Spring 5-2018

Exploring Issues of Diversity Experiences in Student Organizations Sponsored by the University of Southern Mississippi

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Exploring Issues of Diversity Experiences in Student Organizations Sponsored by the
University of Southern Mississippi

by

Cornelia Welch-Dick

A Thesis
Submitted to the Honors College of
The University of Southern Mississippi
in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirement for the Degree of
Bachelor of Arts
in the Department of Mass Communication and Journalism

May 2018

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ABSTRACT

Colleges and universities are becoming increasingly racially/ethnically diverse. Previous studies have noted that an increase in racial/ethnic diversity has positive outcomes for minority and majority groups. Additional research supports that positive diversity experiences in student organizations have benefits for college students (Kuk & Banning, 2010; Cheng & Zhao, 2007; Antonio, 2001). While the benefits of increased diversity are clear, no previous study was found to have looked at diversity experiences at USM or more specifically, USM's student organizations. The current study examined the degree to which leaders of each organization perceived experiences of diversity as positive compared to the members' perception of diversity experiences within the organization. This study consisted of 73 college students ages 18-23 who identify as members or leaders of an organization sponsored by the university. In this sample, two organizations showed noteworthy differences in perceptions between the two groups. However, lack of significance in the other organizations provided suggestions for future research.

Keywords: higher education, student affairs, diversity, student organizations

DEDICATION

I dedicate my thesis to my family and close friends who have supported me

through this process. My college experience and interest in higher education student

affairs is owed to you. I also dedicate it to the University of Southern Mississippi. I

believe in the unique and valuable college experience Southern Miss provides its

students, and hope my research helps propel our university into a better and brighter

future.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Many thanks are due to the people who supported and guided me through the thesis writing process. First, I would like to thank my faculty advisor Dr. Holly Foster for teaching me so much about the research process and for being a constant source of wisdom and encouragement. She has helped not only shape my thesis but has had a part in helping me to become a better researcher. Second, I would like to thank Dr. Steven Chestnut who was instrumental in my data interpretation process. I would also like to thank Dr. Shea Kidd-Houze, Laura Laughlin, and Alesha Knox who also helped shape my understanding of my research topic and inspired my research questions. Lastly, I would like to thank my friends and family for supporting me and the Honors College at USM for giving me so many great opportunities to challenge myself and broaden my academic horizons.

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Introduction

The U.S. Census Bureau reports that by 2025, almost half (42%) of the U.S. population will be members of a racial/ethnic minority group (U.S. Census Bureau, 2008). Undergraduate enrollment of Asian/Pacific Islander, Hispanic, and African American student groups in higher education institutions has increased over the last 30 years (NCES, 2010). It is projected that from 2013 to 2024 the enrollment of minority students will increase by the following: African Americans 28%, Non-White Latino/a 25%, and Asian/Pacific Islander 10%. This is compared to a projected 7% increase of White students (Hussar & Bailey, 2014). Although the classroom may now provide racial and ethnic diversity, feelings of inclusiveness and acceptance among minorities at Predominately White Institutions (PWIs) are less prominent. Studies report that underrepresented college students are more likely than other students to have feelings of isolation from their college environment, especially at PWIs (Cox, 2010; Harper & Hurtado, 2007). This lack of inclusivity could negatively impact student success as it relates to findings that an institutional environment that is perceived by students to be supportive, inclusive, and affirming is the single best predictor of students' college satisfaction (Kuh, Kenzie, Buckley, Bridges, & Hayek, 2006; Strange & Benning, 2001).

Involvement in student organizations is also related to educational benefits and college satisfaction. Involvement in student organizations has been found to help students establish a positive self-identity, increase social and academic integration, and improve academic performance (Baker, 2008; Wolf-Wendel, Ward, & Kinzie, 2009). This involvement helps students succeed academically by facilitating out-of-class peer interactions which can positively influence academic development, knowledge

acquisition, analytical and problem-solving skills, and self-esteem (Kuh 1993, 1995). The University of Southern Mississippi (USM) touts itself as having one of the most diverse student bodies in the region (Coll, 2016); however, it is unclear whether USM's student organizations reflect that commitment. Many studies have examined the positive effects diversity experiences in student organizations have on the development of leadership skills and multicultural competence of college students (Kuk & Banning, 2010; Cheng & Zhao, 2007; Antonio, 2001). However, no study has looked at USM students' experiences with diversity to determine their perceptions of diversity experiences in their organizations.

