pins represented to the new members that they had proven to the chapter that they were worthy of initiation and to wear the badge of the sorority. They were asked to express what the sorority meant to them and what they had learned about sisterhood and the sorority in the last eight weeks. All of the responses referred to how much these women had learned about the sorority, the women who were members, and about lasting sisterhood and the love that comes along with that sisterhood. The chapter sang “We Are Part of a Circle.” After the song was finished, the new members exited the room.
Fireside

When they reentered the room, they found it had been set up for the Fireside Ceremony. This ceremony was informal—it was a ceremony that was exclusive to this chapter. It was a time for the new members to learn about how their parents felt about their membership in the sorority and how they felt about these women who were no longer their little girls but adults who were moving on with their lives. Chairs were set up in pairs all around the room with one set in the front and center of the room.

Once all of the new members were seated with their Sister-Mothers, the New Member Coordinator explained that she had sent a letter to each woman’s parents. She asked them to write letters to their daughters about how they felt as these women were on the verge of becoming full members of the sorority. Three of these letters were read aloud to the chapter. A woman who had been a legacy to another chapter on campus, started to cry when her Sister-Mother started to read the letter from the woman’s mother. Each woman had her letter read to her by her Sister-Mother. All of the women expressed some emotion over hearing the letters read aloud. Some were more expressive than others, but all showed that the ceremony and the letters had touched them in one way or another. The letters helped these women to realize that this decision to become initiated members of this sorority was going to impact their lives in ways they did not even know about. The letters from the parents meant that these women knew they were about to move on to another part of their lives and that their parents knew that this decision was a large one for their daughters. After every sister-mother had finished reading her letter, the ceremony was officially concluded. All of the new members remained at the house
afterwards to talk with other members. They were told not to stay out too late and told other rules they were expected to follow right before initiation.

**Initiation**

The next morning initiation was held at the campus’ Newman Center. Everyone was dressed in white gowns, with the exception of alumnae. The new members had formed a small group in the back corner of the room in which everyone was waiting before initiation started. When asked if they were nervous, they claimed they were not. One girl even joked that she was ready “for the goat,” referring to the long-running joke that they have to have an “interaction” with a goat as part of initiation. They were excited that they had finally made it this far and that all of the hard work was about to payoff. Once the initiation team was prepared to start the ceremony, the active members lined up while the new members were asked to wait in another room. The New Member Coordinator came for the new members shortly thereafter. They followed her into the room. Throughout the ceremony the new members learned about the meaning behind the sorority’s letters, badge, coat of arms, and the bond of Epsilon Pi, the basis on which the sorority was built. Throughout the ceremony they were presented with roses and asked to swear several oaths. At the end of the ceremony the Sister-Mothers pinned the new members with their sorority badges. Once this was done, their Sister-Mothers escorted the new members out of the room. The new members took the initiation service very seriously. They paid very good attention as they learned about the history behind the sorority and the rest of the ritual that they had not known about until now. They were quiet before they entered the room and did not speak unless asked to speak during the ceremony. Their posture was rigid and stiff as if they were nervous and excited at the
same time. At this point the official socialization process ended. Initiation marked their entrance into full-chapter membership, but the women still had plenty to learn about the chapter and how it functioned.

At this point the initial bond between the new members and the active members was completed. The chapter had shared their ritual and purpose with the new members. The rest of the chapter saw promise within these women, and the new members were rewarded with their status being changed from new members to active members. Although this first bond was complete, there would be many more bonds to be created or built upon during their time as members of the sorority.

Feast of Roses

That afternoon Feast of Roses was held at a local restaurant, providing the time the chapter needed to recognize the accomplishments of the new-member class. The parents of the new members were invited to attend the luncheon to witness the sorority that their daughters had chosen to join. All of the new members were still dressed in their white gowns while the rest of the chapter changed into business attire. Before the luncheon started, the chapter gathered in another room to have their pictures taken. The new members took pictures with their parents, their Sister-Mothers, with each other, and with various active members. During pictures the new members looked, for the first time, completely comfortable in their roles as members of the sorority; they were not nervous or unsure of what they were doing or how to behave. It seemed that initiation had given them the confidence they needed to be completely relaxed with the other active members and the sorority as a whole. The new members felt completely comfortable introducing their parents to the other members of the sorority.
The New Member Coordinator welcomed the parents and the chapter to the luncheon. The sorority sang a song and conducted a short prayer before lunch began. After lunch was finished, the New Member Coordinator told the parents about what their daughters had done over the last eight weeks and how proud the chapter was of them. She recognized the new members with various awards. These included the Pledge Class Spirit Award, the Most Athletic Award, the Scholarship Award, the Class President Award, the Sisterhood Award, and the Best New Member Award, which had been voted on by the new-member class. Last, the chapter gathered out in front of the restaurant to have their picture taken as a complete chapter now that these women had been initiated. The next night would begin their journey as active members in the sorority.

Post-Initiation (The Remainder of the Fall Semester)

The day after initiation the new members began their journey as active members of the sorority. They would now be involved in the regular meetings, recruitment, and event planning for the chapter.

First Regular Meeting

The next night the new members attended their first meeting as active members in the sorority. The new members found themselves at the end of the line when they lined up outside the meeting room to enter. This placement was done to maintain the order of the sorority hierarchy and made the new members aware that they still had much to learn about the sorority. They had to be prompted as to how to perform the knock and the handshake in order to be admitted to the chapter room. The women seemed nervous going into this meeting even though they had been attending meetings since they pledged.
They were unfamiliar with this setting so the nervousness and uncertainty returned as it had when they were at their first new-member meeting just eight weeks earlier.

Once inside they joined the circle that the other members had formed around the room. Ritual was conducted. The new members were used to the ritual process at this point. Opening ritual for the regular sorority meetings was the same as the opening ritual to which they were accustomed, except for one additional oath at the end of opening ritual. Once the opening ritual was finished, the new members moved to their seats as part of the chapter. The President called the meeting to order. The meeting was relatively short because it was a program meeting. Tonight was the beginning of Big Sister/Little Sister week. This process was the event to which the new members had been most looking forward. Beginning at this meeting and throughout the week the new members would receive clues and gifts from their Big Sisters about the women’s identities, beginning at this meeting. They would find out who their Big Sisters were at the end of next week’s meeting.

This first meeting was something different for the new members. While the new-member meetings had been structured, they were not prepared for the formality of the active-member meetings. This particular function was foreign to the new members as they had never been to an active-member meeting before this point. None of the new members said much during the meeting. They watched how the meeting ran and how the other members behaved at the meeting. They were still learning about being a member and how the interactions at the meetings helped the women keep the chapter running. This meeting offered a time to watch how the chapter functioned in this meeting setting.
They were educated in the business side of the sorority so that they would be able to keep the sorority running when it was their time to step up and become officers.

**Recruitment Event**

Three days later the sorority held an informal recruitment/public relations event. That night was the first time that the new members were able to participate in the membership-selection process. The event was held at the sorority house. The women talked with other potential new members about the sorority and what it has to offer. They cheered for the contestants in the mini pageant held as the public relations event. Afterwards, the new members joined the other members in the basement of the sorority house to vote on the potential new members. They got their chance not only to learn about the membership selection process but also to voice their opinions on each of the women and vote on whether or not they should be extended bids to join the sorority. They were taken aside at the beginning of the night to learn about the membership process. The membership process was the most important process to the sorority and was the one side of their responsibilities that could not be learned until after initiation.

Membership selection rested on chapter room secrecy and loyalty to the group. During membership selection the members were free to express their true opinions about the potential new members. They trusted each other not to repeat to these women what was said, for they might be asked to join the sorority. Membership selection was the most brutal part of the sorority process, and the new members quickly learned that membership selection was taken very seriously by this chapter and the chapter advisors.

During the bid session these women voiced their opinions on the women that they had met that night and about the type of women they felt the sorority should be seeking to
pledge. It was clear that they wanted to choose good women to join their sorority and that they had the future of the group in mind when choosing their future sisters. After the bid session was over, all of the new members went out in different groups to extend women bids to join the sorority. Being able to have a say in who would become members of the sorority and who would not become members was one of the benefits the new members could reap now that they were initiated members of the sorority.

**Second Regular Meeting**

Four days later the new members attended their first business meeting. At business meetings the chapter decided on events and activities in which to participate and what they would do and not do on campus and in the Greek community. The meeting started with the opening ritual, to which the new members had become quite accustomed at this point in the semester. Even though this night was only their second chapter meeting, they showed that they were comfortable with the opening ritual and that they respected that process.

Waiting for the women were meeting agendas (see Appendix D) to help them navigate through officer reports. That night the women were told that elections would be held in December. The election process was the time for the new members to shine; this would be their opportunity to take an office and to help run the sorority. During the meeting one of the new members and her Sister-Mother were given the “Smart Sister” Award from the Vice President-Scholarship for always studying together and making good grades. Through this presentation the new members realized that studying hard would be rewarded with recognition in front of the chapter. The chapter was informed about the Homecoming activities in which they would participate and where they needed
to be and when they needed to be there. Before the meeting was adjourned the "Happy Basket" was put out. The basket was used for the chapter to collect money for the sorority's philanthropy. The basket routine showed the new members that the members of the sorority were always expected to contribute to the sorority in any way they can. If a sister had something good she would like to share with the chapter or would like to recognize another sister for something she had done, the members would scrounge together a couple of cents or however much they could spare to put in the basket. One new member took part in the "Happy Basket" that night. This "Happy Basket" was one of the informal traditions started by the chapter and was the time to share personal information about their lives with the chapter. The new members took to this tradition immediately. They already trusted the rest of the chapter so they had no problem sharing events in their lives with the entire chapter. The meeting was then adjourned, but the Big Sister/ Little Sister candlelighting was being held after the meeting so no one left. The new members were becoming accustomed to the process of the meetings and were starting to gain confidence during the meeting. They were beginning to learn that the chapter would listen to their opinions and to what they had to say regarding the chapter and what they chose to do with their time, energy, and reputation.

