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**BUILDING A RECIPROCAL PARTNERSHIP: A CASE STUDY OF THE
RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH DAKOTA
AND ITS PRIVATELY-OWNED SORORITY AND FRATERNITY
HOUSING**

Kelli L. Susemihl

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RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH DAKOTA AND ITS
PRIVATELY-OWNED SORORITY AND FRATERNITY HOUSING**

By

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B.A., University of South Dakota, 2021

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of
the Requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts

Division of Educational Leadership

Adult and Higher Education Program

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ABSTRACT

Higher education institutions with Greek systems have different models of sorority and fraternity housing. There are two primary models incorporated into this study; some institutions have Greek housing incorporated into their on-campus residence halls, while other Greek housing is privately-owned by local House Corporation Boards or by the chapter's national headquarters. The University of South Dakota follows the latter model, with each of their eleven chapters having a privately-owned chapter house. Research shows that with privately-owned Greek housing, there is an increased risk of substance abuse and sexual activity, while there are benefits of increased student involvement and leadership development. With this risk in mind, institutions may be seeking increased oversight of and partnerships with privately-owned Greek housing. This research uses the University of South Dakota as a model for a reciprocal partnership between privately-owned Greek housing and an institution. Notably, the University of South Dakota requires live-in Graduate Assistants or House Directors, the adherence to alcohol/substance policies, and other safety measures in privately-owned Greek housing in order for the chapter to receive "Greek Releases." These releases are exemptions for second-year students to live in their Greek chapter house, rather than the South Dakota Board of Regents two-year on-campus living requirement. Greek chapters rely on the Greek Release process and the ability of second-year members to live in their house in order to remain financially solvent, which encourages their adherence to university policies. The partnership also allows the institution to implement programs that promote overall student success, including increased academic performance, role modeling, and safety measures. With qualitative data collected from interviews with university staff and representatives from Greek organizations, this research creates a prototype for higher education institutions seeking to build a reciprocal partnership with their privately-owned sorority and fraternity housing.

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their organizations, who put in countless hours to the betterment of the sorority and fraternity experience and to improve the lives of their students. So many Greek organizational representatives have become role models to me, and I am so grateful we get to serve this community together.

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DEDICATION

For my Grandma Lee and Grandma BB.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Each summer, approximately three hundred University of South Dakota students move their belongings into sorority and fraternity houses, becoming residents of Greek Row, the campus-adjacent neighborhood where a majority of sorority and fraternity houses are located (Poppe & Susemihl, 2023, p. 10). Across the United States and Canada, tens of thousands of students are residing in Greek-affiliated housing with their organizational brothers and sisters (Syrett, 2009, p. 162). The University of South Dakota recognizes seven national, social fraternities: Beta Theta Pi, Delta Tau Delta, Lambda Chi Alpha, Pi Kappa Alpha, Phi Delta Theta, Sigma Alpha Epsilon, and Tau Kappa Epsilon. They also recognize four national, social sororities: Alpha Phi, Alpha Xi Delta, Kappa Alpha Theta, and Pi Beta Phi. All seven fraternities are members of the Interfraternity Council, and all four sororities are members of the Panhellenic Council (Poppe & Susemihl, 2023, p. 5-6). All sorority and fraternity chapters at the University of South Dakota have an off-campus chapter facility/house where a portion of their members reside. Ten of these facilities are owned by local house corporation boards, composed of chapter alumni. One facility is owned by a local house corporation board but managed by their international headquarters. Not every member of a sorority and fraternity at the University of South Dakota resides in their chapter's housing facility. (Poppe & Susemihl, 2023, p. 10). This research creates a prototype for a partnership between the university and private-owned Greek housing facilities, using the University of South Dakota Greek system as a case study.