Literature Review

Diversity in Higher Education

Diversity is a term used in the media and in everyday conversation and is often likened to inclusion, acceptance, tolerance, etc. However, diversity is defined as "the condition of having or being composed of differing elements" ("Diversity," 2016). That is, put simply, having a collection of differences. This means diversity can take many different forms depending on the field of study.

Within higher education, discussions of diversity customarily focus on challenges concerning race, ethnicity, gender, class, disability, and sexual orientation ("Defining Institutional Diversity," 2013). It was Justice Louis Powell in the prominent 1978 Supreme Court case of *Regents of the University of California v. Bakke*, who provided the initial precedent for the importance of on-campus racial and ethnic diversity in United States higher education. Two decades later, two former Ivy League university presidents, William Bowen and Derek Bok, brought the phrase "campus diversity" into focus again.

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Their book, *The Shape of the River* (Bowen, Bok, & Shulman, 2000), argued that African Americans who enrolled in selective institutions with active Affirmative Action programs outperformed their peers who attended less selective institutions. This was supported by research of SAT scores at every level (Kuklinski, 2006). Bowen and Bok's measures focused primarily on post-undergraduate achievements such as earnings, graduate degree attainments, and community and civic engagement. More importantly, they described qualitative responses from several survey questions answered by former students, which further supported the quantitative results that diversity had helped them get along better with members of other races. African American and White alumni of elite institutions, such as Yale and Harvard, gave largely positive responses to these questions. Paired with and heightened by the authors' prestige as university presidents, this book strengthened the legitimacy of diversity as a criterion in university admissions, and therefore, intensified and broadened the discussion of it.

Similar discussions of the importance of on-campus diversity gained prominence in the years following the 2003 Supreme Court case of *Grutter v. Bollinger* and the 2013 Supreme Court case of *Fisher v. University of Texas at Austin*. The rulings held from these cases determined that diversity is essential to the university's educational mission because of the educational benefits of student body diversity (Alger, 2013). The educational benefits alluded to by the Supreme Court have been researched and studied for decades. Findings from a 2007 study suggested a relationship between greater diversity in the student body and higher levels of interaction among students from a variety of backgrounds and varying views. In turn, there was a relationship between higher levels of diverse interactions and increases in understanding individuals from

different races and cultures (Pike, Kuh, & Gonyea, 2007).

There are three types of environmental measures relating to issues of diversity: institutional diversity emphasis, faculty diversity emphasis, and student diversity emphasis (Astin, 1993a). Institutional diversity emphasis reflects the perceptions of the overall institutional climate. Examples of institutional diversity emphasis include the extent to which survey participants believe that their institution is committed to increasing the number of minority faculty, increasing the number of minority students, creating a diverse multicultural environment, and developing an appreciation for multiculturalism (Astin, 1993a). Faculty diversity emphasis is based on the faculty's own academic and teaching practices, such as inclusion of readings or research on racial and ethnic issues. Student diversity emphasis examines whether students attended racial/cultural awareness workshops, discussed racial or ethnic issues, or socialized with someone from another racial/ethnic group. Astin administered the survey when the students entered college as freshmen and again when they were seniors. This allowed the researcher to determine if the students' perspectives changed when exposed to diversity experiences.

The strongest positive effects of diversity were present in two outcomes: cultural awareness and commitment to promoting racial understanding. Cultural awareness is one of the developmental outcomes outlined as a goal relevant to most general education programs. In his study, Astin measured cultural awareness based on the students' estimate of how much their undergraduate experience enhanced their understanding and appreciation of other races and cultures (Astin, 1993a). The evidence that a strong emphasis on diversity enhances the student's commitment to promoting racial

understanding is of importance to this study because of the current nationwide attention on race related challenges in higher education institutions. Some scholars argue that emphasizing issues of race and multiculturalism aids in intensifying racial tensions on the campus (D'Souza 1991; Pastor 2010; Sargent 2003). However, the majority agree that diversity promotes racial understanding and appreciation (Bowman & Park 2014; Harper & Quaye 2007; Park 2012, 2013).

