University of Richmond fraternities: a plan for the future

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Colleges and Universities across the country grant students the opportunity for development in all areas of life. Within these educational institutions, student organizations play a major role by challenging students to become more involved and contribute to the University community. Social fraternities exemplify one popular means of student involvement. However, the appeal fraternities have on first-year students is unclear and individualistic. For some freshman students amidst an intense phase of transition, Greek organizations fulfill a desperate need for affiliation. They provide incoming students with a support structure and a network of friends who aid in the adaptation to an entirely new environment. Others view the involvement in such organizations as a tremendous leadership opportunity. Whatever means of justification one chooses, involvement in a fraternity greatly impacts both personal development and the shaping of one's identity throughout college.

My interest in Greek organizations as a first-year student centered primarily around an ideal. While leadership opportunities and the fulfillment of a need for affiliation were positive byproducts of fraternity association, I was intrigued by a type of friendship that was nonexistent in my high school years. Affiliates introduced me to the concept of brotherhood, an intangible bond that extended friendship in terms of mutual respect, loyalty and unconditional support. The affiliation process throughout my first year of college only strengthened my desire to achieve and live the ideal of brotherhood. By studying the history of the organization, I learned that the
fraternity’s founding principles paralleled the vision I had created. The fraternity adopted ideals that focused on both the development of the individual as well as the group of brothers. With special attention to virtues of honor, courage and leadership, the organization theoretically facilitated a student’s pursuit of individual excellence, and one that was magnified by the affiliation with something greater than oneself. However shortly after initiation which marked the culmination of the learning process, I realized that the organization did not meet my idealistic expectations. An intangible bond did exist which extended ordinary friendships, but the group did not demonstrate the motivation towards a high standard of excellence. This discrepancy between the reality of the system and the ideal that I had both created and studied was frustrating, but only further motivated me to contribute and gain a better understanding of the organization.

In my third year as a member of the fraternity, I was fortunate to be selected by my peers as the formal leader of the organization. Attaining the position of president recaptured a sense of idealism and created two major opportunities for organizational assessment. First, it enabled me to analyze several different relationships that existed within our specific chapter. One of my major goals was to establish a consistent leadership style as it related to the chapter members. Only by relating to my brothers in a consistent manner could I expect to earn their trust which would allow me the opportunity to motivate them to contribute back to the organization and to the greater Richmond community. Once this relationship was established, I could address the member’s concerns and lead the organization towards improvement. Meanwhile, I
had the ability to evaluate the external leadership within the organizational structure of our specific chapter. Each Greek organization has a headquarters that monitors each chapter’s progress. Our headquarters maintained relatively little influence as an external leader previous to my term of office. This weak relationship between our organization and the headquarters provided my motivation to improve communications and establish a formal relationship with a representative who could both advise and guide us toward continued success. I found the establishment of a formal relationship with our national organization fundamental for two reasons. An external contact who is familiar with the fraternity system on a national scale could aid in important decision-making processes, especially with regard to liability issues. Additionally, this person would serve as a liaison between our national fraternity and the University of Richmond administration. With an external leader present and in support of our organization, communication and decision-making processes between the University and our fraternity would be taken more seriously. This notion of an external leader acting as a mediator addresses a separate, yet fundamentally important relationship: the Greek organizations to the University of Richmond.

The second opportunity for organizational assessment that I encountered as president focused on the relationship between the University of Richmond administration and the Greek organizations. As I became more experienced in my position, I began to identify both the leadership structure of the Greek system and the student and administrative structure including those leaders who had significant influence to the system. Essentially, there are three major groups of individuals
involved in the leadership process of the Greek system: administration, Interfraternity Council and alumni boards.