Sorority and fraternity housing structures and models vary by institution. At some institutions, Greek housing is a part of the on-campus housing community, with members of each Greek organization residing in a particular dormitory building or residence hall floor. This is the case at the University of Nebraska-Kearney, where the Office of Residence Life oversees the

residence hall buildings that are dedicated to sorority and fraternity use. Each Greek organization has their residence hall designated for their own members to live, equipped with a chapter room, lounge, and study rooms. These university-owned and managed Greek housing spaces are overseen by a Resident Assistant who is paid by the university but is a member of their dormitory's respective Greek organization (*Sorority Life Building, 2023*). This is also the case at Arizona State University, which constructed the Greek Leadership Village in 2018 in response to risk concerns at the former chapter houses on Greek Row. The Greek Leadership Village, a series of university-owned townhomes that are designated for the members of each residing Greek chapter, permits sorority and fraternity organizations to use the space if they follow certain requirements, including being in good standing with the university, having a Chapter House Corporation Board to oversee the space, and have designated chapter leadership officers living in the facility. Although they are university-owned, the chapters are able to customize their living spaces to fit their organization's themes and traditions (*The Greek Leadership Village, 2023*).

At other institutions, Greek housing is privately-owned and operated, with varying degrees and methods of oversight. As an example, at the University of Iowa, there is not an on-campus living requirement for students, and sorority and fraternity housing is privately-owned and are not on university property. Greek students can move into their sorority and fraternity housing without university approval (*Housing Regulations, 2023*). Although there is no contractual relationship between the privately-owned Greek facilities and the university, they do offer certain resources to the chapter facilities, including House Director training (*A Vision for the Future, 2023*). In addition, the university requires that sorority and fraternity organizations follow policies for other registered student organizations, in order to participate in council-

sponsored recruitment/intake and receive other benefits. If an organization is found in violation of misconduct, including activities in private housing, they are at risk of having this sponsorship revoked (*Suspended Organizations*, 2023). While this relationship is not specifically related to Greek housing, the University of Iowa has a process for university sanctioning and accountability for Greek organizations, demonstrating how an institution can continue to have oversight into privately-owned facilities.

Conceptual Framework

Institutions can form reciprocal partnerships between privately-owned Greek facilities and the university, where accountability takes place within housing policy. In this model, the university agrees to provide services in exchange for the fraternity and sorority chapters agreeing to abide by particular policies and standards. The University of South Dakota follows the latter model; sororities and fraternity organizations reside in privately-owned facilities, and in exchange for the granting of “Greek Releases” and the official university recognition of the Greek organization, chapters are required to fulfill certain obligations. (*Sorority and Fraternity Life*, 2022, p. 14). All eleven sorority and fraternity organizations at the University of South Dakota have privately-owned Greek housing facilities. With the exception of two fraternity chapters, nine of these facilities are located in the neighborhood known as Greek Row. At the time of publication, one fraternity chapter is residing in an interim housing option leased by their House Corporation Board as they build a new chapter house, and the interim housing is governed by the same policies as other Greek facilities (Pope & Susemihl, 2023, p. 10). Although the institution has no official authority over the function of a privately-owned facility, the reciprocal partnership between the University of South Dakota and the privately-owned Greek houses

allows the institution to continue to have a role in the risk management and development of their students living in these facilities.

Statement of the Problem

Research demonstrates that privately-owned Greek housing poses an increased risk for the university, the Greek organization, and the organization's members, in comparison to on-campus housing alternatives (Gibson et al., 2017). Although they report higher rates of risk mitigation, leadership skills, and overall involvement, students residing in sorority and fraternity housing are more likely to drink alcohol, use marijuana, and smoke tobacco products (Tyler et al., 2018, p. 724). This risk can extend to their non-Greek peers, and off-campus Greek housing can increase substance use for the entire student body (Gibson et al., 2017, p. 310). Sorority and fraternity members also report higher levels of sexual activity, and attitudes of sexual assault are higher in fraternity members than non-affiliated students (Gibson et al., 2017, p. 308). With this increased risk in mind, institutions may seek to increase their oversight and control of these facilities. While institutional employees may not have access to private facilities, they can utilize a reciprocal partnership to require privately-owned facilities to abide by specific policies in exchange for certain privileges. The revocation of Greek Releases for a Greek chapter, removing their ability to have sophomore members live in their facility, can significantly impact the chapter's ability to remain financially solvent. In order to receive Greek Releases for their members, a chapter must abide by risk management policies, conduct regular safety inspections, and have a Graduate Assistant or House Director live in the facility. The importance of receiving Greek Releases promotes the adherence to risk policies set in place by the university to mitigate risk. Therefore, this study describes the partnership between the University of South Dakota and its privately-owned sorority and fraternity housing, specifically with how this partnership allows

the institution to partner with the private organization to promote risk management and student success.