Student involvement and engagement in campus activities outside of the academic realm are crucial to student success. Student involvement refers to the amount of physical and psychological energy that a student devotes to the academic experience (Astin, 1984). Astin's (1993b) literature on student retention addresses four contributing factors that affect student success: student involvement/engagement; student interactions with faculty, administrators, and staff; student learning experiences; and student support services. Therefore, Astin concludes a highly-involved student will devote substantial time to studying, spend much time on campus, participate actively in student organizations, and engage with faculty and peers. According to Astin's Student Involvement Theory (1984), the greater the student's involvement in college, the greater the level of personal development and growth the student will exhibit. Astin's theory has been referenced and tested for over two decades through multiple research studies (Foubert & Urbanski, 2006; Lotkowski, Robbins, & Noeth, 2004; Webber, Krylow, & Zhang, 2013). For example, ACT sponsored a study regarding the non-academic factors that affect college retention rates (Lotkowski, Robbins, & Noeth, 2004). The researchers found that student involvement, institutional commitment, and social support have a strong influence on whether students graduate at the same university six years after

beginning coursework, and these factors have a significant effect on the student's GPA (Lotkowski, Robbins, & Noeth, 2004).

The actual experiences that students have with diverse peers offer students personal development opportunities and prepares them for interactions in an increasingly multicultural society. Pascarella and Terenzini (2005) note involvement in experiences of diversity enhances student learning experiences, and the level of student body diversity predicts the degree of student involvement in diversity experiences. Diversity experiences include attending workshops on racial-cultural awareness, discussing racial issues in social groups, interacting with racially/culturally diverse individuals, and developing friendships with students unlike themselves. More importantly, diversity experiences positively affect student learning experiences, as students also reported their own improvement in course knowledge, and felt more likely to graduate (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). Therefore, the importance of diversity experiences cannot be minimized. However, higher education institutions should make use of racial/ethnic diversity by committing their student leaders to strive towards diversity in their organizations because although the presence of a diverse student body is important, the success of the interactions is dependent on meaningful interactions that facilitates conversations of diversity (Gurin, Dey, Hurtado & Gurin, 2002).

Much of the research on student diversity states that students from previously underrepresented groups in higher education feel alienated from the rest of the campus community (Museus, 2008; Rendón and Hope, 1996; Strayhorn, 2008). Minority students in these studies often reported that the campus community is more hostile than welcoming, and administration is insensitive to their interests and needs. The changing

demographics of the country and the increasing diversity within higher education supports the significance of these reported tensions and feelings of being overlooked (Boschini & Thomspon, 1998; Perez & Hirschman, 2009). Literature suggests one way to support minority students on campus is cultural-specific student organizations. Cultural-specific sororities have been studied since undergraduate women of color on Predominantly White Institutions (PWIs) often perceive an unwelcoming campus climate (Castellanos & Gloria, 2007; Garcia, 2005). Cultural-specific sororities are those with a racially and ethnically diverse membership that have cultural values embedded within their founding missions and principles (Boschini & Thompson, 1998). Olivas (1996) found that women of color felt their cultural-specific sorority provided a refuge against a hostile university environment and met the cultural, academic, and social support needs often overlooked by their institution. The cultural-specific organization served as a source of empowerment. The student development research on cultural-specific sororities shows evidence that student groups that provide heightened cultural awareness and enhanced leadership skills, support the positive benefits of increased sense of belonging (Bovell, 2009; Garcia, 2005; Layzer, 2000; Olivas, 1996; Ross, 2001; Stuart, 2008). Ensuring ethnic minorities feel comfortable in student organizations is important. However, until diversity and cultural awareness becomes an institutional value impressed and instilled in its leaders, institutions are falling short in meeting all students' needs. Diversity in student organizations is important for the benefits to the members and the campus community at large. Student organizations play a role in creating and sustaining a campus culture that welcomes diversity (Kuk & Banning, 2010). An organizational approach to diversity has significance for virtually all institutions regardless of the diversity within

their student bodies, for it acknowledges the importance of diversity in society and the

role it plays in the future of the institution.

Diversity at the University of Southern Mississippi

The University of Southern Mississippi (USM) located in Hattiesburg was

founded in 1910 by legislative act as Mississippi's first state-supported teacher training

school. It was not until September 1965, that USM enrolled its first African American

students, Raylawni Branch and Gwendolyn Elaine Armstrong ("Desegregation at

Southern Miss," 2016). Over five decades later, the student body at USM is more diverse

than it has ever been, as 37 percent of the 15,000-student population is considered

minority, representing over 74 countries ("About," 2016). *Forbes Magazine* reports the

university's demographics as 0.4% American Indian or Alaskan native, 1.2% Asian,

0.1% Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, 27.2% Black or African American, 3%

Hispanic/Latino, 2.4% two or more races, 0.8% unnamed, and 62.5% White students

("University of Southern Mississippi," 2015). The university recently made financial

investments supporting its commitment to diversity. In July 2016, USM announced the

hiring of Dr. Latonya Guillory as Director of Affirmative Action/Equal Employment

Opportunity. USM administrators also allotted funds to create two graduate assistantships

within the university's Title IX office.