From my perspective as a Greek leader as of the Fall of 1996, the influential members who compose the administrative leadership body relating specifically to Greek life form a hierarchy. Ultimately, President Morrill maintains ultimate authority, making important decisions based on information and suggestions from the Vice President for Student Affairs, Dr. Leonard Goldberg. Dr. Goldberg represents a second tier of leadership authority. He works in conjunction with Alison Bartel Lord, the Greek Life Advisor, on concerns that need to be addressed. Should a decision need to be made, the issue is brought to the appropriate level of authority based on its importance. Additionally, the Interfraternity Council (IFC) is composed of individual chapter presidents and a six-member Interfraternity Executive Committee. The IFC Executive Committee facilitates the governance process, as well as, holds responsibility for judicial related matters. Alumni volunteers from each fraternity comprise chapter alumni boards. These individuals are the link between the undergraduate organizations and their respective national fraternities and headquarters. These boards convene periodically, or in emergency situations, with the University of Richmond administration to address system issues, resolve conflicts or assist chapters with ongoing problems.

The following diagram best represents the formal hierarchy that I perceive to exist between the University of Richmond administrative leaders, the fraternity headquarters and Greek chapters. Bold lines indicate a firmly established relationship
in which communication is frequent, where as, dotted lines represent relatively weak relationships in which communication is minimal at best:

**Formal Hierarchy of the University of Richmond Greek System**

My assessment of the Greek system’s organizational structure examines how these three groups of leaders interact with one another and, more specifically, who
provides the formal leadership. In an attempt to clarify this question, it is important to understand the way in which fraternities are currently regulated and the type of expectations placed on fraternities by the University administration. Essentially, the student affairs administration and the Greek Life offices, in conjunction with the Interfraternity Council, regulate the social fraternities on campus. In order to establish a written form of communication, chapter presidents are given the Greek Handbook. This resource guide clarifies all University and state policies by which fraternities must abide. One specific document within this guide, The Statement of Mutual Responsibility, clearly identifies the relationship between fraternities and the University of Richmond administration. The terms “community” and “self-governance” are the underlying aims of fraternity regulation in this document. Self-governance assumes that all fraternities should act in a manner that will positively influence the University environment. The internal operations of the social organizations, however, are consistent with the aims of other student organizations on campus. Each fraternity is completely responsible and liable for their own actions. “The growth which occurs through people’s affiliations is in great measure a function of the degree of independence they are allowed to exercise.” The document further describes the fraternities’ responsibilities towards academics, new members, housing, pledging, special programming and legal and institutional policies. These responsibilities serve as an excellent set of standards; however, the University of Richmond administration rarely exercises a form of regulation to enforce these

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1 The University of Richmond Office of Student Activities and Greek Life. “Statement of Mutual Responsibility.”
standards. Once a fraternity president has signed this statement in agreement of its contents, he is rarely confronted to meet all of its specifications. The system of self-governance is understood to enforce this criteria. With the emergence of legal violations, the Office of Student Activities and Greek Life assists the Interfraternity Council toward appropriate sanctions. The magnitude of the situation influences which leadership authority of the administration intervenes with an appropriate decision. This document clearly identifies the administration’s position in regard to Greek life, but the extent of implementation is solely dependent upon the Interfraternity Council and the individual chapters and its members.

The administrative leaders clearly articulate the standards by which fraternities should abide; however, the method in which the administration confronts issues remains unclear. Theoretically, the hierarchical structure of the Greek system should not exist if the Interfraternity Council completely abided by the self-governance policy. In reality, the hierarchical structure does exist and the administrative leaders have significant influence in any decision affecting the system. Thus, I question the type of regulation enforced and the extent of formal leadership exerted by the leaders of this institution.