Research Question

The study presented in this thesis is a case analysis of the University of South Dakota's partnership with its privately-owned sorority and fraternity houses. The question that guided this study is:

1. How can higher education institutions build partnerships with Greek organizations to increase their oversight and risk management of privately-owned Greek housing?

From this sub-question emerged six questions that examined the implementation of this oversight:

1. What role does live-in institutional staff play in a private fraternity or sorority facility?
2. What role do Greek Releases play in the implementation of institutional policy?
3. What are ways the reciprocal relationship has benefitted the institution or the private Greek organization?
4. What impact have the initiatives in the reciprocal relationship had on risk management and reduction?
5. What impact have the initiatives in the reciprocal relationship had on student success and development?
6. Is there pushback from Greek organizations on increased institutional oversight of their facilities?

Significance of the Study

The University of South Dakota's reciprocal partnership with their privately-owned Greek housing facilities can serve as a prototype for higher education institutions seeking to

increase oversight and management of these facilities. The purpose of this case study is to describe how the University of South Dakota has built and maintained this reciprocal partnership through qualitative interviews with relevant university staff, Greek organizational representatives, and student leadership. This study will inform Greek organizational representatives of potential benefits of institutional relationships and provide a prototype for institutional officials to increase their oversight of privately-owned sorority and fraternity housing.

Definition of Terms

The following terms are defined to create clear operationalization for readers and consistency throughout the study.

Greek Life: Social, values-based organizations for undergraduate students. Greek Life refers to both sororities and fraternities, and can be used interchangeably with Sorority and Fraternity Life. Students in Greek Life receive bids, or invitations for membership, and pledge to become members of their organizations. While Greek membership begins as an undergraduate student, they are members of their organization for life, and once initiated, they may not join another Greek organization (Hohman & Moody, 2019).

Sorority: Sororities are Greek organizations for individuals who identify as women. The four sororities at the University of South Dakota belong to the National Panhellenic Conference (NPC), an umbrella organization of 26 national sororities. The NPC oversees the recruitment, policies, and management of its member organizations (*National Panhellenic Conference, 2023, p. 16*).

Fraternity: Fraternities are Greek organizations for individuals who identify as men. The seven fraternities at the University of South Dakota participate in the Interfraternity Council (IFC), a

student-led advisory group that oversees the recruitment, policies, and management of the campus' fraternities. The IFC is a local affiliate of the North American Interfraternity Conference (NIC), which provides insurance, guidance, and maintenance of member national fraternities. At the time of the study, four national chapters of the seven fraternities at the University of South Dakota opt in to NIC membership, but all seven organizations participate in the local IFC (*Member Fraternities*, 2023).

Chapter House Corporation Board: Chapter House Corporation Boards typically own and manage privately-owned sorority and fraternities housing. They are typically alumni of the organization, and they are responsible for leasing the house to undergraduate members, hiring house staff to provide housekeeping and culinary services, overseeing risk management and insurance, and maintaining and renovating the physical space (*House Corporation*, n.d., p. 5).

Graduate Assistant: A Graduate Assistant is a part-time employee of the institution who receives an hourly salary and a tuition reduction. Graduate Assistants in the Sorority and Fraternity Life Office at the University of South Dakota live in private apartments in the fraternity and sorority houses. Overseeing risk management and being a liaison between the institution and chapter leadership, they receive a tuition reduction, an hourly salary, room and board in the Greek facility, and a meal plan (Sorority and Fraternity Life, 2022, p. 11-12).