In 2015, USM administration selected a group of faculty, staff, students, and

community leaders, to serve as the Institutional Diversity Committee. The committee is

charged with ensuring the university lives by the values it outlines, and to take a

supporting role in university conversations related to inclusion. The committee works to

identify and address issues of inclusivity by actively engaging the university community

and counseling USM leaders on policies, procedures, and programs that will encourage the institution to operate according to the values outlined in the non-discrimination policy statement (Coll, 2016). However, although enrollment of minority students has increased in recent years and the university is more diverse than ever before, evidence that these students feel accepted and included in their university organization has not been studied.

Purpose

This study will look at whether organizational leadership's perceptions of diversity are different from the members' perceptions and engagement in USM sponsored student organizations. The research will attempt to determine if there is consistency or discrepancy in organizational leadership's perception of diversity when compared with members' perceptions of diversity. This study will also examine whether members' perceptions of student organization diversity affect their self-reported level of involvement/connectedness to the organization and institution.

Research questions:

- Is there consistency in organizational leadership's perception of diversity, when compared with members' perceptions?

- Do members' perceptions of student organization diversity affect their self-reported level of involvement/connectedness to the organization and institution?

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Methods

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Participants

Data for this study was collected in 2017. The participants of this study were 73 undergraduate college students ranging in age from $18 - 23$ years ($M = 20.33$ $SD = 0.94$)

who attend the University of Southern Mississippi and are members of one or more of the 11 student organizations sponsored by the University of Southern Mississippi as registered by the Leadership and Student Involvement Office. The undergraduate organizations included in this study have a faculty or staff advisor, no national headquarters, and are not delineated as a Greek governing body. Fifty-three participants identified as White non-Hispanic (72%), fourteen as African American (19%), three as Multi-Racial (4%), two as Asian (2%), and one as Latinx (1%). Two were classified as freshmen (2%), fourteen as sophomores (19%), thirty as juniors (41%), and twenty-seven as seniors (36%). This sample is representative of the demographic of the student body of the university.

A preliminary email requesting a list of active members was sent to all eleven of the organizations' presidents as well as the faculty or staff advisor, as registered and provided by the Leadership and Student Involvement Office. Six organizations provided rosters. The Student Government Association President supplied the leadership roster but could not provide a full membership roster. However, the president said the executive board would distribute it to their individual branch members. Two organizations, Graduate Student Senate and the College of Health Ambassadors, did not reply to the email. Once the membership rosters were received or advisors complied to distribute, email invitations were first sent to the leaders of the organization. After the leaders responded, the members were sent email invitations. For the organizations whose advisors would not release rosters, an email was sent to the advisors with specific instructions on how to distribute the emails to the leaders and then to the members; the emails were identical to what participants would have received had they been sent

directly from the researcher. Those who chose to participate completed a survey through the secure online server, SurveyMonkey. Responses were collected anonymously. The total number of respondents was 79; however, six respondents did not finish the survey and were removed; the total number of usable cases was 73. The university's Institutional Review Board (IRB) approved this proposal prior to data collection.

<div align="center">**Measures**</div>

ADVANCE Diversity Survey Menu. Texas A & M University's (TAMU) ADVANCE Social Science Studies Team developed the ADVANCE Diversity Survey for inclusion on any TAMU Diversity survey ("Diversity Survey Menu", 2010). Texas A&M University faculty created the ADVANCE Diversity Survey to help ensure the institution met its goals of understanding the workplace climate. It was also created in hopes of providing a good picture of the challenges and successes in different units of the university ("Diversity Survey Menu", 2010). This survey offers a set of baseline questions that can be used to develop surveys for faculty, staff, or students that are relevant to the challenges and concerns about diversity issues. The scales provided are well-developed, validated, and published scales that have good psychometric properties. These scales have met the high standards of the Social Science Studies Team, making it more likely that these scales provide an accurate assessment of the member's experiences in the organizations. Some sample items include, "At Texas A&M, diverse perspectives are valued," and "in my department/unit/major people from different backgrounds get along well." Participants respond on a five-point Likert scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The student section was used, but some of the language was adjusted to fit the focus of this study on student organizations.