Big/Lil Sister Reveal

The new members were escorted into the hallway while the rest of the chapter set themselves up for the candlelighting. Each new member had brought a candle to give to her Big Sister as a gift. The candle represents the loyalty that these two women already feel toward each other. The new members decorated the candles and they presented them to their Big Sisters once their identities were revealed. They were all nervous about
finding out which woman their Big Sister would turn out to be. One by one they were led into the chapter room. The remaining members, who were still out in the hallway, kept trying to peek into the room while another member was finding out who her Big Sister was. The active members formed a large circle around the room. The New Member Coordinator escorted the women around the room while the chapter sang various sorority songs. Different members would blow out the girl’s candle, trying to convince her that she was her Big Sister. The chapter had decided that only two “fake” Big Sisters would be allowed to blow out the candle before the real Big Sister would blow out the candle. After the second girl had blown out the candle, the new member’s real Big Sister would run up behind her and blow out the candle. This exchange went on until all of the new members had received their Big Sisters. One woman was very nervous about finding out which woman her Big Sister was. She revealed that she really wanted only one woman to be her Big Sister and that she would be extremely disappointed if this woman were not her Big Sister. This process of Big/Lil reveal is a tradition with this sorority and is crucial to the socialization process. They always try to “psych” the new members out about the identity of their real Big Sisters. This “psyching” was an interaction that the new members would see throughout the night and, in turn, they will be able to do this action to their Little Sisters once they are chosen to be a Big Sister. Everyone who was standing in that room had been “psyched” by her big sister, and it would be something that the new members would do to their little sisters in the future. This process helped the new members to see that they could have fun with each other but still be respectful to each other and to the sorority.
One interesting addendum to this night was one girl's discovery of who her Big Sister was. As she traveled around the room, two women blew out her candle. When the third woman blew out her candle, this new member was visibly upset at the selection of her Big Sister. It was clear that this woman was upset and angry because this woman was not whom she had wanted to be her Big Sister. After all of the new members had found out who their Big Sisters were, there was one more candlelighting. As the candle passed around the room, the sorority sang. Eventually the candle reached one woman. She took the candle, walked it over to this new member, and informed her that she was her real Big Sister and that she had been fooled into thinking that this other woman was her Big Sister. Needless to say, this woman was very relieved and happy.

**Third Regular Meeting**

The next week was a program meeting. Two different programs were held that night. The first was a "fashion" show of sorts. This program showed the chapter how they were expected to dress and present themselves on campus and at meetings. The second program was about elections. The President read the responsibilities of each officer and what that office entailed and urged the members to start thinking about offices for which they would like to run because elections would be held in two weeks. They were told that they would fill out officer interest forms at the next meeting. By filling out the officer interest forms, the new members were able to decide what kind of role each wanted to take in the sorority and how much time they wanted to spend as officers for the sorority because some offices take up a lot more time than others. The new members took this process very seriously. They asked other members about the various offices and what the office responsibilities entailed. It was clear that this new-member class wanted
to make a large impact on the sorority and that they wanted to help the chapter move forward.

These two programs helped to reinforce two different ideals and standards in the new members. The first program, the fashion show, helped the new members to visualize appropriate and inappropriate dress when out on campus representing the sorority. The program showed the new members that people will associate them with the sorority, even if they are not in a representative capacity, and that the members need to make sure that they are doing everything they can to make a good impression and have appropriate interaction with these other students. The second program, the elections, showed the new members that they were expected to step up and help keep the sorority running. Through the election process the sorority would begin to get back from the new members what had been given to them up until now. The new members would help lead the chapter into the future and keep the group successful for many years to come.

**Homecoming**

Five days later Homecoming weekend started. On Friday night the annual pep rally was held on campus the night before the Homecoming game. Every campus organization was invited to attend, but it was mostly the Greek organizations in attendance because they are the groups who participate in all of the Homecoming activities. The rally was the first chance the new members had to see Greek life at its most active and finest. The chapter gathered in one spot of the amphitheater to cheer for two of their sisters. One was representing the chapter, and another was representing another campus organization. The band played the fight song and performed some small routines, as did the dance team and the cheerleaders. As the Homecoming candidates
were announced, each organization cheered for their representative. After the
Homecoming candidates were announced, the MC announced the winners from the past
week’s activities, including the best Banner, the best Float, and the most Spirit at the pep
rally. The rally was not a mandatory event for the chapter, but all but one new member
attended the rally. In fact, the chapter stayed for the entire event, even after it started to
rain. After the rally was completed, they went back to the sorority house to hang out and
watch movies together and to prepare for the alumnae brunch that was held the next
morning. The Homecoming activities helped the new members interact with the other
members on a deeper level. Homecoming was the time the sorority came together as a
group to show their support for the university. By showing this support the new members
were helping to facilitate the good impression the sorority wants to maintain on campus
and were giving back to the sorority through their involvement with and support for the
university.

The next morning the chapter held an alumnae brunch at the sorority house. The
brunch was the first time the new members had to interact with older alumnae that they
might not have otherwise had a chance to meet. The new members seemed nervous
around the alumnae members who were present. They would only talk to these women if
there were other members involved in the conversation as well. The chapter provided
food for everyone to eat. The members went outside to have their pictures taken with
each other and as a group. The brunch lasted for two hours. After the brunch was over
the chapter went over to tailgate before the football game. Tents had been pitched on the
lawn across from the football stadium for everyone on campus to gather together and
tailgate. Members walked from tent to tent talking to people that they knew. They
eventually made their way over to the football game to cheer for their Homecoming candidate. That night those women who were not going to fraternity dances had planned to go the step show to cheer for their sister sorority and then on to a Halloween party that one of the members was hosting at her apartment.

Through their interaction with the alumnae members, the new members learned more about the history and previous members of this chapter. They saw the pride that the alumnae members had for the sorority and its current members. By interacting with these alumnae, the new members learned that the sisterhood and the loyalty for the sorority lasts long after one graduates from college. They were able to witness how the sorority continues to give back to its members even after they have finished their time as active members.

**Fourth Regular Meeting**

At the next meeting the election process began. After opening ritual and roll call the entire chapter filled out officer interest and nomination forms (see Appendix E). This process was the time when the chapter members could nominate themselves and each other for various sorority offices. Becoming an officer was the best way for the new members to give back to the sorority. By leading the chapter into the future, these new members would ensure that they would be respected by other members of the sorority and by other students on campus. The chapter was informed about the upcoming philanthropic event to raise money for the sorority's cause. They were also informed about letters day and informal recruitment. After all of the officer reports were finished, the chapter proceeded to the happy basket. One new member participated. The meeting was then adjourned.
Recruitment Event

Three days later an informal recruitment event was held. It was held at the sorority house. This event consisted of the chapter members meeting potential new members. Chapter members showed these women the houses, a short slide show that was used during formal recruitment, and a video that had been recorded at the Spring Sing event from the previous Greek week. Once the potential new members left, the chapter members proceeded to the basement to vote on these women. The new members became much more assertive in their opinions on these women and on the membership selection process. They made their views very clear and were not reticent to express how they felt about these women. The new members wanted to make sure that they pledged good women while keeping their reputation intact. This recruitment event just stressed even further that these new members were taking full advantage of their sorority membership and making sure that they pledged women who would care about the sorority as much as they did.

“Pajama Jam” Dance

Two days later a theme dance was held. The theme was “Pajama Jam.” Each girl and her date came dressed in their pajamas. The girls seemed much more comfortable at this dance than they had been at the first one. When they arrived at the dance, they came right in and began dancing. The girls interacted with other members, the newest new member class, and the alumnae that attended the dance. The interactions and behaviors of the new members at this dance were very different than they were at the first dance. The new members were comfortable with the sorority. They no longer felt that they had to wait for the other members of the sorority to start having fun; they were able to start
enjoying the dance on their own. While they still seemed a little reserved and let the active members have most of the control of the dance, the new members were relaxed and seemed to be having fun from the minute they got to the dance. The DJ played the songs that were important to the members, just as he had done at the first dance. The members danced around and sang those songs as loudly as they could. It was clear that these songs were a part of the sorority’s social culture and were expected to be played at every dance.

It was clear at this event that the new members felt they had cemented their positions within the chapter and that they could express themselves more than they had when they were at the first dance. One occurrence serves as an example. One of the new members and an alumna got into an altercation at the dance. The alumna confronted the new member about things she had heard this woman had been saying about her. The new member got very defensive and verbally attacked the alumna. The alumna retaliated, and a fight broke out in the bathroom. The fight was broken up by one of the advisors, and both women were sent home from the dance right away. Other than that, the dance seemed to go well, and all of the new members had a lot of fun.

**Fifth Regular Meeting/Officer Elections**

The following Sunday officer elections were held. Every member who had voice and vote elected the new officers who would serve for the next calendar year. Each member was given a ballot with the names of the women who were interested in each office. Each woman had her chance to take her name off of the various offices and to place emphasis on the offices she was most interested in having. Elections then proceeded. The officers selected, in order, were President, Vice President Member
Development, Vice President Scholarship, Vice President Recruitment, Vice President Operations, Vice President Finance, Vice President Campus Relations, the President’s team officers, the Vice President Member Development’s team officers, the Vice President Scholarship’s team officers, the Vice President Recruitment’s team officers, the Vice President Operations’ team officers, the Vice President Finance’s team officers, and the Vice President Campus Relation’s team officers. All of the new members were present to vote on the officers. At the end of the night the new members held various offices, including the Vice President Campus Relations, who sits on the Executive Council, and the Continuous Open Bidding Coordinator, who helps to recruit women throughout the semester. All of the new members were excited about their offices and could not wait to get started on their duties. Being elected to an office gave the new members a sense of purpose within the sorority. The new members were now given the chance to show the chapter that they had made the right decision when they decided to extend them a bid.

**Sixth Regular Meeting**

The next week a business meeting was held. The President informed the chapter that officer training had to be completed by the beginning of December. This training would entail the exiting officer training the incoming officer on her officer responsibilities and what she would be expected to do while in this office. One new member, the Continuous Open Bidding Coordinator, had already started as the officer. She had already planned events for the rest of the semester and into the spring semester. By taking control of their offices at this early stage, the new members were showing the rest of the chapter that they were ready to give back to the sorority. They wanted to show
the chapter just how much the sorority meant to them and how much they wanted to see the chapter succeed. As a group the chapter voted on whom they wanted to see hold each Panhellenic office. They were told about what they would be expected to wear at the pageant. After the happy basket the meeting adjourned.

