

**TITLE:** Student Leadership Development as a Supplement to College Fraternity Pledge Programs

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**OBJECTIVE:** To assess the effectiveness of a leadership development component to college fraternity pledge programs.

**METHODOLOGY:** Four fraternity pledge classes were selected from a total of 25 active chapters at the University of Alabama. Two pledge classes completed long (10+ weeks) and two completed short pledge programs. The treatment (enhanced program) consisted of a five session leadership development program supplemental to the chapter's regular pledge education program (long or short). The pre- and post-test sample involved the completion of 70 LPI-Student (self version), for a 86 percent response rate. No demographic data was reported.

**KEY FINDINGS:** Pretest scores showed that the distribution of scores across the five leadership practices was similar, and consistent with data reported by Posner & Brodsky (1992). No significant differences were found between the leadership practices of pledges completing short pledge education programs compared to those completing long programs. Pledges participating in the enhanced pledge education program recorded higher post-test scores on all five leadership practices, with three reaching statistical significance (challenge, model, and encourage). The author states: "...the utilization of a supplemental leadership development component to fraternity pledge education programs did have a significantly positive impact on pledge member leadership development practices" (p. 133). While there were no statistically significant differences between the post-test leadership practices scores of pledges in the control and experimental groups, the author notes several explanations. First, the possibility of sample bias (measurement error), in that pre-test scores revealed that the pledges in the control group were significantly higher on three leadership practices at the pre-test stage. Second, pledges in the control group did not make statistically significant gains in their leadership practices from pre- to post-test administrations.

The author concludes: "This study illustrates the need to incorporate a programmed leadership development instruction component to pledge education programs (p. 135)..Leadership development as a visible component to member development would serve as a possible path to link the fraternity with the academic community" (p. 136). He also notes that "too many efforts at leadership development today focus primarily on the group leader role...at best, these modest attempts represent a benefit of little value to few members. Broad based leadership development programming for all members is called for. Only when this is in place can all members benefit from opportunities for developing their personal skills and abilities to their full potential" (p. 136-7). In a personal note, the author remarks: "Your work holds much promise in our efforts to foster the growth and development of leadership potential in college students."