Greek Release: A Greek Release is the exemption granted to a student to be released from the SDBOR's two-year campus residence policy in order to reside in their Greek chapter facility. Sorority and fraternity members may be granted a Greek Release if they are a member of their chapter, graduated high school at least one full calendar year prior (are a second-year student), have completed 24 credit hours, and have a 2.0 cumulative grade point average (Sorority and Fraternity Life, 2022, p. 14).

Risk Management: In this study, risk management is operationalized by policies and practices that reduce unsafe behavior, such as substance abuse, hazing, and sexual assault. Risk management can also be viewed as practices that reduce the liability of a Greek organization or institution. For example, risk management can include the implementation of policies, even if they are defied by individuals unknowingly of the organization.

Student Success: In this study, student success is operationalized by academic performance, safety, professional development, and feelings of belonging and community.

Reciprocal Partnership: This term refers to the partnership that the University of South Dakota has created with its sorority and fraternity organizations that own and manage their own chapter facilities. The relationship has been created by the organizations agreeing to follow the institution's policies, in order to maintain their recognition status and receive Greek Releases.

CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This chapter will review existing literature on sorority and fraternity history and structure, outcomes for students residing in either Greek and university housing systems, legal relationships between higher education institutions and Greek systems, and current strategies for risk management. Literature exploring the history of Greek systems will focus on the organizations' creation, purpose, and organizational structure, as well as the creation, maintenance, and purpose of Greek housing facilities. Literature focusing on the outcomes of university type will explore the themes of substance use, sexual activity, and student success, comparing Greek and non-affiliated students, as well as differentiating between on-campus residence halls, on-campus Greek housing, and off-campus Greek housing. Literature discussing the legal relationship between higher education institutions and Greek chapters will be presented, focusing on examples of liability, accessibility compliance, and the rights of private organizations. Finally, current strategies for risk management in sororities and fraternities will be explored, opening the discussion for how this study can create a prototype for partnership and increased student success.

Survey of Sorority and Fraternity History

Understanding the history of fraternities and sororities is crucial to understanding their purpose and organizational structure. Greek Life began in colonial America with the founding of men's organizations called fraternities, where male students protested the rigid university structure by forming extracurricular, off-campus student organizations that could revolve around topics such as religion, sharing ideas and poetry, and smoking and drinking. These organizations, usually two to three per campus, competed with each other for members and used secret rituals, mottos, and badges (Susemihl, 2021, p. 16-17; Torbensen, 2009, p. 18-19). On December 5,

1776, five male students at the William and Mary College in Virginia formed Phi Beta Kappa, the first organization to use Greek letters in its name (Susemihl, 2021, p. 17; Torbensen, 2009, p. 15). After Kappa Alpha Society, Sigma Phi, and Delta Phi were founded in the late 1820s, fraternity life became firmly established in American university culture as the movement expanded to colleges around the country. The creation of fraternities began the concept of creating like-minded, extracurricular, social groups in higher education (Susemihl, 2021, p. 17; Torbensen, 2009, p. 21-22).

Sororities, first known as women's fraternities, began as the female counterparts of fraternities and were a way for women to enjoy similar benefits of these male social organizations. As more women began to attend college in the 1830s, many prominent universities became coeducational, but women continued to find themselves in male-dominated environments (Susemihl, 2021, p. 17; Torbensen, 2009, p. 22). While some fraternity organizations allowed women to "belong" to their group, they did not extend full membership. Although some fraternities were known to have women as members, their role was primarily to use the fraternity homes to entertain, decorate for, and feed their "brothers," and they were unable to enjoy the full benefits of membership. In objection, women began to form their own single-sex organizations to provide similar benefits and activities and to elevate their position on campus (Susemihl, 2021, p. 17-18; Torbensen, 2009, p. 23). The first organization founded in direct contrast to the men's fraternities was the women's fraternity of Pi Beta Phi in 1867, known at the time as I.C. Sorosis (Susemihl, 2021, p. 18; *Through the Years*, 2023). In 1882, Gamma Phi Beta at Syracuse University became the first women's fraternity to distinguish themselves using the word "sorority," which has become the umbrella term for women's-only social organizations (Susemihl, 2021, p. 18; *Explore the Legacy*, 2021).