**Philanthropic Event**

The next night was the annual sorority philanthropic event. The women held a pageant, but it is not a typical pageant. The pageant was a “fun” pageant; this one was for men to dress in drag. The women wore jeans and their jerseys. Before the contestants and audience arrived, the chapter decorated the stage with lights, signs, and balloons. Several new members were in front folding programs and waiting for the audience to arrive. Several new members were selected to be the escorts for the men. There were three rounds: a letters round, a talent round, and an eveningwear round. Seven men participated in the pageant for various organizations. Once the winner was announced, the chapter encircled him on the stage and sang one of the sorority songs to him. The night was a success for the chapter; they raised about one thousand dollars for the philanthropy, and everyone who participated and who was in attendance seemed to have a good time. None of the new members was nervous, but this lack of nervousness may have been because their sisters surrounded them and they were not in front of the audience. The philanthropy night was their first chance to get involved with the work that the sorority does for a good cause. If the sorority had a good night with this pageant, then the members would be rewarded with a good name on campus. They were able to see how much work goes into planning an event like this, how much fun it can be, and how much money can be raised in one night. Helping to raise money for the philanthropy
gave the new members a sense of community service and pride in the philanthropic organization of the sorority. The success of this event built upon the pride that the new members had for the sorority and the reputation of the sorority in the eyes of other group on campus and International Headquarters.

**Seventh/Eighth Regular Meeting**

Six days later the sorority held their annual Sisterhood/Thanksgiving potluck dinner instead of the regular meeting. The potluck was very informal. These women brought food to share with each other. The members just sat around talking and enjoying each other’s company before leaving for Thanksgiving break. The informality of the evening represented a sense of comfort. By attending this event, the new members showed the rest of the sorority that they were fitting into the sorority.

When the women returned from Thanksgiving, they attended their last meeting of the semester. It was held at the sorority house. Officer installation was completed at the beginning of the meeting. The outgoing President gave certificates to all of the officers that had served under her. The President then began the installation process. In reverse order of election each officer approached the President. She repeated the oath of office. After the oath was completed, the President announced her as that officer and handed her the officer notebook for that office. The installation process went on until the President was installed. The new officers then took their places at the head table. All of the new members were extremely excited to take on the responsibilities of their offices. All were ready to make an impact on the chapter and on the women that would become their sisters in the future. The new officers then gave their officer reports, which included the Vice President Recruitment announcing the dates for all of the recruitment workshops.
that would happen the next semester. The members then did the happy basket, the meeting was adjourned, and the chapter went on their way. The next meeting would be held at the beginning of the semester.

These last two meetings gave the new members a sense of sisterhood to take home over the Christmas break. They were now full-fledged members of the sorority and were expected to represent themselves well even when they were in their hometowns. The new members left the fall semester with a group of sisters with whom they had developed a deep bond. The new members were ready for the break from school and sorority, but they were also ready to come back and gear up for a successful spring semester.

Post-initiation (the spring semester)

The women returned for classes in the middle of January. Along with the meetings and other regular sorority events, this sorority would also put the majority of their focus on recruitment, not only continuous opening bidding and informal recruitment but fall recruitment as well. The research for this semester focused on the recruitment process for this chapter and how the new member class fit into this recruitment process. It dealt with how they felt about expressing their opinions about possible new sisters, how this chapter dealt with the issue of recruitment, and how the new members became involved with the recruitment process. Their feelings and emotions were seen somewhat after these women were initiated, but it became even more clear as they began to plan recruitment for the fall.
Ninth Regular Meeting

On January 21 the first meeting of the semester was held. This meeting was a business meeting so the officers could set out their plans for the semester. All of the recruitment events, social events, and other events were announced and added to the chapter calendar. The interesting thing to note here at the beginning of the semester was that two of the new members had to be replaced as officers because they did not make adequate grades. By not making adequate grades these women had to give up their offices and would not have voice or vote for the entire semester, which did not make these women happy. Their attitude had begun to change ever so slightly because they were frustrated and disappointed that they had not done what the rest of the chapter expected of them.

The change in attitude of these new members was unexpected. They were two of the most excited new members. They had planned to take the sorority by storm and help the group to become one of the most successful groups on campus. Not making adequate grades meant that these women would have to wait for a whole semester before they could make the impact that they wanted to make when they left for Christmas break. They were frustrated that they were going to have to wait until the fall semester in order to have a voice in the decisions of the chapter.

Recruitment Workshop

The next night the first recruitment workshop of the semester was held in the student center. The workshop was an overview of formal recruitment and how it would work. The Vice President Recruitment talked about what they would not be wearing, as set down by International Headquarters and the Recruitment Advisor. Two of the new
members were named as Party Chairs for fall recruitment. These appointments meant they would be planning one of the parties and would be responsible for the decorations, the set up and clean up of the room, and the flow of the party. This appointment was a reward for hard work as new members and showed that the chapter trusted them with these important recruitment appointments. The chapter was divided into three groups, and the party chairs rotated groups to get their input on each individual party. The new members were able to give their input into what needed to be changed and what should stay the same. The chapter wanted these women very involved in the planning of the upcoming recruitment because they were the members who had been through the process the most recently. The new members were expected to participate fully in the planning of fall recruitment. The active members wanted their input. By asking their opinions, the active members were showing these women that they were wanted and that their opinions mattered to the rest of the chapter. These opinions and input from the new members would help the chapter make the necessary changes for recruitment. The rest of the chapter hoped to reap the benefits of these women who had fresh ideas about what the sorority should do at recruitment.

After they were finished talking about fall recruitment, they began planning the upcoming spring recruitment event. They had three nights to fill with events and getting-to-know-you activities. The chapter eventually decided on a “Getting-to-Know-the-Sorority” night, a “Mardi Gras” theme night, and a Sisterhood night. Once these decisions had been made, the women were free to leave.

Recruitment Training School
The next weekend the first Recruitment Training School was an all day workshop held at the sorority house. The day started with a discussion about membership selection. The membership coordinator discussed how membership selection works in the fall and how it would work for the upcoming spring recruitment because the circumstances for each are very different. Next the chapter discussed their image and what they could do to promote their image on campus. The women got to air how they felt about the previous semester and what they would like to see change within the sisterhood for the upcoming semester and definitely for fall formal recruitment. Then each set of party chairs discussed their parties. They told the chapter what they would be wearing, what the conversation would entail, and what the decorations would look like. After this discussion was finished, the chapter broke for lunch.

Once the chapter returned from lunch, they began discussing the upcoming spring recruitment, which was starting in three days. The Vice President Recruitment and her advisor discussed with the chapter what they would be wearing and what they should talk about when the potential new members arrived each night. Because some of the new members in the chapter had concerns about conversation, the older members broke up into groups with the new members and helped them with ideas about topics of conversation that should be covered at the parties. The first night the women were told to talk about the benefits of the sorority and what the sorority can offer them. After that they were told that they needed to work on building bonds with the guests so that these women would want to pledge the sorority. Before the meeting was adjourned, the Membership Advisor went over the membership selection process again and answered any questions that the chapter might have thought of since the morning or questions that
might not have been answered in the morning. The workshop was then adjourned. The workshop gave the new members a detailed idea of what was expected of them when recruiting women to become members of the chapter. They were expected to build bonds with these women just as the rest of the chapter had done with them during fall recruitment. They were expected to show these potential members what the sorority had to offer them and how the sorority could benefit them if they chose to join.

**Spring Recruitment**

Three days later the spring recruitment event began and was held over three consecutive days. The first night was the “Getting-to-know-the-Sorority” night. The members wore stitched-letter shirts and khaki pants. The event was held in the student center so the chapter could set up tables with sorority information on them. The members went through the process of rotation groups, a process used extensively during fall recruitment. This event was the first time the new-member class had to deal with the idea of rotation groups. They were placed in a specific order and were told that they bumped the woman who was standing behind them. This process gave the new members a chance to get a taste for rotation groups and how they would work on a larger scale in the fall. The new members did not have a problem falling into the rotation groups and seemed to grasp the concept quickly. The event lasted for an hour and a half. Once the potential new members left, the chapter voted on these women, and then they were free to leave.

The second night of spring recruitment was a theme night. Tonight’s theme was “Mardi Gras.” The chapter wore red shirts and black pants. They wore Mardi Gras beads and had decorated the room with Mardi Gras memorabilia. Tonight the chapter provided food because this event would take a little longer than the event of the night
before. Around the room tables were set up with various games. One table was a Blackjack table, one was an Uno table, and one was a miscellaneous table with various different games that could be played. The chapter divided into groups and sat at the tables or milled around talking to the potential new members. The new members began the night in enthusiastically, interacting with the potential new members and playing games. They made sure that these women had plenty to drink and eat and were having a good time. The two new members who did not make adequate grades also interacted, but they also, for part of the night, talked to an alumna about the chapter. The first new member talked to the alumna about the sorority’s image and what should be done about it and how it definitely needed to change for fall recruitment. This conversation lasted about twenty-five minutes. Once that conversation was finished, the second new member came up to the alumna to talk to her about a situation that she was having with another woman, who just happened to be part of the new-member class. This conversation lasted about twenty minutes. By the end of the night the women had a good feeling about whom they wanted as members and whom they did not want as members. They voted on the women who attended that night and then were free to leave.

The next night was the final night of spring recruitment, and the event was held at the sorority house. The potential new members joined the chapter for a “Southern Night.” The chapter wore stitched-letter shirts and jeans. The chapter provided fried chicken, mashed potatoes, rolls, dessert, and a movie; the women watched “Sweet Home Alabama” together. Only one low point for a new member occurred during the night. One of the advisors discovered that a new member had separated herself from the chapter and was sitting with her Big Sister in her bedroom watching television. Because this
event was mandatory, these women were supposed to be in the living room with the potential new members. The advisor confronted this woman and her Big Sister. The new member left the bedroom without much hesitation and was instructed not to go back into that bedroom. This new member witnessed how members were punished if they were not willing to participate fully in the sorority events. Once the movie was finished, the potential new members were give tours of the houses. Once the potential new members left, the chapter proceeded to the basement for the membership selection processes. Without much discussion the chapter extended eight bids that night, and all eight were accepted.

These three days gave the new members a taste of what recruitment would be like in the fall. They had to learn how to pick out the cues that these women wanted to be members of the sorority and whether they would be beneficial members to the sorority. They had to weigh the costs and the benefits of each woman in order to decide whether she would be appropriate to receive a bid to join the sorority.