ACES Diversity Climate Survey. The ACES Diversity Climate Survey (Ng, Skorupski, & Wolf, 2013) serves as a reliable and valid instrument to assess faculty support of diversity goals in the United States. It divides questions into four components: attitude towards diversity (general attitude questions); career activities (research, teaching, service, and some professional norms questions); environment (questions about perceptions of institutional climate for diversity); and social interactions with diverse groups (questions about interpersonal relationships). The attitudes toward diversity, environment, and social interactions with diverse group's components of the ACES survey were used to form the three categories of questions – University, Organization, and Peer for this study's survey. Some sample items include, "hiring a more diverse faculty should be a priority at my university," and "issues of diversity are unrelated to the content of my courses." Participants respond on a five-point Likert scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Some language was modified to address students instead of employees to fit the focus of this study on student organizations.

Procedure

First, members of the executive board, leadership council, or other "title holders" within the organization were invited to participate in the survey. Twenty-eight leaders were invited, and three organization advisors were asked to forward the initial survey to the leaders of their respective organizations. The invitation to participate was distributed via email during the first two months of the fall semester. The confidential survey was completed through the secure online website SurveyMonkey. After completing an online informed consent, participants completed a demographic questionnaire that asked for age, academic classification, major, gender, organization affiliation, and race/ethnicity. This

was followed by three sets of questions measured on a four-point scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 4 (strongly agree). A four-point scale with an option for "N/A" was chosen over a five-point to exclude a neutral option. Educational researcher Kwok Tsang suggests the limitations caused by a midpoint option in a Likert scale may be minimized by using an "N/A" option and four points (Tsang, 2012).

First, participants answered questions about their perceptions of diversity at USM. Next, participants responded to questions about their perceptions of diversity within their specific student organizations. Lastly, students responded to questions of how issues of diversity take place in their peer-to-peer interactions. The three categories served as tools to gauge the leadership participants' views of diversity at an institutional level, in relation to the leadership role held in their student organization, and finally in social peer-to-peer interactions. This allowed for a more comprehensive analysis of the leadership's perception towards diversity. The survey asked participants for their perspectives on the importance of diversity in different spheres of their university life to help ensure that participants were not responding based on self-presentation bias, or the behavior that attempts to convey some image of oneself (or organization) based on what is more favorable in society (Arkin, Appelman, & Burger, 1980).

Next, general members (non-title holding members) of the organizations not previously surveyed were invited to participate in the survey to evaluate the data of members' responses while in the organization as general members. Two-hundred and five individuals were invited to participate, and three organization advisors as well as Student Government Association executive officers were instructed on how to distribute the invitation to their members. The invitation to participate was distributed by email during

the last two months of the fall semester. The confidential survey was completed through SurveyMonkey. After completing an online informed consent, participants completed a demographic questionnaire followed by questions using the same categories and organization as the leadership survey (University, Organization, Peer). Keeping the organization of the questions for general members in the same three categories as the leadership survey questions allowed for comparison between responses. However, where the initial study completed by organizational leaders included specific questions on their role as leaders, the membership survey included questions focused on their experiences as a non-title holding member.

Data Analysis

JASP, an open-source statistical analysis program (JASP, 2018) was used to analyze the data. The leadership's commitment towards diversity and the students' diversity experiences in the organizations are the dependent variables. There were six incomplete responses which were removed. Additionally, the Graduate Student Senate and the College of Health Ambassadors were removed from the study based on no respondents identifying with the organizations. The descriptive statistics were reviewed to determine the number of participants and who comprised the population. Analyses were conducted on composite scores for each of the constructs (e.g., ADVANCE Diversity Survey Menu). The composite scores were calculated by averaging the scores of the leaders of each organization and then the members of each organization for each section of the survey. To test the hypotheses, the composite of the leadership/title-holder was compared to the composite of the general members of their organizations responses in data analysis through T-tests. T-tests show the differences between two means, how

significant those differences are, or how likely it is the results happened by chance (T-Test, 2018).

After reviewing the individual responses, question 10 in the organization section was removed from both survey sets. The question was reversed scored but an overwhelming majority of respondents answered as though it was not. There was inconsistency in questions two and four when compared with other questions in the set which targeted what a participant thinks should be done at the university level regarding diversity, thus, they were removed.

Results

The following sections will present the description and explanation of the results. An independent samples t-test was conducted to determine the differences in organization composite scores between members and leaders of each organization. Based on a statistically significant difference $t(27) = 2.06$, $p = 0.04$, leaders of the Honors College ($N = 9$, $M = 3.51$, $SD = 0.42$) had a more positive view of diversity experiences within the organization than members of the Honors College ($N = 20$, $M = 3.09$, $SD = 0.54$). Although, the results were not statistically significant $t(29) = 1.97$, $p = 0.058$, the large effect size ($d = 0.71$), shows that the leaders of the Student Government Association ($N = 14$, $M = 3.44$, $SD = 0.35$) had a more positive view of diversity experiences than the organization's members ($N = 17$, $M = 3.09$, $SD = 0.58$). The lack of significant difference could be could be due to the small sample size. The other organizations' leadership and membership responses showed no statistically significant differences.