One example that supports my skepticism on the formal leadership in specific regard to the Greek System is the University’s enforcement of the alcohol policy. Social activity for all students occurs in three main areas on campus: the residence halls, the University Forest Apartments and the fraternity lodges. Alcohol Responsibility.” The Greek Handbook, 1996-1997
consumption occurs in all of these locations regardless of age. However, the institutional enforcement within each area varies. Student staff representing the Richmond College Dean's office are responsible for monitoring parties in the residence halls. If minors are consuming alcohol, they are documented and appropriate, formal sanctions are given by a Dean's Office staff-person at a later time. This type of enforcement is relatively consistent, but rarely involves police enforcement. The Dean's Office implements the same policies in the University Forest Apartments. Student staff are, once again, responsible for enforcing university and state protocol; however, considering most residents in UFA are of legal age, it is difficult for student staff to visually assess who is of age and who is illegally drinking. The Fraternity row operates on complete different policies. The University of Richmond Police Department, complemented by IFC student representatives, monitors fraternity events rather than institutional administration or student staff. Each individual chapter is responsible for checking identification and controlling underage drinking at all social parties. Two representatives from the Interfraternity Council patrol each of the parties to insure each chapter is fulfilling their obligations and responsibilities. Should a conflict arise, both Interfraternity Council representatives and police officers confront the situation depending on its magnitude.

Students in these various areas of social climate react according to the varying levels of potential disciplinary action. Students are frequently documented by student staff in the residence halls, but rarely are students punished for underage alcohol consumption.
consumption at the fraternity row. Residence halls can be classified as a high risk zone for potential punitive action; UFA can be classified as a medium risk zone and the fraternity row can be considered a low risk zone. This informal risk assessment signals to students that it is inappropriate to consume alcohol in the residence halls, but relatively risk-free at the fraternity row. To exacerbate the problem already present, the University supports, and in some incidents promotes, the distribution of alcohol at fraternity parties through a common container. Richmond is one of very few schools nationally that continues to permit this type of distribution. Consequently, fraternity presidents and each member of the social organization place themselves in an extremely vulnerable position concerning social host liability. From my perspective however, exchanging our current common container policy to a B.Y.O.B. (Bring Your Own Beer) type policy would reduce underage consumption, decrease the burden of liability that fraternities inherit and potentially reduce the overall amount of alcohol consumed by both Greek and non-Greek students. The rationale behind our current system is simply control; the officers of the University of Richmond Police Department are able to control the distribution of alcohol should a crisis situation arise. Combining the promotion of alcohol distribution in common containers and the creation of a culture with varying degrees of punitive enforcement, a standard is not established. Instead, inconsistent messages are sent to students, whether or not they are associated with a social fraternity.

Recent research supports this organizational assessment regarding the relationship between social fraternities and the University administration. Gary
Pavela recently identified a correlation between the negative actions of fraternities and the amount of control that institutions exercise over fraternities. Students are considered adults and need to be given reasonable amounts of freedom and respect, yet they are also inexperienced and amidst an intense transitional phase of personal, intellectual and physical development. Unfortunately, the conflict of control usually stems from situations that result from poor decisions made by inexperienced students. This conflict of control is challenging institutions nationwide to reevaluate and define their role in their relationship between social organizations. Henry Wechsler, et.al. questions the role of institutions from a slightly different perspective: "Institutions are sending mixed messages to fraternities and other students by not holding fraternity or sorority members accountable to institutionally-approved standards of acceptable behavior."

The opinions of these two researchers parallel a recent article by George Kuh. Kuh questions the values fraternities contribute to University environments by presenting empirical data which supports negative associations of fraternities to alcohol abuse, academic degradation and hindrances in personal and cognitive development. Yet, Kuh also realizes the importance of institutional intervention. "Colleges and universities must insure that fraternity members live up to the standards expected of all students and the standards that fraternities themselves espouse. When groups or individuals fail to meet these goals, administrators and fraternity leaders

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must act decisively to stem further abuse and reaffirm the institution’s overarching educational mission.”

Based on this previous research and my personal experiences, I believe the University of Richmond Greek system parallels the national concern regarding the lack of clarity in the relationship definition between social fraternities and the University administration. Although members of the faculty and the student affairs division question the values social fraternities contribute to the University of Richmond community, questioning the type of leadership framework provided to fraternities which outlines the expectations of these organizations is imperative. Thus, there is obviously a need for a leadership plan which assesses the feasibility of an improved definition between leaders of Greek organizations and leaders of the University administration. Only a leadership plan can facilitate a change from the Greek system’s current state of ambiguity and inconsistency into one that fosters valued contribution by fraternities to the University community.