**Pledge Ceremony – Spring New Member Class**

Three days later the pledge ceremony was held for the women who had been pledged after spring recruitment. This ceremony was the first chance the new members from the fall had to sit back and see this ceremony from an active-member perspective. One of the new members was a Sister-Mother to one spring new member. The ceremony lasted about twenty minutes. After the ceremony the chapter surrounded the newest new members and performed the sorority chant. The new members had learned that this informal tradition was a standard celebratory activity for the sorority and that it was important that every member learn the words to the chant. These new members were
then excused but not before they were given gifts from various chapter members. The ceremony represented the passing of the torch for this fall new-member class. They were no longer the brand new members who would be spoiled by the rest of the chapter. They were now expected to treat the new members just as they had been treated when they pledged the sorority.

**Tenth Regular Meeting**

This night’s chapter meeting was an important one; a visitor from Headquarters had been visiting the chapter and had left that afternoon. The executive council members all sat at the front table to discuss with the chapter what they were going to be doing differently and what new programs were to be implemented at the request of Headquarters, including a new-standards program and new-member program. Each chapter member was given a copy of the most recent chapter bylaws so that each member, including all new members, would know the rules and would know what they would be expected to do and how they were expected to act as representatives of the sorority. This meeting was one that the new members had never experienced before. They had to abide by the rules set down by Headquarters and had to trust in the fact that the women who ran International Headquarters had the best interests of the chapters in mind when they made these changes and that these changes would help the sorority become a successful chapter on campus.

**Recruitment Workshop**

Two days later another recruitment workshop was held. The Vice President Recruitment began gathering party plans from the party chairs. She handed out “Rush for Results.” “Rush for Results” was the handbook provided by Headquarters and had
everything that the chapter needed to know about fall recruitment. The handbook dealt with conversation, decorations, attire, and the flow of the parties. The chapter went over the handbook in detail. The Vice President Recruitment fielded questions from the chapter about conversation, attire, and general questions about recruitment. After all of the questions had been answered, the workshop was adjourned. This workshop just added to the amount of information that the new members had to know for fall recruitment.

**Initiation**

Six days later initiation was held. The ceremony was held at the sorority house. There was one woman who had pledged right before the fall-new member class got initiated so she was separated into another new-member class. This initiation was the first time the new members had to sit back and see initiation from the active side of it. None of the new members was on the initiation team, but the new member who was serving as the Vice President Campus Relations served as a guard. Another new member was also the Sister-Mother of one of the women being initiated so she played an active role in the ceremony. The fall new-member class got a chance to sit and take in what they may have missed during their initiation ceremony. They seemed surprised at all that was taught and could be learned at initiation. They talked about how they had missed this and missed that. They were glad that they got the chance to sit through another initiation. The ceremony lasted about an hour. After the ceremony was completed, the women were free to go. Watching this woman become a full member of the sorority was another milestone for the sorority. They were no longer considered the “babies” of the sorority. They were expected to help this woman become accustomed to the sorority and
to the way that the sorority members conducted themselves at meetings and at other events. They were moving from the role of student to the role of teacher based on the interactions they had with active members before they were initiated.

**Recruitment Event**

Two days later another continuous open bidding event was held. This one was held at the sorority house. The chapter gathered to watch the season finale of "The Bachelorette," and they invited potential new members to join them. One of the new members brought a good friend of hers whom the chapter seemed to like instantly. They all seemed to get along very well. After another small event a couple of days later, this woman was extended a bid, and she accepted. This event just reinforced the standards that the new members had for women that wanted to become members of the sorority.

**Recruitment Workshop**

One week later the third recruitment workshop of the semester was held. Once again this was held at the student center. Right before the workshop, there was a pledge ceremony for one woman. After the ceremony the chapter followed this one woman out of the room and performed the sorority chant. The fact that the chapter continued to be able to pledge new women seemed to give the new-member class a sense of pride and satisfaction in the sorority. They were proud of their sisters, and they were proud to wear their letters and represent the sorority. Afterwards they went back into the room. The Continuous Open Bidding (COB) Coordinator started off talking about the new way the chapter was going to conduct the continuous open bidding process. The chapter was split into seven groups. Each member of each group was responsible for bringing at least one woman to an event. The chapter was told that there would be several rewards for
meeting the challenge that had been put before them. If every woman in the chapter brought at least one woman to an event, the entire chapter would receive a free pizza party. Also, each member who got a woman to pledge would receive a gift certificate to her favorite store. The chapter was also informed that if they pledged twenty-five women that semester, the alumnae would pay for their Senior Sendoff dance so that the event would be entirely free for the chapter.

Once the COB Coordinator was finished, the Vice President Recruitment and her advisor informed the chapter of certain things that Headquarters wanted changed for fall recruitment. The Vice President Recruitment had attended the Leadership Conference the weekend before, and at the conference she met with specialists who informed her of what the chapter needed to change for recruitment. They would be wearing red-letter shirts for the first round of parties and red dresses for the Preference party. After the Vice President Recruitment finished her report, the workshop was ended. The purpose of this workshop was to reinforce in the new members and the rest of the chapter how important it was to continue pledging new sisters. The new members had taken this idea to heart before this workshop. They were on a mission to pledge women who wanted to give themselves to the sorority as this new member class had done when they became members.

Alumnae Appreciation Brunch

Four days later the chapter held an Alumnae Appreciation Brunch at the sorority house. The members wore meeting attire and provided the food for the alumnae. Only three of the new members attended the event because it was not mandatory. These three women mingled with alumnae with whom they were familiar but had to be prompted to
go talk to some of the older alumnae they did not know. Even when they introduced
themselves, there was a lull in the conversation unless there was an older member
present. Eventually the new members moved away from these women and rejoined a
group of just active members or active members and the alumnae that they knew well.
This event lasted three hours.

For some reason the new members seemed more reserved at this event than they
had been at the Homecoming event. It may have been because there were fewer active
members in attendance and they had to pick up more of the slack than they had had to at
the Homecoming events. The new members seemed to revert back to the behavior they
exhibited before they were initiated; they allowed the rest of the members to do most of
the talking and entertaining of the alumnae members while they receded into the
background. This behavior had not been seen for a couple of months.

Formal

The biggest event of the year was the sorority formal. The dance was held on
March 14 at a local hall. The women had been looking forward to this event since the
beginning of the semester. This dance was the event that the new members had been told
about since they became new members back in August. They had been told about how
much fun the formal was last year so the new members were very excited about this
dance.

They spent the whole day preparing for that night. After classes were finished for
the day, all of the new members prepared for the dance. Most went with other members
of the sorority to get their hair done. All of the new members were joining other groups
of sisters who were going out to dinner before the dance. All of the women had dates for
the evening. At this event the women were completely at ease and comfortable in the sorority. They had had six months to become accustomed to the group and the various individual members, and at this dance this comfort showed through the actions of the new members. None of these women hesitated to come in immediately and start dancing. They intermingled with other members and alumnae who were present. They even felt comfortable enough to include the visitor from headquarters in their conversations.

What was most interesting about this dance was how the fall new members interacted with the spring-new-member class. It was clear that this new-member class felt uncomfortable and unsure of how to behave and what to do at this dance. The fall new-member class took it upon themselves to make sure that these women were included in conversations, pictures, and dancing. They introduced the newest new members to the alumnae and other members that they did not know as well. It was clear that the new members made sure that the spring new-member class felt as though they could express themselves at this dance. The dance went on just as the previous two dances had gone on. The DJ played the songs that were important to the sorority. There were now some new songs in the mix because of events that had taken place throughout the semester and events that were coming up for the chapter during the rest of the semester. The most noticeable of the songs were the songs that the chapter had chosen to use during Spring Sing, the annual singing and dancing show that kicks off Greek Week. When the DJ played these songs, the women who were participating in Spring Sing got out on the floor and performed the routines for the rest of the chapter. This behavior helped the chapter to see how well they were going to be represented at Spring Sing and how one event can make a seemingly unimportant song become important to the chapter.
It was clear through this event that the new members had come full circle. They started out in August as individual women who were unsure of their position in college. Through the various events over the last six months, meetings, sisterhood activities, social activities, recruitment, and initiation and ritual, these new members had been completely socialized into the roles of sorority members. It was clear that the new members had become at ease with the women that they were expected to be. The new members had accepted the role of sorority member in such a way that the role had become part of who they were. By interacting with the new members the way that the chapter had interacted with them at the Active/New Member dance, the fall new-member class ensured that these newest members would move down the same road that they had just traveled six months earlier. They ensured that the pledges were seen as complete members of the group and that all future members would travel down the same path that they had to become fully socialized members of this sorority.

The socialization and bonding had come full circle for the new members at this point in the year. They had become full-fledged members of the sorority. They had started building bonds with each other and with the other members of the sorority from the start and had continued those bonds throughout the year. They were willing to help the newest members start their own bonds and socialization by teaching them the things that they had been taught, from sorority education to the cheers and chants to the all-important songs that had to be played at their dances. The sorority completed their important task with this class; they had taken these different women and made them into a cohesive group. They had shown them that the bond of sisterhood was the most important thing to the members of the sorority so it had to be important to them. The
new members took what they learned from the chapter and implemented it in their lives, thus tweaking their self-perceptions and the perceptions that are given off to others. Without even realizing it these women had socialized themselves into a culture that would become an integral part of who they would become as women and adults.
CHAPTER VI
ANALYSIS

All of this research boils down to the socialization process. How are these women socialized into the organization? Is the process successful? Do these women feel as though they are fully integrated members of the organization? It is through these formal and informal processes and traditions of the organization that the new members learned about the organization, their place in the organization, and how to become the members that the chapter expected them to be. Through the use of the ideas of scholarship, leadership, social aspects, sisterhood interactions, and philanthropy (Alpha Gamma Delta 1999b), the active members of the sorority helped the new members socialize fully into the sorority.

Formal

The formal processes are what most people think of when they think about Greek organizations. These are the meetings, the recruitment processes, and, most important, the initiation that all members of the sorority must attend. These are the processes that are important to a sorority member.

Meetings

Meetings occur once a week for the duration of a person's membership in the organization. The meetings provide the time when the members get together to make decisions that will impact the sorority. The meeting is the business aspect of the sorority.
There is a hierarchy and chain of command that is to be followed. There are reports, votes, decisions, and a learning process that happen at these meetings.