Discussion

Given the importance of diversity and student involvement in student success in

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higher education and the emphasis placed on diversity at this university, the purpose of this research was to assess the value Southern Miss student organizational leaders place on diversity and how organizational members perceive diversity experiences within their organization.

There was a significant difference in the way leaders of the Honors College and the members of the Honors College responded to their experiences with diversity. The leaders of the Honors College reported more positive experiences with diversity, while the members of the Honors College reported less positive experiences. Leaders and members of the Student Government Association did not have significant differences but showed observable differences regarding experiences with diversity. Like the Honors College, the leaders reported more positive experiences than the members. Leaders of both organizations reported valuing diversity and holding it at as a tenant of their organization. However, members reported valuing diversity themselves, but not always seeing that value reflected in their organization. The members of the Student Government Association cabinet, judicial board, philanthropy commission, and election commission are selected by an application and interview process led by an executive board of elected peers. The members of the Honors College are selected through an application process reviewed by university faculty and staff. The selective nature of these organizations may help explain why members feel diversity is not a consistent value held and communicated throughout their organization. In fact, six of the 29 Honors College respondents and five of the 31 SGA respondents felt as though they were selected for membership based on their race/ethnicity.

The Dixie Darlings' results showed no significant difference between the leaders'

and members' perceptions of diversity. However, five of the six total respondents agreed that they do not believe their organization plays a role in promoting the importance of diversity at the university. This organization is a prominent and historic organization on campus, but given its history as an organization founded before the university's integration, the organization may not hold diversity as a central tenet. If the university wants to be as inclusive as they claim, then the importance of minority representation and positive experiences with diversity on this team needs to be impressed upon the organization's members.

The five remaining organizations also showed no significant differences. The Afro-American Student Organization, Eagle Connection, Luckyday Citizenship Program, Student Eagle Club, and the Southern Miss Activities Council are all prominent organizations serving different populations of the student body. As a culturally-specific organization, a student recruiter training organization, a service-based academic scholarship program, an athletic promotion organization, and the campus activities council, respectively, further research should explore these organizations' diversity curriculum.

Limitations. There were limitations and challenges in this research. Some organizational advisors did not release their membership roster; therefore, the total invited population is unknown. Additionally, the removal of two organizations, the Graduate Student Senate and the College of Health Ambassadors, from the study prevented further examination into how academic-specific organizations view diversity.

Suggestions for Future Research. Future studies should consider including Greek organizations to examine the effect of historic segregation on members' view of

diversity. Further, based on the results of this study it would be important to refine the survey questions for clarity and specificity to narrow the broad topic of diversity. The lack of significant results from four of the organizations could mean both leaders and members have a positive view of diversity within their organizations, or it could mean neither leaders nor members consider diversity experiences within their organizations. Questions should be developed to make this distinction. Finally, it may also be valuable to explore the effects of long-term multicultural competence curriculum and training on the organizations researched in this study. Exploring these factors might explain why some organizations display more awareness to the importance of diversity while others do not. For example, comparing the views on diversity of Southern Style and Eagle Connection before their training or orientation period to the views of their members after this training, could help identify what factors lead to advanced multicultural competence. Any one of these considerations holds potential for future research.

Conclusion

These results bring light to historic and systemic issues of diversity that some organizations face. This study is not suggesting that these organizations' advisors and leaders are not currently making attempts to improve the perception of diversity within their organizations; it is to help leaders understand how their efforts are perceived. Though leaders of the organization may value diversity and hold it as a tenet of their organization, this must be communicated from the top down. Efforts to increase positive diversity experiences should be made clear and impressed upon organizational members. This may lead to an alignment in the leaders and members' views of diversity and benefit the organization as well as the campus community.

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APPENDIX A

THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN MISSISSIPPI.