The development of an action plan hinges on a theoretical framework of organizational leadership. Five major components of this theoretical framework on organizational leadership are organizational purpose, structure, power, performance and change. A thorough assessment of each of these components will reveal how leadership can influence and improve an organization.

West Point Associates specifically concentrated on creating a definition of organizational leadership. The context of organizational leadership, from their

4 Kuh, G., Pascarella, E., and Wechsler, H. “The Questionable Value of Fraternities.” The Chronicle of
perspective, eliminates personal leader characteristics and attributions. A leader emerges by declaration or appointment rather than group need or personal motivation. Contingent upon the leader is the specific task-oriented nature of organizations. They further argue that organizations are created to serve a purpose. This characteristic of organizations places an emphasis on the relationship between the organization and the leader. Organizational leaders are appointed to direct an organization towards the fulfillment of a goal. Both the relationship between the leader and the nature of organizations are fundamental in their definition of organizational leadership which is "the process of influencing behavior so as to accomplish the goals prescribed by the organizationally appointed leader." Thus based on this definition of leadership, the leader is the binding factor between the organization and the attainment of a goal.

West Point Associates further address the aspect of purpose within the context of organizational leadership. As previously supported in their definition, West Point Associates argue that organizations are inherently meaningful. The extent to which organizations clarify that purpose, however, is essential. This places an added responsibility on the organizational leader to identify the purpose in order to attain task-fulfillment. The effectiveness of the organization depends primarily on this responsibility of the leader. "Without a knowledge of purpose, organizational leaders may find themselves in a reactive rather than a proactive mode of leadership." This isolates the aspect of purpose within the context of organizational leadership. There is

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a direct correlation between the effectiveness of an organization and the extent to which the purpose has been clearly defined by the organizational leader.

Structure is a second important aspect of organizational leadership. James Gardner included theory of large-scale organized systems in his book, On Leadership. One important element in his book distinguished the concepts of leadership and bureaucracy. Gardner identified bureaucracy in terms of formal hierarchies, impersonal relationships and a structure that creates specialized roles for constituents. Leadership, by contrast, reduces complexity, eliminates layering in structure and creates a climate for two-way communication. Communication, Gardner further contends, is one of the most fundamental components of large-scale organizations. Open communication that flows fluently between leaders and followers fosters a sense of belonging to the organizational purpose and further enhances participation. Large-scale organizations, however, are associated to great extent with weak lines of communication. This type of communication leads to impersonal relationships between leaders and followers, and potentially, the subordinate’s loss of identity with the purpose of the organization. Gardner simplified forms of communication affecting organizational structure that were evident in large-scale organizations in two ways. Communication from the leader to the subordinate is downward communication. This type of communication is often distorted as messages are relayed through the hierarchical structure of large-scale organizations. Similarly, upward communication has the tendency to provide organizational leaders with a

6 West Point Associates. Leadership in Organizations. Garden City Park: Avery Publishing Group, 1988,
skewed perception of reality as mixed messages are relayed to leaders from the organizational fronts. Negative characteristics of upward and downward communication identify the strong relationship between effective organizations and the need for strong communication from both the leaders and followers of the organization.

Tesser and Rosen also found that limitations on effective communication exist between leaders and followers in hierarchies. Their research, which supports Gardner's classification of communication, indicates that followers often feel reluctant to reveal bad news because of the potentially negative association that could be attributed back towards them. The MUM effect, keeping mum about undesirable messages reconfirms the necessity of strong communication within the organizational structure.

Gardner also presented another argument which links effective communication to the ability to solve problems in large-scale organizations. The level of motivation of an organization directly relates to the amount of ownership of the problem that an individual perceives to possess. Constituents who feel as if they are working towards the solution of an organizational goal will sustain higher levels of motivation.