When the new members started in the sorority, they started at a meeting. They were immediately put into a formal setting. This immediate inclusion helped the new members to realize that while the sorority was a place in which they would make life-long friends, it was still a business, and certain things had to be taken care of. From the very first meeting the importance of paying dues and being prompt with money was stressed to these women. To maintain a fully functioning business, money must be the first priority; and by discussing money and dues first, it was made clear to the new members that they were expected to help the sorority run.

The new member meetings helped the women become accustomed to the tradition of weekly meetings. Even though they were not full members yet, their meetings were conducted just as the chapter meetings were conducted, and they opened these meetings just as the active members did. Officer reports were done first, followed by education and announcements. They elected new member class officers so that there would be a small hierarchy within the new-member class. This structure also helped the new members stay apprised of what the active members were doing and in what they were involved. By giving the new members a sense of order and structure, they ensured that the new members would fit into the sorority in the way expected by the chapter—by learning and following the rules of the meetings and having a certain amount of respect for the rest of the sisters and the hierarchy that was established within the organization.

The purpose of the new member period was to educate the women in the purpose behind the organization. The education process was crucial because if the new members
did not learn about the sorority and the purpose and function behind the organization, then they would not be able to pass on that knowledge to future members. In learning about the history of the sorority, they learned to respect the sorority as a whole. When they learned to respect the sorority, they would respect the sisters and their individual membership within the organization. Once they started to respect the sorority and the sisters, the new members would begin to give themselves and what they had to offer back to the sorority. When they started to give back to the sorority, the chapter began to receive the benefits of having extended bids to these women. By instilling respect for the sorority in the new members, the chapter created a new sense of loyalty in these women that did not exist before they joined the group. This respect made the new members want to stay in the sorority and made them proud to be members of the sorority. By making sure that the sorority was entrenched in the minds and the lives of these new members, the active members ensured that the new members became very loyal to the chapter and the organization in a very short amount of time.

Barely three weeks into their membership the new members wanted to make the chapter a place to which other women would want to belong. They were actively participating in all aspects of chapter life. They joined the flag football team, actively recruited other new members, and made themselves visible on campus. While they were not completely comfortable representing the sorority on their own, they were more than willing to join other sisters in their representation of the group on campus and in the community. This representation showed that the group had been able to make an impact on the women in a short period of time, and the new member meetings were a major part of that process.
While there was a structure to the new-member meetings, the New Member Coordinator gave the new members some control over the meetings by letting them be in charge. When they became initiated members, they not only lost their meetings, but they lost the control and atmosphere to which they had become accustomed. The New Member Coordinator made sure that the women had fun while they learned about the background of the organization. When these women became active members, they started attending the regular chapter meetings. These meetings had a completely different feel and tone to them, and it took a little while for the women to become used to them.

The new women were aware that, although they were now full members and had an opportunity to help run the sorority, they still had much to learn. Because they were the last group of women initiated, they were placed at the end of the line, figuratively and literally. They were the last women in line when the chapter lined up outside of the chapter room to begin opening ritual and the meeting. They also sat at the back of the chapter room, behind the rest of the members. Their placement at the sorority meetings was arranged so that they could learn about how the chapter meetings were run. From where they sat they could see the rest of the chapter and the officers. They could see how the other members behaved at the meetings and how they were expected to behave. After initiation they were full members of the sorority and had voice and vote at the meetings to express their opinions about the chapter. They would have to remain dedicated and loyal to the sorority and would have to be willing to learn about the inner workings of the chapter meetings before they would be allowed to move forward in the organization. This education instilled a sense of order and professionalism in the new members and
showed them that they were expected to work for their position in the sorority, even after they were initiated.

These chapter meetings were much more formal than the new member meetings had been. The sisters addressed each other in formal and professional ways. There was no unnecessary chatter and banter between the officers and the other members when the officers were giving their reports. Only women who had met their obligations to the sorority – making grades and being current on all payments – could have a voice and vote in chapter meeting. The new members knew that they had to be responsible for their personal actions in order to be able to participate fully in the sorority. This knowledge instilled in them a sense of obligation to the chapter that may not have existed before they joined the sorority. These women knew that they had to keep up on all aspects of their lives in order to be able to give their full effort to the organization. The chapter meetings helped the new members retain some order in their hectic college lives. The structure of the chapter meetings taught these women how to structure other parts of their lives in order to maximize their time without having to sacrifice most of what they wanted to do. The chapter meetings helped these women grow into the roles of a young adults by helping them to run a successful organization, a quality that will be beneficial when they graduate and are working in the real world. The meetings played a large role in helping the new members become socialized to college, to the sorority, and to their adult lives.

Initiation

Initiation is what most people think of when they think of Greek organizations. Initiation was the culmination of the new-member period. These women had proven
themselves to the chapter, and their rewards were initiation and elevation from new member status to active-member status.

Through the eight-week new-member period the new members had learned about the sorority and how to become good members. During this time the new members had begun to change from being distinct individuals to women who would represent the ideals and standards of this sorority for the rest of their lives. While they knew that they would be able to maintain who they were, they also knew that they had to become a woman that the chapter could be proud to call a sister.

During initiation, the new members learned why the sorority was so special and so important to the rest of the members. They learned the meanings of the symbols that the chapter held dear. They learned that, if they ever divulged the meaning of these symbols, they would be held responsible for their actions. With initiation came a new responsibility. The new members were entrusted with all of the secrets of the sorority. By entrusting these women with the ritual of the sorority, the active members were telling the new members that they had earned their place in the chapter. The active members were also telling the new members that they were expected to give back to the chapter that had already given them so much and that would give them much more in the future. With initiation came the responsibility to become the members and the women that the chapter expected them to become. The new members knew that initiation meant that they had to give up part of that which they had previously been in order to make room for the sorority members that they would become. They understood this process going into initiation and had no problem agreeing to these standards. Even before initiation the new
members had already started to take on the traits that the chapter expected them to have. Agreeing to do so in a ceremonial sorority setting was just a formality.

Ceremonies

Ceremonies are an integral part of a sorority. They allow the members to learn about ritual and what the sorority stands for. Ceremonies remain the same throughout the years and from chapter to chapter. They all begin the same way—the new members are kept outside until the rest of the members are prepared to start the event. The ceremonies were even set up in similar ways. The members formed a semicircle around the room. There was a small table set up in front of the room with candles placed on it. The candles varied in color and number depending on what ceremony was being conducted. The Red ceremony had three red candles on the table. The Buff Ceremony had two yellow candles on the table. The Green Ceremony had three green candles on the table. The rest of the ceremonies used two white candles. The décor of the table helped the new members differentiate between ceremonies.

Once the new members entered the room, they were positioned in a semicircle between the active members and the table. This positioning helped the new members to realize that they were the focus of the ceremony and that they were expected to learn about that ceremony and how it was important to their membership and education process. Their position at the ceremonies also helped them to realize that the active members cared about their membership and that they wanted the new members to learn from the ceremonies.

Because the ceremonies were such a structured part of the sorority, attire was expected to be nothing less than professional. All members, new and active, were
expected to dress properly. Nothing less than business attire would be tolerated at these ceremonies. For the most part everyone wore black pants and a variety of blouses. Sometimes there would be women in dresses or skirts, but pants were the norm. As the new members progressed through their new member period, they began to learn about attire. At their first ceremony they were all dressed in dresses or skirts. They began to see that pants and outfits of that sort were permissible. By the time the initiation week ceremonies came around, the new members dressed as the active members did. It was interesting to see the reaction from the members when one woman would be more dressed up than everyone else. She would receive whistles and comments from the other women. While the new members were never specifically told about exactly what to wear, they eventually learned about what was the norm and what was considered above and below the standard.

The songs performed at the ceremonies changed from ceremony to ceremony. While there were only a handful of songs that could be sung at the ceremonies, which ones were performed and the order in which they were performed varied. The songs helped to give the ceremonies that added touch of seriousness that the active members wanted. The lyrics of the songs helped the women learn about sisterhood and loyalty. All of the songs dealt with sisterhood and the lasting love and friendship that each member should feel.

The ceremonies served a larger purpose than any other aspect of the formal processes of the sorority. They helped the new members to learn that there were deeper aspects to the sorority than just letters and a mascot. The ceremonies reinforced the idea of ritual and sisterhood. Through the ceremonies and the ritual aspect of the sorority the
new members learned why and how the bond of sisterhood transcends letters and trinkets with the sorority’s name on them. Those items were merely representations of one's membership in the sorority. The ceremonies showed the new members that sisterhood would become part of their lives. They learned that they would become reliant on their sisters and on the organization. The ceremonies helped to reinforce in the new members the idea that sisterhood is something that would be felt strongly by every member forever.

**Recruitment and Membership**

From the beginning of their membership in the sorority, the new women took recruitment and membership very seriously. Until they were initiated they were not permitted to be a part of the membership process, but they did actively recruit other members for the sorority. By choosing to bring friends to sorority recruitment events, the new members showed the active members that they wanted their friends to see how great this organization could be and what it had already done for them. They wanted to create a chapter full of women who would succeed in the chapter and help the chapter succeed in the Greek community on campus. Even at an early stage in their membership the new members understood the importance of membership and the importance of finding good women to become great sisters and members. The selection methods of the group had a degree of socialization upon the members (Anderson 2001, p. 85). By seeing the selection process in action the new members were able to see that membership starts even before the women realize they are being asked to join the sorority. This process "unavoidably influences reactions, expectations, attitudes, and behavior" (Anderson
They took their job of recruitment very seriously. This seriousness reinforced the idea that the new members had given themselves to the sorority.

The new members did not have any input into the membership process until after they were initiated. Once allowed to participate, they did not hold back their opinions and what they knew about the women who wanted to join the sorority. One new member voiced her concerns that the sorority would “look desperate for members” if they pledged women very quickly. This opinion showed that, while these women did care about increasing membership and the number of sisters they had, they still wanted to protect the integrity of the group. They wanted the other sisters to remain selective in their choices for new members. They cared about the type of impression created the women who came to their recruitment events. They wanted to make sure that they pledged women who would represent them well on campus and in the local community.