Throughout the 19th century, due to their small membership sizes, fraternity and sorority chapters were able to live together in boarding houses or on-campus housing. Chapter meetings and events were held in on-campus lecture halls or classrooms. However, as membership sizes increased in the 1890s, so did chapter funding, and Greek chapters were able to purchase or rent their own housing facilities specifically dedicated to residence for chapter members. Fraternity and sorority houses became social hubs for campus, hosting parties, reunions, and extracurricular activities and housed students who were leaders in student government and politics (Anson & Marchesani, 1991, p. 2-3). The chapter houses became a way for Greek organizations to provide exclusive housing to their membership and isolate and differentiate themselves from other groups on campus (Waxman, 2017). As the importance of Greek houses increased in the political and social college environment, so did their financial importance for both campus administration and Greek organization leaders. For Greek organizations, a focus of sorority and fraternity recruitment became pledging enough members to keep chapter houses full and financially secure (Anson & Marchesani, 1991, p. 2-3). The presence of Greek housing also became important for campus administrators, as they allowed the institution to accept more students without needing to provide them on-campus housing (Gibson et al., 2017, p. 315).

From the beginning of privately-owned Greek houses, chapter alumni collected rent payments, maintained the facility, and handled legal issues, while collegiate chapter members focused on the day-to-day operations of organization and member management (Anson & Marchesani, 1991, p. 2-3). This is still the case for privately-owned sorority and fraternity facilities today, where the national headquarters or a local alumni group own and manage the chapter house. According to the Phi Delta Theta fraternity Chapter House Corporation Board manual, purposes of such groups are to own and manage the real estate for the chapter; lease the

chapter house to the undergraduate chapter members; maintain equipment, furnishings, and financial records; oversee risk management and insurance; and hire and supervise chapter employees, such as House Directors, housekeeping, or culinary services. Even if a sorority or fraternity chapter has housing that is owned by their host institution, they likely still have a Chapter House Corporation Board to assist in management of the space and leasing of bed to capacity (*House Corporation*, n.d., p. 5). Alumni and other non-undergraduate chapter leaders play a role in sorority and fraternity housing, whether on or off campus.

The four sorority organizations at the University of South Dakota are all member organizations of the National Panhellenic Conference (NPC), the umbrella organization that oversees the recruitment and maintenance of 26 national sororities (*National Panhellenic Conference*, 2023, p. 16). At the time of this study, four of the seven fraternities are member organizations of the North American Interfraternity Conference (NIC), which provides insurance, guidance, and maintenance of member national fraternities (*Member Fraternities*, 2023). While not all national organizations opt-in to this membership, all seven fraternities at the University of South Dakota participate in the Interfraternity Council (IFC), the student-run, campus-based organization that oversees fraternal operations and values at the institution (*President Officer Guide*, 2023, p. 2). Greek organizations that are members of NPC and IFC are historically white sororities and fraternities. While race no longer plays a role in recruitment or membership, these organizations are most traditionally associated with having Greek chapter facilities and follow similar structures to one another for management of their facilities. Organizations that belong to other Greek councils, such as the National Pan-Hellenic Council (historically black) or the Multicultural Greek Council, have different models of housing. Not all NPC and IFC sororities and fraternities have chapter houses or facilities nationwide, but all

Greek organizations at the University of South Dakota are members of NPC and the local IFC, and they all have private-owned Greek housing facilities.