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD
118 College Drive #5147 | Hattiesburg, MS 39406-0001
Phone: 601.266.5997 | Fax: 601.266.4377 | www.usm.edu/research/institutional.review.board

NOTICE OF COMMITTEE ACTION

The project has been reviewed by The University of Southern Mississippi Institutional Review Board in accordance with Federal Drug Administration regulations (21 CFR 26, 111), Department of Health and Human Services (45 CFR Part 46), and university guidelines to ensure adherence to the following criteria:

- The risks to subjects are minimized.
- The risks to subjects are reasonable in relation to the anticipated benefits.
- The selection of subjects is equitable.
- Informed consent is adequate and appropriately documented.
- Where appropriate, the research plan makes adequate provisions for monitoring the data collected to ensure the safety of the subjects.
- Where appropriate, there are adequate provisions to protect the privacy of subjects and to maintain the confidentiality of all data.
- Appropriate additional safeguards have been included to protect vulnerable subjects.
- Any unanticipated, serious, or continuing problems encountered regarding risks to subjects must be reported immediately, but not later than 10 days following the event. This should be reported to the IRB Office via the "Adverse Effect Report Form".
- If approved, the maximum period of approval is limited to twelve months.
  Projects that exceed this period must submit an application for renewal or continuation.

PROTOCOL NUMBER: 17050501
PROJECT TITLE: Exploring Issues of Diversity Experiences in Student Organizations Sponsored by the University of Southern Mississippi
PROJECT TYPE: New Project
RESEARCHER(S): Cornelia Wech-Dick
COLLEGE/DIVISION: College of Education and Psychology
DEPARTMENT: Educational Research and Administration
FUNDING AGENCY/SPONSOR: N/A
IRB COMMITTEE ACTION: Exempt Review Approval
PERIOD OF APPROVAL: 05/08/2017 to 05/07/2018
Lawrence A. Hosman, Ph.D.
Institutional Review Board

Leadership Survey
1. Sex/Gender
    a. Male
    b. Female
    c. Intersex
    d. Transgender
    e. Not listed- please specify
2. Race/Ethnic Identification (check all that apply)
    a. African-American/Black
    b. Latina/o or Hispanic
    c. Asian
    d. American Indian/Alaska Native
    e. Native Hawaiian/Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander
    f. White
    g. Multi-Racial
    h. Not Specified
3. Age
4. Classification (by years not hours):
    a. First year
    b. Second year
    c. Third year
    d. Fourth year
    e. Graduate level
5. Organization affiliation (choose all that apply):
    a. Southern Style
    b. College of Health Ambassadors
    c. Graduate Student Senate
    d. Southern Miss Activities Council
    e. Afro-American Student Organization
    f. Dixie Darlings
    g. Student Eagle Club
    h. Eagle Connection
    i. Luckyday Leadership Team
    j. Student Government Association
    k. Honors College Ambassadors
6. Describe your leadership/officer position for one organization listed above.
7. How long have you been a member of this organization?
    a. 1 year
    b. 2 years
    c. 3 years
    d. 4 years
    e. 5 years

8. Respond in regard to the University of Southern Mississippi: (1-Strongly Disagree 4-Strongly Agree or N/A)
    a. Diversity should be a factor considered in student admissions at my university.
    b. Top leaders of the university are committed to diversity.
    c. Diverse perspectives are valued at my university.
    d. At my university, top leaders prefer people who are similar to them.
    e. Hiring a more diverse faculty/staff should be a priority at my university.
    f. Regardless of students' background characteristics, everyone in the U.S. should have an equal opportunity to attend college.
    g. It is important that female faculty members serve as leaders in my university and field.
    h. Too much attention on diversity can divide the campus community.
    i. Increased diversity at my university is beneficial to minority and majority groups.
    j. I am sensitive to the existence of institutionalized racism and microaggressions.
9. Respond in regards to one organization you hold an executive title: (1-Strongly Disagree- 4-Strongly Agree or N/A)
    a. People from different backgrounds get along well in my organization.
    b. Racial and ethnic diversity is represented in my student organization.
    c. Increasing the participation of people from diverse backgrounds is a priority in my organization.
    d. I and other organizational leaders consider issues of race, ethnicity, and gender in our membership selection process a priority.
    e. Issues of diversity are not relevant to the work of my student organization.
    f. I strive to exhibit racial and cultural sensitivity in my organization.
    g. It is a priority of my organization to consider many diverse perspectives in our decision making.
    h. My organization plays a role in promoting the importance of diversity at our university.
    i. Racially and culturally diverse students are valued in our organization.
    j. My organization feels an obligation to have at least some ethnic diversity in our organization.
10. Respond in regards to your peer interaction. (1-Strongly Disagree- 4-Strongly Agree or N/A)
    a. Many of my friends are involved in the same involvement circles.
    b. Many of my friendships are based on similarity in upbringing/background.
    c. In a room full of new people, it is easiest to gravitate toward people who look like me.
    d. I like to engage in political discussions of race, sex, and civil rights.
    e. If my friend makes a racist, sexist, or homophobic joke I will address them.
    f. If my friend makes a racist, sexist, or homophobic joke I will not respond.
    g. If my friend makes a racist, sexist, or homophobic joke I will tell them to speak more quietly.

h. If my friend makes a racist, sexist, or homophobic joke I will laugh.