The fact that the new members cared so much about the type of women that would become members of the group showed that they had taken on their role as sorority members to its fullest. These women cared about their reputations and what those outside of the sorority thought of them. They refused to accept one woman who obviously wanted to be a member more than anything else because of the impression she gave off on campus. One of the members was in a class with this woman. She told the chapter that this woman’s behavior insinuated that she did not respect her professor or the other members of the class. She felt that if this woman could not show classmates and professors respect, she would probably act the same way toward the sorority if she were extended a bid to join.
The role of sorority member had become the most important thing to these women. They wanted to be known as members of the sorority, first and foremost. They wanted the other members of the Greek community to have a good impression of them and of their chapter. This good impression could only continue if they chose to pledge good women and not pledge the questionable women. The socialization process was most evident though the recruitment and membership selection process. The role that they played as members of the sorority had become their primary identification. While they still considered themselves individuals, they knew that they had morphed into a person that had to be concerned that her actions would affect the other members of her group. The new members knew that they had to watch out not only for themselves but also for the rest of the members and for the good name of the chapter.

Informal

Informal processes of socialization were just as important as the more formal ones. It was from the more informal processes that new members really learned about the role of a sorority member and how each woman was supposed to interact with the rest of the sisters. Even though the chapter preached to these women about the correct way to behave in order to become fully socialized members of the group, the new members learned more from watching the actions of the active members than they did hearing about what was considered proper and improper.

Social expectations

From the day that the new members pledged themselves to the sorority, they were instructed in the ways to behave when representing the sorority, whether that was at a party, a Greek function, or just on campus going to classes. The most important item that
the new members were given, in respect to the social expectations that the chapter placed on them, was the Code of Standards (see Appendix C). By giving the new members the Code of Standards, the chapter members were telling these women that, while they may not be fully integrated members yet, they were expected to hold themselves to the same standard to which they would be held once they were initiated. Becoming good and upstanding members was of the utmost importance to the new member class. The Code of Standards ensured not only that they would become model sisters and members but also that the other members, the alumnae, and other members of the Greek community on campus would respect them.

While the Code of Standards was the tangible symbol to which the new members could refer when in question about behavior, it was the behavior of the chapter members at parties and dances that reinforced the importance of the Code of Standards. Certain behaviors that are set out in the Code of Standards cannot fully be understood without the women witnessing the behavior in practice. One example of this was the way the new members learned to dress and behave when going to fraternity parties. They learned that they were expected to conduct themselves in a ladylike manner. Some of these behaviors included drinking out of cups instead of cans and bottles, smoking while seated, always looking one's best while at the party, and, most important, looking out for oneself and the other sisters to make sure that a woman has not had too much to drink. The Code of Standards states in black and white how a member should behave and treat her sisters when at a party. By watching the other sisters at parties the new members were able to ascertain the meaning behind the Code of Standards. The words were there to help the women develop into members that fraternity men would want at their parties and to help
the women learn how to be good guests at a party without having to feel like wallflowers. By witnessing the actions of the active members, the new members were able to interpret the Code of Standards and how it was to be applied to everyday situations. They could take the words and the ideas of the Code of Standards and begin to incorporate them into their lives.

Dances were a little different in respect to the Code of Standards and behavior. Because dances were open to only sorority members and their dates, the behavior of the members was allowed to be a little more relaxed than if they were out at a party. They had not been told that behavior at these dances could bend the Code of Standards somewhat because the function was closed, which was why they were nervous at the first dance. It did not take long for these women to realize this fact. By the end of the night they had loosened up and relaxed to the point that they were behaving like the active members and enjoying themselves. By the time the next dance came around, the new members knew that at dances they could walk the fine line between appropriate and inappropriate behavior.

There was some behavior, though, that would not be tolerated at all, regardless of whether the member was a party or at a dance. One was drinking. The alcohol policy stated that a woman was to be in control of herself at all times in all situations whenever she was drinking. This idea was stressed to the new-members over and over by the New Member Coordinator at their new-member meetings. They did not fully understand these words until they were in a dance situation. There they saw active members asked to either stop drinking or to leave because they were unable to be in control of themselves.
Thus, new members came to understand the consequences of becoming too intoxicated at parties and dances.

Another behavior that was not tolerated was fighting between sisters. When the fight between the new member and the alumna broke out at the theme dance, both women were made to leave by the advisors present. This event demonstrated to the new members that, while they might not get along with all of the members, they were expected to have respect for each other. No matter what kinds of problems two sisters might have with each other, they were expected to respect each other and the sorority by not confronting each other in a physical or abusive way. This altercation also showed the new members that alumnae were not immune from the rules of the sorority. Just because they were no longer active did not mean that they could disregard the rules when in a sorority situation. This act demonstrated that all members – new, active, and alumna – were expected always to treat the sorority with respect and follow the rules when in a sorority situation.

The social expectations and situations taught the new members a lot about being sorority members. They learned that they were to have a higher self-awareness now that they were members of a sorority because their behavior would reflect back on the sorority as a whole. They knew that they were no longer just individuals. They knew that they would always remain themselves, but they also knew that they were part of the sorority. The new members realized that everything they did and would do in the future would be reflected back on their membership in the sorority. The chapter made it clear to the new members that they would be known as a sorority member first and an individual second by everyone else on campus.
Sisterhood Expectations

Sisterhood was the reason the new members wanted to join a sorority initially. What they did not realize was that, along with this bond of sisterhood, there were certain expectations that would be placed on them. Being a member of the sorority was very much a give and take situation. For their membership and the bond of sisterhood the new members were expected to give back to the sorority in numerous ways.

One way they were expected to give back was through their academic performance. The new members were expected to make and maintain their grades. In order to be initiated and to have voice and vote once they were initiated, they had to maintain at least a 2.2 grade point average each semester. The chapter, along with Headquarters, expected them to go above and beyond this minimum grade point average. To help the new members achieve the grades that the chapter expected them to have, they were told that each new member would have a number of study hours per week that she must complete. An active member would be in a certain spot in the library for a specified number of hours. This woman would be the proctor. The new members and active members would have to sign in and out with this woman in order to have their study hours count. Any member who obtained a 3.0 grade point average or better for the semester did not have to participate in the mandatory study hours unless she chose to. These women had to complete honored study hours. Study hours were done to help the new members acquire the time management skills that were needed to go to school full time and to be a full time member of the sorority.

There were consequences if the new members fell behind in their study hours. They were told that if they got more than four hours behind, they would not be allowed to
attend social functions or to participate in any extracurricular sorority activities. These rules and conditions helped the new members to learn the importance of making good grades in the name of the sorority. It was not fully understood until two of the new members came back to school in the spring. These two women had failed to meet the 2.2 grade point average mark for the semester. They had to give up their offices and could not help make chapter decisions the entire semester. At first they were frustrated with the idea of having to pay their money and sit through meetings without being allowed to participate in the decision-making process. It did not take long for these women to get past the frustration. They both resolved to make at least a 3.0 grade point average. This way they would not have to attend any of the mandatory study sessions, and they would be able to hold offices and have a voice and vote for the fall semester. The new members realized that academics were one of the most important aspects of their membership in the sorority. The new members knew that the sorority could function as a useful study tool and would help them to achieve and maintain all of the academic success that they could possibly want.

Along with the academic portion of their sisterhood the members of the sorority were expected to become involved in Greek events and campus clubs and organizations. A well-rounded sorority member was expected to be involved with other organizations besides just the sorority. From Bid day on, the New Member Coordinator stressed the importance of getting involved with other groups. Involvement with other groups would not only reflect well on the chapter in the eyes of Headquarters, but it would also make these new members sociable and respected women on campus. By getting involved in campus activities the new members were helping to enhance the reputation of the
sorority. They knew that their involvement in other campus groups would lead those on campus to think that this sorority was a group that could be counted on to get involved and help make the university a better place.

Most of the new members became involved with other groups. Three of them got involved with the campus pep club, while the rest got involved with academic organizations through their majors. Their involvement helped them to meet more people on campus, helped them to grow as women, and helped them to represent the sorority in a positive light on campus and with other students. The other members of the groups they joined would recognize and respect them as sorority members.

Greek events are the most dominant in a sorority member’s life. There are seventeen other Greek organizations on campus, all of which have to do the same things that this sorority does. The new members learned right away that involvement in other Greek activities and events was crucial to the reputation and status of the sorority. From the first week that they pledged they became involved in other Greek activities. Two of the new members participated in fraternity rush pageants during their first week as new members. This participation not only helped them start to feel comfortable representing the sorority but also helped them to get the sorority’s name out in a good way with the other groups on campus. Participation in other groups’ events taught the new members that getting involved in these activities helped to create or improve the view that other groups on campus had of the sorority.

The new members learned quickly, though, that it was nearly impossible to get involved in every event put on by every organization. The new members learned that, by choosing one event over another, they risked their group not getting involved in their
events. They saw this behavior in action when it came time for the sororities’ annual philanthropy event. Through the grapevine the new members learned of groups that would be participating and why those who chose not to participate decided not to do so. The new members learned that the chapter wanted to have a good name with all of the other groups on campus and that they were to do as much as they could to stay in the good graces of the other Greek organizations. Making the difficult decision of choosing one event over another was something that the new members dealt with almost immediately because of the timing of the sorority’s philanthropic event. These decisions taught them that repercussions could affect the whole group but that each sister was expected to deal with these repercussions with style and grace.

The most important aspect of sorority membership was involvement within the group itself. When each woman was initiated, she took an oath to “step up in the name of the sorority when called upon.” The new members were no different. The chapter members pledged and initiated these women on the ideal that they would give back to the chapter what the chapter had given them. They were expected to become involved. Most important they were expected to become chapter officers. The active members expected these women to be able to lead the sorority into the future, and this leadership could only be achieved if they got involved in the decision-making process. They were excited about becoming chapter officers and, once elected, took their roles as officers very seriously. Through their words and actions it was clear that the new members were on a mission to help the chapter become successful and achieve greatness on campus and in the eyes of Headquarters. There was no hesitation in these women once they were elected to their respective offices. The new members wanted to show that they were grateful to
the chapter for all they had learned and for all with which they had been entrusted. The best way to repay this gratitude was to become a successful and respected chapter officer.