Gardner argues that the greatest number of individuals should be included in the ownership of the problem. Neglect of constituent ownership with problems that the

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organization faces contributes to a lack of subordinate communication and, in the
long-term, weakens the organizational structure.9

James McGregor Burns also examined the differences between leadership and
bureaucracy in organizations, but from the perspective of organizational power.
Burns included the importance of a formal authority in his conception of bureaucratic
leadership. The formal authority is responsible for regulating the constituents in the
organizational hierarchy. Burns defines bureaucracy as “the world of explicitly
formulated goals, rules and procedures, and givens that define and regulate the place
of its ‘members,’ a world of specialization and expertise, with the roles of individuals
minutely specified and differentiated.”10 Due to their formal hierarchical structure,
bureaucracies tend to preserve the status quo rather than embrace change for
continued improvement. Burns argues that “power in bureaucracies is arbitrary,
unless guided by purpose.” The element of control that Burns addressed creates an
emphasis on the formal authority as the organizational leader. It also questions the
extent to which the formal authority affects other roles in the organization.

An assessment of the different types of power could help clarify Burns’s
rationale for placing the formal authority in the center of bureaucracies. French and
Raven developed a taxonomy that classified five types of power: reward power,
coercive power, legitimate power, referent power and expert power. Reward power is
exemplified in a leader’s ability to distribute positive or negative reinforcers to
subordinates. If a leader manipulates punishments to achieve a desired behavior from

a follower, coercive power is utilized. Referent power stems from a follower’s respect or identification with the leader. An example of expert power is a follower’s compliance with an order based on the assumption that the leader has superior skills and abilities. Similar to expert power, legitimate power is “the powerholder’s legitimate right to require and demand compliance.”\textsuperscript{11} This type of power best illustrates Burn’s use of formal authority as a means of regulating bureaucracies. Legitimate authority is derived from the group process itself rather than specific individual attributes. The roles, norms and structure of the organization all affect the extent to which legitimate power influences organizational behavior.

The definition of roles within the organizational structure identifies constituent’s expected behavior. The structure of the organization and the formal authority’s influence on the subordinates, however, can greatly impact the definition of those roles. Both Burns and Gardner argued that the formal, impersonal structure of hierarchies can have a negative affect on a constituent. Forsyth indicated two concepts that bridge the roles of leaders and followers to the organizational structure. An individual of an organization may experience role ambiguity if he or she is uncertain of the role for which he or she feels responsible. Likewise, if an individual is serving multiple roles and the expectations of each role are incompatible, that person might experience role conflict.\textsuperscript{12} A formal authority may experience these examples of role stress or they might act as the cause for creating role conflict or role

ambiguity. By nature, hierarchies are more vulnerable to these leadership conflicts, which potentially result in the degradation of employee performance and long-term ineffectiveness of the organization.

Performance is a fourth component essential in the creation of a leadership framework for organizational behavior and is dependent upon the three aforementioned aspects of organizations. Under West Point Associates' argument that organizations are inherently meaningful, the purpose provides a group with a task and a reason for existence. The structure outlines the arrangement of the roles and the method by which individuals of the group will reach the desired task. The power within the organization, or the formal authority, influences the structure of the system while guiding constituents toward task-fulfillment. The effectiveness of the organization and the extent to which it reaches the desired outcome, then, depends on the group performance.