Membership Survey

1. Sex/Gender
   a. Male
   b. Female
   c. Intersex
   d. Transgender
   e. Not listed- please specify
2. Race/Ethnic Identification (check all that apply)
   a. African-American/Black
   b. Latina/o or Hispanic
   c. Asian
   d. American Indian/Alaska Native
   e. Native Hawaiian/Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander
   f. White
   g. Multi-Racial
   h. Not Specified
3. Age
4. Classification (by years not hours):
   a. First year
   b. Second year
   c. Third year
   d. Fourth year
   e. Fifth year
   f. Graduate level
5. Organization affiliation (choose all that apply):
   a. Southern Style
   b. College of Health Ambassadors
   c. Graduate Student Senate
   d. Southern Miss Activities Council
   e. Afro-American Student Organization
   f. Dixie Darlings
   g. Student Eagle Club
   h. Eagle Connection
   i. Luckyday
   j. Student Government Association
   k. Honors College
6. For the purpose of this study you will select one of the above organizations you will answer questions in regard to.
   a. Southern Style
   b. College of Health Ambassadors
   c. Graduate Student Senate
   d. Southern Miss Activities Council
   e. Afro-American Student Organization
   f. Dixie Darlings
   g. Student Eagle Club

       h. Eagle Connection
       i. Luckyday
       j. Student Government Association
       k. Honors College
7. How long have you been a member of this organization?
       a. 1 year
       b. 2 years
       c. 3 years
       d. 4 years
       e. 5 years
8. Respond in regard to the University of Southern Mississippi: (1-Strongly Disagree 4-Strongly Agree or N/A)
       a. Diversity should be a factor considered in student admissions at my university.
       b. Top leaders of the university are committed to diversity.
       c. Diverse perspectives are valued at my university.
       d. At my university, top leaders prefer people who are similar to them.
       e. Hiring a more diverse faculty/staff should be a priority at my university.
       f. Regardless of students' background characteristics, everyone in the U.S. should have an equal opportunity to attend college.
       g. It is important that female faculty members serve as leaders in my university and field.
       h. Too much attention on diversity can divide the campus community.
       i. Increased diversity at my university is beneficial to minority and majority groups.
       j. I am sensitive to the existence of institutionalized racism and microagressions.
9. Respond in regard to one organization you hold an executive title: (1-Strongly Disagree- 4-Strongly Agree or N/A)
       a. People from different backgrounds get along well in my organization.
       b. Racial and ethnic diversity is represented in my student organization.
       c. Increasing the participation of people from diverse backgrounds is a priority in my organization.
       d. I believe my organization's leaders consider issues of race, ethnicity, and gender in our membership selection process a priority.
       e. Issues of diversity are not relevant to the work of my student organization.
       f. I believe I was selected for my organization based on my race, ethnicity, or other aspects of my identity.
       g. It is a priority of my organization to consider many diverse perspectives in our decision making.
       h. My organization plays a role in promoting the importance of diversity at our university.
       i. Racially and culturally diverse students are valued in our organization.
       j. My organization feels an obligation to have at least some ethnic diversity in our organization.

10. Respond in regards to your peer interaction. (1-Strongly Disagree- 4-Strongly Agree or N/A)
    a. Many of my friends are involved in the same involvement circles.
    b. Many of my friendships are based on similarity in upbringing/background.
    c. In a room full of new people, it is easiest to gravitate toward people who look like me.
    d. I like to engage in political discussions of race, sex, and civil rights.
    e. If my friend makes a racist, sexist, or homophobic joke I will address them.
    f. If my friend makes a racist, sexist, or homophobic joke I will not respond.
    g. If my friend makes a racist, sexist, or homophobic joke I will tell them to speak more quietly.
    h. If my friend makes a racist, sexist, or homophobic joke I will laugh.

Organizations

1. Southern Style
2. College of Health Ambassadors
3. Graduate Student Senate
4. Southern Miss Activities Council
5. Afro-American Student Organization
6. Dixie Darlings
7. Student Eagle Club
8. Eagle Connection
9. Luckyday
10. Student Government Association
11. Honors College