The feelings that these women had were clearly seen by anyone paying attention to them. They were grateful to the sorority as a whole and to the individual members for helping them move from nervous and uncertain individual women who just happened to share the same letters to women who were fully socialized, fully functioning members of the sorority. The new members moved from seemingly superficial exchanges to exchanges based on women giving parts of themselves to each other and to the sorority. In six months the new members were able to learn that a sorority is more than letters and dues. They were able to learn that there was a real meaning and purpose behind the letters and the mascot. They learned that, while they might have first come together and interacted because of the letters they shared, there was much more to the sorority and to their sisters than they had originally thought.
CHAPTER VII
CONCLUSION

This research set out to discover how individual women are socialized into an organization that is structured and organized. No matter how many clubs and organizations in which these women participated while in high school, none could match the time and loyalty that was required to maintain membership in a sorority. While they were known as members of this sorority, that did not mean they were already familiar with the behaviors and actions that would be expected of them by the active members. These women had to learn how to move themselves from being who they used to be to being the type of women the sorority expected them to become. The necessary behaviors and actions are learned through everyday interactions with the other members of the sorority and with people who were not members of the group (Zurcher 1977, p. 24).

The women who joined the sorority came into the group with a self-perception that was not exactly what the active members wanted. Granted, the active members had to feel that there were already parts of these women that could represent the sorority, or they would not have chosen to extend a bid to them. What they learned during the new member period was to build on who they were in order to become a better person. The education process was done through formal and informal interactions with the other members of the group. As these women moved through their new member period, the self that was expected of them by the other members started to grow through their socialization experiences (Zurcher 1977, p. 29). "Selves, minds, and consequently social
structures, are the products of social interaction among human beings" (Zurcher 1977, p. 31).

The focus of this research was on the phenomenon of adult socialization and adult peer groups. The socialization that a person will experience in college will help him or her move toward socialization into the adult world and an adult society to which he or she is new. Establishing some sort of connection with a group on the college campus helps this adult socialization process. Individuals will choose groups based on a connection, which is established through interactions with the members of the groups and through the symbols that connect each person to the whole organization.

A connection alone is not enough for a person to maintain membership in a group. Those individuals have to feel that there is a benefit to staying with this organization versus joining another one. This exchange helps to promote group cohesion, thus helping the group become a success. A successful group will maintain its existence in society because people want to be associated with a successful group. Members must have a vested interest in seeing these groups succeed, but this vested interest will appear only when the members have been fully socialized and incorporated into the group.

A group can have a purpose and a function, but this function and purpose are meaningless unless people want to be a part of the organization. A group can function only if the members continue exchanges based on the respect and loyalty they have toward the tangible symbols of the group and on the ideal that the members will see that there are benefits to being a member of this organization. The socialization and integration process happens because the members are seen as bonded individuals by those
who are not members of the group, based on the symbols and signs that represent the
group and also based on the beneficial exchanges that the members have with each other.

This research was interesting to do. It is the type of project that if done on a
larger scale over a longer period of time could produce some real identity trends and
changes. If it were done over a year or the entire time the women were members in the
sorority, I feel that a researcher could see a real change in the women. In this short time
span, I was able to see differences in the women from when they first joined to their last
dance of the year, but they will go through more changes and begin to identify more with
the sorority the longer they are members. I feel a large-scale version of this research
would produce very interesting and sociologically worthwhile results.

I also feel that this research needs to be done again with a larger new-member
class. While this class was diverse and produced the results that I expected, a larger class
might have produced some of the same results, but also perhaps some different ones.
There were no losses from this new member class, which was not the norm for sororities.
While the chapter should be commended for socializing these women as quickly as it did
so that the new members could feel the bond of sisterhood and would become loyal to the
sorority, I feel that the size of the class hindered this research. I did not have the chance
to talk to women who would have left the sorority to find out why the socialization
process would not work for them as it did for the other members of the class. I feel that
the size of the class is a flaw in this research, and, if done again, this research would have
to be conducted on a sorority with a larger new member class.

Socialization of new members into the sorority constitutes the life and existence
of the sorority. When women pledge a sorority, they do so because they have seen
something in a few of the members with which they have connected. Initial exchanges are based on the letters and the tangible symbols of the sorority because the new members do not know any better. Once the women become comfortable with the sorority and the system of the organization, those interactions move past the tangible aspects of the sorority and become based on a relationship in which the women give and receive feelings, ideas, and behaviors from each other. It is these relationships that make women not only want to join a sorority but also want to make the ideals and standards of the sorority part of their lives.
APPENDIX A
FOURTEEN PEARL PROGRAM

During your new member period, each new member will complete the Fourteen Pearl Program of ________. This program focuses on individual growth as a new member, thereby helping to prepare you to become a valued member. The program includes activities, which illustrate the Purpose. Each new member is required to earn at least one pearl from each category, plus four additional pearls from any other of the categories. Once a pearl is completed, please report it to your Sister-Mother or the Fourteen Pearls Coordinator.

All pearls must be completed BEFORE initiation week

Scholarship – “To gain understanding that wisdom may be vouchsafed to me”
1. Earn an “A” on any three tests, quizzes, or papers.
2. Attain passing grades at midterm in all courses.
3. Be at least 5 hours ahead in study hours at the end of your new member period.
4. Achieve prefect attendance in all classes during your new member period.
5. Attend at least 2 educational or professional lectures in your course of study.
6. Arrange a conference with a professor in a course where you need help.
7. Study with a tutor or with sisters in a similar course of study.
8. Show improvement by at least on letter grade on any three tests or quizzes
9. Be nominated to an Honor society or equivalent.
10. Earn a 4.0 the previous semester.

Personal Health – “To develop and prize health and vigor of body”
1. Work out with a sister at least 1 day a week.
2. Participate in a self-improvement or exercise course.
3. Participate in chapter or campus intramurals.
4. Become a member of a college athletic team.
5. Participate in an alcohol abuse prevention project.
6. Complete a time management, stress management, nutrition, CPR, lifesaving, or first aid course.

Friendship – “To cultivate acquaintance with many whom I meet”
1. Serve on the Social Committee for a special function or event.
2. Attend at least 2 Panhellenic meetings.
3. Bring a potential new member to visit the Chapter and meet your sisters.
4. Participate in two exchanges with a fraternity, sorority, faculty, or parents.
5. Active membership in 2 other campus clubs or organizations.

Sisterhood – “To cherish friendships with but a chosen few and to study the perfecting of those friendships”
1. Send a Rose note to a sister at least once a week.
2. Attend two special events (such as meals, club meetings, or worship services) with a sister.
3. Get to know and spend time with your sisters (such as going to Wal-Mart or watching a movie at the house) at least 3 times other than required events.
4. Introduce yourself to the alumnae (either on campus or in your hometown).
5. Learn the names of the alumnae advisors and officers.
6. Correspond or visit with alumna in your hometown.
7. Participate in Pledge Olympics.

Philanthropy – “To welcome the opportunity to contribute to the world’s work in the community where I am placed because of the joy of service thereby bestowed and the talent of leadership multiplied”
1. Be at least 5 hours ahead on community service hours at the end of your new member period.
2. Bring in the highest amount in contributions to a Chapter philanthropy project.
3. Participate in at least 2 philanthropy projects of other Greek organizations.
4. Be an active member of service sorority.
5. Participate in an alumnae, Panhellenic, or IFC service project.

Ritual – “To honor my home, my country, my religious faith”
1. Learn at least 2 songs from the list of “10 Songs every ________ should know” (in addition to the Hymn and the Pledge Song).
2. Attend the worship service of your choice regularly.
3. Teach Sunday school or sing in the choir (or equivalent worship volunteer activity).
5. Invite your family to a special activity at the Chapter house or on campus.
6. Recite the purpose to your Sister-Mother.
7. Volunteer for house duty.

Responsibility – “To hold truth inviolable, sincerity essential, kindness invaluable”
1. Perfect attendance at all pledge meetings.
2. Perfect attendance at all required Chapter functions.
3. Hold an office for the new member class.
4. Serve on a chapter committee.
5. Regular employment of 10 hours per week.

Standards – “To covet beauty in environment, manner, word, and thought”
1. Dressing up and wearing your pledge pin on at least three occasions such as football games, Greek philanthropy projects and campus activities.
2. Participation in campus or community beautification project.
3. Attendance at a minimum of three cultural events such as art, music, theatre, lecture, or recital.
4. Attendance at a minimum of three chapter or pledge standard programs.
5. Attending the Pledge Symposium.
Fraternity Education – “To possess high ideals and to attain somewhat unto them”
1. Being able to explain the honors of ____________ (the sorority ritual).
2. Research scholarship and job opportunities within the Fraternity and presenting the information to the chapter.
3. Earning a score of 100% on your pledge test.
4. Talking to a chapter officer and reporting to the pledge class about her office.
5. Presenting a Fraternity education program to the chapter.

Public Awareness – “This shall be my purpose that those who know me may esteem - __________ for her attainments, revere her for her purposes and love her for her womanhood.
1. Participate in sorority flag football, volleyball, basketball, or other intramurals.
2. Participate in other Greek events.
3. Dressing up and wearing your pledge pin to class at least twice a week.
4. Attending at least three __________ sporting events.
5. Wearing letters on “Letters Day”
6. Participation in Greek Week events.
7. Participation on a committee for Homecoming.
APPENDIX B  
CODE OF STANDARDS

A. PERSONAL APPEARANCE

- **Daily Appearance**: On and around campus, dress neatly. Make sure all skirts and shorts are appropriate length. Do not wear jeans, T-shirt, or sweatshirts that are stained or ragged in public. Hair should be clean and make-up attractive. Try to appear your best, especially when wearing anything identifying you as an ______ For example, do not roll out of bed and put on letters to go to class.

- **Meeting Appearance**: Appropriate dress for meeting shall be nice pants, dressy shorts, a skirt or a dress. Proper shoes are dressy flats, heels, dressy sandal, or nice loafer. Denim pants (jeans) or pants that may resemble denim pants, tennis shoes, or hiking boots are not to be worn at a meeting.

- **Rush Appearance**: You should look your best especially for Rush. During Rush, everyone should wear make-up and do an extra touch to your hair. Dress for Rush will be decided by the Rush Chairs, and should be followed by each member.

B. DRINKING

- In accordance with state and federal laws, members under the age of 21 are not legally permitted to drink. No one under the age of 21 will be allowed to drink at any ______ functions.

- Do not drink alcoholic beverages while wearing the following: letters, anything with the words ______, pledge pin, badge or lavaliere. Only at closed functions, like a dance, can one drink in ______ clothing. This includes drinking from a decorated cup or hugger, only drink alcohol from these cups at ______ closed functions. If you intend to drink from decorated cups at other functions, like Homecoming, cover with tape for the time when drinking alcohol out of it. Remember to always drink from a cup. Do not drink out of bottles or cans.