Outcomes of Student Housing Options

Substance Use

Existing research explores the impact of campus housing type on the use of substances, demonstrating that binge drinking is more prevalent in Greek facilities, in comparison to non-Greek, on-campus residence halls. A 2018 study explored the perceptions of alcohol consumption and implementation of Protective Behavior Strategies (PBS) in relation to type of student housing. PBS are interventional actions taken to reduce negative consequences of alcohol consumption, such as limiting the number of alcoholic beverages consumed or designating a sober driver (Gibson et al., 2017, p. 310). The study had 1,448 undergraduate students complete an essay and a survey on their perceptions of their peers' substance use, PBS implementation, and sexual activity (Tyler et al., 2018, p. 724). Of the participants, 8% lived in a sorority or fraternity house, 26% lived in an on-campus residence hall or dorm, and 66% lived off-campus either alone or with a roommate, romantic partner, or parents (Tyler et al., 2018, p. 727). This study found that housing type impacted the use of PBS, with the students living in sorority and fraternity housing using these strategies more frequently than students living off-campus or in residence halls. This study also found that students living in Greek housing are more likely to participate in heavy drinking than their non-Greek counterparts. The researchers hypothesized that the increased use of PBS could be due to the higher rates of binge drinking; since Greek students consume alcohol more frequently than their peers, they are also planning their behavior and are familiar with the signs of negative consequences. For example, they may recognize the signs of overconsumption, have planned a sober driver in advance, or can limit their beverage

consumption based on prior negative experiences (Tyler et al., 2018, p. 730). The researchers also hypothesized that the increased rates of binge drinking in Greek students can be attributed to the social nature of the organizations; like-minded individuals are attracted to one another, and students with high alcohol consumption are likely to join others with similar habits, and thus perpetuate the culture (Tyler et al., 2018, p. 731). Similar results were discussed in a 2014 study assessing the overall success of students living in sorority and fraternity housing. Using data from an institutional housing assessment and a sorority and fraternity assessment from five institutions, this study also found that students in Greek housing were more likely to binge drink and consume alcohol more frequently (Long, 2014, p. 74). Existing research demonstrates higher rates of heavy alcohol consumption for members of sororities and fraternities in comparison to their peers residing in other housing facilities.

Another distinction that has been explored is the impact of on-campus or off-campus Greek housing on an institution's entire student body. A 2017 study conducted a survey of students at two higher education institutions, one with on-campus sorority and fraternity housing, and the other with privately-owned, off-campus sorority and fraternity housing. This study assessed whether Greek students at these institutions had higher rates of alcohol consumption and lower rates of Protective Behavior Strategies (Gibson et al., 2017, p. 310). Using a survey of both Greek affiliated and non-Greek affiliated students, the study revealed that both populations had higher rates of alcohol consumption at the university with off-campus Greek housing, and that this alcohol consumption is taking place at those fraternity and sorority facilities. Likewise, the students at the institution with off-campus Greek residences were more likely to use marijuana at a sorority or fraternity residence than the students at the institution with on-campus Greek housing (Gibson et al., 2017, p. 307). This study found that there were no differences in

on-campus or off-campus Greek housing in the use of PBS. Due to the increased risk of alcohol and marijuana use in off-campus Greek houses for both affiliated and non-affiliated students, the study recommends that universities implement strategies to increase connection and oversight with privately-owned, off campus Greek housing (Gibson et al., 2017, p. 317). Off-campus sorority and fraternity housing can impact substance use for both Greek affiliated and non-Greek affiliated students.

Existing research has also explored the effects of housing type on smoking and tobacco use. A 2014 literature review of 19 studies researching the effects of sorority and fraternity membership revealed that members of sororities and fraternities have higher usage rates of cigars, cigarettes, hookah, and smokeless tobacco. One study, which conducted a survey of students from 30 institutions, found that sorority and fraternity members who lived in their chapter house were 2.32 times more likely to be smokers than their peers living in on-campus residence halls (Cheney et al., 2014, p. 272). Another study utilized data from 82,251 student responses to the National College Health Assessment (NCHA) and revealed that of the sorority and fraternity members who are residents of the chapter's house, 52.4% used marijuana, 48.5% used hookah, and 46.6% used cigarettes. The lowest rates of substance use were reported in non-Greek students, at nearly half the rate (Sidani et al., 2013, p. 238). A similar comparative analysis of Greek housing's correlation to tobacco use, using the NCHA survey, has not been conducted since. Sorority and fraternity members who are residents of the Greek organization's chapter house also have higher rates of smoking than non-resident members, as resident members are more integrated into the organization's culture and social life. Smoking in association to sorority and fraternity membership is often done to enhance one's social identity, most often taking place at parties and amongst more "popular" members. The majority of