Goal setting and the creation of a vision are two important concepts that organizations must utilize when attempting to enhance group performance. Gary Latham and Edwin Locke researched the effects of goal setting in business organizations and identified the concept as a highly effective means of increasing employee performance. Based on their research, Locke and Latham derived criteria for setting, obtaining and providing support for goals. Research findings first suggested that goals should be specific rather than vague. Specific goals lead to a clear definition of what is expected. Second, goals should be challenging, yet
attainable. A goal that is set too low will be readily accomplished and will not
provide sufficient motivation to enhance performance. Goals that are set too high will
not be accepted by followers and will dissuade them from performing at their best.
Once a goal is established, the leader has a responsibility to support the goal that has been created and follow through with enforcement. If an individual is resisting a goal, Locke and Latham identified several steps that can be taken to overcome resistance. First, training can develop an individual's skill level and self-confidence. Second, allowing an individual to participate in the goal-setting process instills motivation by creating an identification between the individual and the goal. Finally, various types of rewards can be offered to individuals should they actually achieve their goals.
While an individual or a group is striving to achieve a desired goal, a leader must provide support by supplying adequate resources, allowing the individual or group enough autonomy to attain the goal and providing feedback which allows individuals to evaluate their performance in relation to their goals. Although research supports goal-setting as an effective tool for enhancing group performance, "goal commitment [ultimately] reflects compliance with legitimate authority or power."13

Kouzes and Posner focus on a second important concept needed to enhance organizational performance. Listed among their ten commitments of leadership, Kouzes and Posner identify the concept of a shared vision. Sharing a vision among subordinates increases employee identification with the organization and sets short-term or long-term goals for which to strive. The important characteristic of a shared

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vision, as proposed by Kouzes and Posner, is the element of optimism. An optimistic vision for the future that appeals to subordinate’s values, interests, hopes and dreams enables organizations to collaborate and work effectively towards achieving a common goal. It also adds an aspect of flexibility to the organizational structure, which is essential to organizations that are consistently challenged to make changes for future improvement.\textsuperscript{14}

A final component that is necessary for continued organizational development is organizational change. Change is a complex problem for most organizations, especially structured hierarchies. Both Gardner and Burns indicated variables essential in the transformation of bureaucracies into leadership organizations. Gardner emphasized two concepts that could facilitate the change process. His first notion paralleled Kouzes and Posner’s leadership commitments: “a widely shared understanding of the organization’s goals and values will do much to ensure cohesiveness even when the various parts of the organization are given considerable autonomy.”\textsuperscript{15} Gardner’s second emphasis focused on the concept of renewal. Leaders must attempt to renew values that have become hypocritical, reenergize goals and foster human growth within organizations.\textsuperscript{16}

Burns’s approach also paralleled Kouzes and Posner regarding the need for values, yet maintained the importance of power in specific regard to the formal

authority: “If [leaders] respond to wider sets of values than the narrow organizational
norms, if these dynamic forces engage person’s needs and motives and hence manifest
themselves in new power patterns and alignments, then the bureaucracy may become
a seedbed for change.”

Change from traditional bureaucracies according to Burns involves the restructuring of the formal hierarchy in a manner in which legitimate
power is accessed by subordinates rather than directed at them.

With the understanding of this theoretical framework defining significant
components of organizational leadership, a comparison between the University of
Richmond fraternity system and a leadership plan already implemented at another
university can clarify the extent to which this institution needs to address current
problems. The University of Maryland formally adopted The Maryland Plan in the
Fall of 1995 and set the precedent as the first university to establish a clear type of
regulation that confronted the dilemma of how much control institutions should
exercise over social organizations. After severe problems with their Greek system,
the University of Maryland administration created nineteen standards by which
fraternities must abide in order to maintain non-restricted recognition by the
University. These nineteen standards encompassed every aspect of fraternity life. For
example, Standard One of The Maryland Plan focused on the area of academic
performance: “each chapter must have an overall grade point average for its full
current membership that is above the respective male and female campus averages.”

A second powerful precedent instated was The Maryland Plan’s third standard. It

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proposed the clarification of “pledge education” as “member education.” It also
decreased the period of fraternity pledging by two weeks for each consecutive year
starting in 1995. By first de-emphasizing the common usage of the identity associated
with the new members, the University of Maryland placed an emphasis the reduction
of the negative image associated with fraternity pledging. Ultimately, the plan
suggested the elimination of pledging altogether by the year 2000.