- Drinking in excess or boasting about one’s drinking capability is not in keeping with ______ standards. Examples of excess drinking would be inability to holding yourself up, stumbling, throwing up, violent and disrespectful behavior, promiscuity, etc. A continued problem in this area could result in Suspended Membership. If a sister approaches you and asks you to ‘maintain’ your composure then remember you are violating the code of standards.

- Although you may not intended to drink, do not wear ______ clothing into drinking establishments. You should not wear ______ clothing into any establishment where alcohol is served which includes bars and liquor stores.

- **DO NOT** have alcohol on ______ property, which includes in your care in the ______ parking lot.
Legal violations such as drinking and driving, public intoxication, and consumption or possession of alcohol by a minor is not in good standing with the fraternity. Use good judgment and be responsible when drinking.

C. DRUGS
- According to federal and state statutes, possession or use of a control substance is illegal. _______ does NOT and will NOT tolerate drug use.

D. SMOKING
- Observe proper smoking etiquette, which includes being seated while smoking, holding the cigarette in your hand or laying it in an ashtray. This means you should not be walking across campus smoking. Respect the feelings and attitudes of others toward smoking. If the weather does not permit one to smoke outdoors, you do not smoke.
- No smoking is permitted on ________ property except in designated areas, which are the back porches only. Smoking materials must be disposed of properly – this means not thrown on the ground.
- You should not smoke wearing ________ letters or the words ________ in public places and especially on campus.
- No matter the circumstances, a member is never to smoke at any Rush function.

E. SOCIAL CONDUCT
- Your conduct on dates and at parties should be above reproach so that it doesn’t reflect adversely on yourself or ________. Also you know that you are responsible for your date at any ________ function. When attending an ________ function, you will adhere to all conditions posted in risk management forms.
- Some songs that we may sing are not appropriate to sing in mixed company. These songs will not be sung at dances or in public places. We must remember to conduct ourselves in the best manner possible while in the presence of mixed company. So you should not partake in inappropriate vulgar behavior such as extreme dancing and public displays of affection.
- You will reflect a lady like manner at all times. This includes class, your job, parties, extra-curricular activities, and Greek activities. It is important you reflect good sportsmanship at all sports functions and pageants.
- Fighting is against all ________ standards and will not be tolerated. Furthermore, any legal discretion that you bring to the ________ chapter or name becomes ________ business.

F. FUNCTION
- When attending a function, stay long enough to meet some of the people there; give a good ________ impression. Be discreet when leaving a function, especially one you are not enjoying.
- In accordance with university policy, staying overnight at a fraternity house and in university housing (in a male’s dorm room) is strictly prohibited.
- At a fraternity function, have another young woman escort you when going upstairs in a fraternity house.

G. MEALS
- Good table manners are expected when eating. Meals are not a time for rowdy behavior. Conversations at meals should include everyone at the table. Be especially courteous if there is a guest at the table.
H. LANGUAGE
- Profane and vulgar language is not keeping with the standards of _______ and is not acceptable especially in meetings, workshops and when representing _____.

I. BADGE AND PLEDGE PIN
- Show respect for our Badge and Pledge Pin by looking your best and neatest when they are worn. Only wear Badge or Pledge Pin when in formal meeting attire.

J. RESPECT
- Respect should be extended to all advisers, alumnae, sisters, parents, and any visitor at the _______ house or function. You only have to stand twice for alumnae – once when they enter a room and once when they exit a room.
- Always maintain a positive attitude about _______ and your sisters and toward your sisters, and remember we are all adults, we all must act like adults especially at all _______ functions including meetings.

K. CHAPTER ROOM SECRECY
- Anything discussed in the _______ chapter room will stay among those present in the chapter room, and should not be discussed outside the chapter room. Breaking this policy will be dealt with accordingly. If you miss the meeting, it is your responsibility to contact the secretary and read the minutes yourself.

L. EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT
- In the event of an emergency and 911 is called, you need to call the chapter president who will in turn call the chapter adviser. Speaking to anyone outside the house including the press is strictly prohibited in an emergency situation. No one present during the emergency is allowed to leave. No phone calls can come in or out once a critical situation has happened.

M. GENERAL
- Be aware of your nervous habits, such as chewing ice, biting fingernails, chewing gum, etc; try to keep them under control.
- Be prompt and courteous to everyone.
- In making introductions, the guest of honor or the elder person’s name is mentioned first.
- And always remember… YOUR BEHAVIOR REFLECTS ON _______. USE GOOD JUDGMENT.
APPENDIX C
INITIATION REQUIREMENTS
These are five requirements for Initiation as set forth by our Constitution

1. Demonstration by conduct and attitude of desire and ability to uphold Fraternity standards and ideas; to accept Fraternity responsibility; and to contribute as a Fraternity member.

2. Successfully completion of the Fraternity Education Course and the Oral Pledge Ceremony.

3. Attainment of chapter and college scholarship requirements.

4. Payment of all financial obligations.

5. Regular attendance at new member meetings.

EXPLANATION OF REQUIREMENTS:
- A new member is expected to learn the Code of Standards of her Chapter and to consistently apply those standards in her daily conduct within the Chapter, campus, and community life.
- A new member is expected to complete the Fourteen Pearl Program prior to initiation week.
- A new member will successfully complete her Fraternity Education course and Oral Pledge ceremony as monitored by the New Member Coordinator and Advisor.
- A new member will make at least the grade point average stated in her Chapter Bylaws as necessary for initiation.
- A new member will promptly pay all fees and dues as set forth by the Chapter Bylaws.
- A new member must attend all new member meetings.
## APPENDIX D
### Meeting Agenda

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Regular</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Special</td>
<td>Location</td>
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</table>

**Opening Ritual** – conducted by the Ritual Coordinator

**Call to Order** – conducted by the President

**Roll Call** – conducted by the Vice President-Operations

**Reading of the Minutes** – conducted by the Vice President-Operations

**Guest Speakers** – this would be the time when speakers can come in to talk to the sorority about activities on campus or in the community. This is also the time when alumnae advisors come in to discuss chapter business with the active members.

**Officer Reports:**

**President’s Team**

*At this time the members of the President’s Team (President, Ritual Coordinator, Risk Management Coordinator, Community Service Coordinator, and Alumnae Relations Coordinator) will give their officer reports*

**Vice President-Member Development’s Team**

*At this time the members of the Vice President-Member Development’s Team (Vice President-Member Development, New Member Coordinator, Personal Development Coordinator, and Sisterhood Coordinator) will give their officer reports*

**Vice President-Scholarship’s Team**

*At this time the members of the Vice President-Scholarship’s Team (Vice President-Scholarship and Social Coordinator) will give their officer reports*

**Vice President-Recruitment’s Team**

*At this time the members of the Vice President-Recruitment’s Team (Vice President-Recruitment, Membership Coordinator, and Continuous Open Bidding Coordinator) will give their officer reports*

**Vice President-Finance’s Team**

*At this time the members of the Vice President-Finance’s Team (Vice President-Finance, Philanthropy Coordinator, Purchasing Coordinator, and Assistant Treasurer/Activities Coordinator) will give their officer reports*

**Vice President-Operation’s Team**

*At this time the members of the Vice President-Operations’ Team (Vice President-Operations, Correspondence Coordinator, and Publications Coordinator) will give their officer reports*
Vice President-Campus Relations' Team
At this time the members of the Vice President-Campus Relations' Team (Vice President-Campus Relations, Public Relations Coordinator, and Intramural Chair) will give their officer reports.

Property Coordinator
At this time the members of the Property Coordinator will give her report.

Old Business
This is the time that the chapter can discuss a report that was previously given that evening or a subject that had been brought up at an earlier meeting.

New Business
This is the time for officers to bring up business relating to their office that may not have gotten on the meeting agenda in time, or business that came up after the agenda had already been set.

Announcements
This is the time when any chapter member, officer or not, can make an announcement about an upcoming event or activity that is going to be happening on campus or with the sorority.

Adjourn
Once all meeting business has been taken care of, the President will adjourn the meeting after announcing the time and date for the next sorority meeting.
**APPENDIX E**  
**SORORITY OFFICER INTEREST FORM**

To be eligible for an office, a member must be in Good Standing, have a GPA of at least 2.2 and have fulfilled past officer duties and committee responsibilities. Eligibility will be verified by the Election Committee. New members are eligible to submit an Interest Form and are eligible for election if their Initiation will occur prior to Officer Installation.

President – must have junior class standing at the time of elections; must have served as an officer; must attend Convention or The Leadership Conference  
Vice President Recruitment – must have participated in formal recruitment as an initiated member  
Property Coordinator – must have lived in the chapter housing (if applicable)

I will accept nomination to any office that I am eligible for, but am most interested in:  

I will **not** accept nomination for the following office(s):

Print name: ___________________________  
Signature: _____________________________

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**Nominating Ballot**  
*List each name only once – use first and last names. You may nominate yourself.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Office</th>
<th>Nominating Officer</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>President</td>
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<tr>
<td>VP Member Development</td>
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<td>VP Scholarship</td>
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<td>VP Recruitment</td>
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<td>VP Operations</td>
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<td>VP Finance</td>
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<td>VP Campus Relations</td>
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<td>Asst. Treasurer/Activities Coordinator</td>
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<td>Alumnae Relations Coordinator</td>
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<td>COB Coordinator</td>
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<td>Correspondence Coordinator</td>
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<td>Membership Coordinator</td>
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<td>Community Service Coordinator</td>
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<td>New Member Coordinator</td>
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<td>Personal Development Coordinator</td>
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<td>Philanthropy Coordinator</td>
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<td>Property Coordinator</td>
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<td>Publications Coordinator</td>
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<td>Public Relations Coordinator</td>
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<td>Purchasing Coordinator</td>
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<td>Risk Management Coordinator</td>
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<td>Ritual Coordinator</td>
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<td>Sisterhood Coordinator</td>
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<td>Social Coordinator</td>
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<td>Community Service Coordinator</td>
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<tr>
<td>Intramural Coordinator</td>
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REFERENCES


Brace Jovanovich.


Leemon, Thomas A. 1972. The Rites of Passage in a Student Culture. New York: Teachers College Press.