Greek organization’s participation with non-Greek organizations through the hosting
of a special program was also reinforced in Standard Eleven. This promoted the
interaction between Greeks and non-Greeks in a positive manner that contributed to
the University community. Additionally, community service and relations with
alumni and national organizations were also stressed in the effort to initiate a change
of perception for the Greek system.

To enforce these standards, the University of Maryland created an
implementations packet which composed of checklists and specific instructions that
student leaders could easily follow to meet the proposed criteria. Almost every
standard was accompanied by a formal document required to be submitted by the
leaders of each social fraternity.

The methodology for data retrieval and interpretation was minimal considering
the focus of this project was the development of a leadership plan that clearly
articulates the relationship between Greek and administrative leaders. An interview
was conducted to attain a better understanding of the effectiveness of The Maryland

Plan and assess its relation to the context of organizational leadership\textsuperscript{19}. Informal interviews were then conducted with members of the University of Richmond administrative and Greek leaders to examine the feasibility of implementing this type of regulatory measure into the University of Richmond community. The World Wide Web and First Search facilitated the research of articles pertaining to organizational leadership and models for implementing change within organizations. Additional resources were also obtained through a library search.

Limitations on the retrieval of data, specifically in regard to the University of Richmond's function as leader of the Greek system, stemmed from the nature of the system itself. Administrative and student leaders were hesitant to admit formal opinions concerning the structure of the Richmond Greek system. The avoidance of confrontation surfaced as a primary objective for leaders currently contributing to the system and served as an excellent example of the magnitude to which members of Greek system, as an organization, resist change.

Results indicate that The Maryland Plan exemplifies many of the theoretical components of organizational leadership. The University of Maryland effectively established a clear set of standards for fraternities; thus, established themselves as the legitimate authority of the system. This definition of leadership within the Greek system at the University of Maryland eliminated role ambiguity and role stress that both administrative and Greek leaders potential experienced. The method by which the institution implemented the standards, however, is questionable. The Greek

\textsuperscript{19} Supple, Matt. Personal Interview. 2 April 1997
culture at the University of Maryland deteriorated to the point where the administration was obligated to firmly establish a definition between fraternities and sororities. This drastic measure of regulation exhibited downward communication and did not empower fraternity leaders to contribute to the improvement of the system. The administration merely created a new, higher standard by which fraternities had to abide. Maryland’s use of formal documentation exemplified the implementation of goal setting. Although the aim of this action was to improve the overall performance and condition of Maryland’s Greek system, it also strengthened the organizational hierarchy of the system.

Influential administrative leaders who implemented The Maryland Plan indicated that fraternity leader’s initial reaction to the standards was negative. Fraternity leaders were narrow-minded to organizational change. Only by consistently reiterating the purpose of the plan to Greek leaders were the administrative leaders able to initiate the changes into the system. The two year transition period has greatly improved communication between the Greek and administrative leaders. Fraternity members are now beginning to fully understand the direction for which the institution is striving. The overall response of the administration, however, is mixed. Some of the administrators feel as if this action only confuses the relationship between fraternity and administrative leaders. They further contend that it is not the role that the University of Maryland should be playing. The effectiveness of the organization is identified by the ratio of the number of fraternities who are currently not recognized to the total number of fraternities at
the University of Maryland. Only three fraternities are currently on probation or suspension for not complying with the new system. Although this situation does not exactly parallel the University of Richmond's current Greek problem, it does serve as a strong model of comparison.

Based on the literature review, my previous experiences as a Greek leader and The Maryland Plan serving as a model for potential change, I redefined my perspective regarding the University of Richmond Greek system and identified the problems as they pertained to the aforementioned theoretical framework for organizational leadership. The purpose of the University of Richmond Greek system, as an organization, is not clear and should be determined by the organizational leader. This lack of purpose, based on the argument presented by West Point Associates, promotes a reactive rather than a proactive mode of leadership. The University of Richmond administration acts in response to issues that arise rather than leading the existing social organizations toward some type of healthy change.

The Greek system at the University of Richmond is a formal hierarchy and is bureaucratic by nature. This hierarchical structure exhibits weak links of communication between perceived Greek and administrative leaders. Weak lines of communication combined with the lack of a clear organizational purpose and a reactive mode of leadership creates the inconsistent enforcement of policy that is clearly evident. I argue that the current leadership structure is designed for the University administration to monitor and informally control the Greek organizations through the Office of Student Activities. This leadership structure does not promote
growth within the individual components of the system and is not conducive to organizational change. Additionally, only a limited number of external constituents, such as national fraternity representatives, are being encouraged to take ownership in the problems that currently face the University of Richmond Greek system.

The organizational structure of our system does yield the identification of specialized roles on multiple levels, but the question still remains: who is the formal leader? Greek leaders perceive the administration as a legitimate authority. This perception is created by the University’s reactive actions to problems that arise periodically. However, the administration does not consistently serve as a formal authority who is involved in the ongoing progress and attainment of organizational goals. The University, rather, isolates itself from the position of formal leader by relying on an unclear policy of self-governance. The identification of the formal leadership from Greek and administrative perspectives is inconsistent. As a result, this inconsistency creates role stress and ambiguity, which hinders clarity between the University of Richmond administration and Greek organizations.

A problem results from the above weaknesses in organizational purpose, power and structure. The University of Richmond administration, as a formal organizational leader, is not exercising enough control over Greek organizations. Yet fraternities are held to expectations that are not clearly outlined by University leaders. Based on both my previous experiences as a constituent in the system and the theoretical framework of organization leadership previous identified, the following
leadership plan composed of five recommendations can be implemented into the
Greek system to combat this problem.

**Leadership Plan for Organizational Redesign:**

**Recommendation 1:**

The University of Richmond needs to firmly define fraternities as either University-recognized and supported organizations or independent entities. Defining the leadership role of the University administration to fraternity organizations is essential in eliminating inconsistent messages sent to University students. The effectiveness of the organizational structure and the attainment of organizational purposes is contingent upon a clear definition of the formal authority.

**Recommendation 2:**

Once this relationship is defined, alumni boards can serve as the regulatory liaison between fraternities and the University of Richmond administration. A written agreement should hold fraternities accountable to the University administration through the chapter advisors, and vice versa. This type of regulation and improved communication will de-emphasize the formal hierarchy currently present within the system’s leadership structure.

**Recommendation 3:**

Referencing the Maryland plan as a model, Greek fraternity leaders should identify a set of standards by which the University can hold them accountable. These standards should be compatible with the University of Richmond Greek system and social climate. The effectiveness of the leadership plan is contingent upon the Greek affiliates’ initiative towards system change and improvement.

**Recommendation 4:**

Greek leaders should utilize the Greek Life Advisory Board as a means of receiving constructive feedback from the University faculty. Faculty should serve as a primary resource towards the promotion of Greeks contributing value to the University of Richmond community.
Recommendation 5:

Following the implementation of the above recommendations, the Alumni Board, the administrative leaders and the Greek leaders should formally meet to assess and determine the progress of the Greek system towards the year 2000. This evaluative measure will allow these three groups of individuals to review all standards, address problems facing the system and reestablish goals for the future.

This leadership plan is controversial in itself. It questions the firmly established leadership structure of this institution in regard to a extremely traditional, deeply-rooted social system. Our current leadership structure fosters the preservation of the status quo rather than challenging social organizations to improve and contribute to the University community. The resistance to change this organizational structure is enormous by students, faculty and administration. As evidenced by the Maryland Plan, the effectiveness of this organizational change depends on both the administration of this institution and the Greek students. Without the participation of these stakeholders in addition to the participation of the alumni board, resistance to change will only continue and the status quo will be maintained. Yet only by restructuring the system will the social fraternities be able to progress towards reestablishing the ideals on which they were created.
Bibliography