sorority and fraternity members (86%) reported being non-daily, social smokers (Cheney et al., 2014, p. 271-272). A 2017 study led by the same researcher revealed similar smoking habits, sharing that sororities and fraternities create social settings where smoking is deemed acceptable, particularly in fraternity houses (Cheney et al., 2017, p.525). While the Gibson study found that students living in sorority and fraternity housing have increased rates of marijuana use, there was no correlation found between housing type and the use of other drugs (Gibson et al., 2017, p. 307). Conducted in the early 2010s, both the literature review and the research study lack discussion on the use of e-cigarettes or vape pens. The lack of data in the last ten years also points to the need for additional research into this area. Research has demonstrated that sorority and fraternity members are more likely than their peers to smoke tobacco, hookah, and marijuana and that living in the sorority and fraternity house increases this likelihood further.

Sexual Activity

Existing literature on sorority and fraternity housing demonstrates the attitudes towards sexual activity among both members who live in and out of Greek-affiliated housing. In general, college students with higher reported substance use are also more likely to have been involved in sexual encounters. With sorority and fraternity members experiencing higher rates of substance use, there is an expectation that they also experience higher rates of sexual activity (Gibson et al., 2017, p. 308). A 1999 study used National College Health Risk Behavior Survey data from 735 students at a Midwestern university. These students were over 18, had never been married, and lived in either university residence halls or Greek housing. The students living in the residence halls may also be members of a fraternity or sorority but were categorized on residence type, not membership status (Dinger & Parsons, 1999, p. 242). Out of the 810 residence hall students and 265 Greek housing students, 86.3% had experienced sexual intercourse by the time of the survey.

Overall, students living in sorority and fraternity housing were more sexually active than their peers. Thirty-nine-point four percent of sorority and fraternity residents had more than 6 sexual partners in their lifetime, in contrast to 22.8% of students in residence halls. Sorority and fraternity residents were more likely to have had sex in the 30 days prior to the survey, but condom use was not affected by residence type (Dinger & Parsons, 1999, p. 243-244). Students in sorority and fraternity housing were also more likely to have used alcohol or drugs prior to their last sexual encounter; 50% of sorority and fraternity residents had used a substance before their last sexual encounter, in comparison to 34.4% of residence hall students. However, the students living in residence halls who were also members of sorority or fraternities were more likely to participate in this behavior, suggesting that this specific result is connected to membership, rather than residence status (Dinger & Parsons, 1999, p. 245). Sorority and fraternity membership and residence are connected to higher rates of sexual activity, specifically in relation to substance use.

The all-male nature of fraternities also creates an environment where rape culture and objectification of women is more prominent than other co-ed living environments (McCready et al., 2022, p. 222). First-year men who join a fraternity chapter are three times more likely to commit sexual assault (Seabrook et al., 2018, p. 4). The hypermasculine culture of a fraternity can create pressure for a member to objectify women in an attempt to seem masculine and heterosexual, rather than feminine and gay (McCready et al., 2022, p. 228). A 2022 study distributed a survey to members of a social fraternity chapter at 77 different institutions in both the United States and Canada. The survey measured their acceptance of sexual assault attitudes: minimization, solidarity, survivor-blaming, and survivor support (McCready et al., 2022, p. 223-224). While varying from institution to institution, the survey results showed that men in this

fraternal organization were more likely to blame the victim, use power dynamics over women, and show less support for a sexual assault survivor (McCready et al., 2022, p. 228). Due to masculinity norms and pressures, fraternity membership can lead to an increase in sexual assault.

However, residency status in the fraternity chapter house can also impact sexual assault attitudes. For example, in the same 2022 study, resident members were less likely to accept solidarity attitudes, which is unreasonably defending a fellow chapter member accused of sexual assault (McCready et al., 2022, p. 226). Resident members were also more likely than non-resident members to show support to a sexual assault survivor and less likely to blame the victim for the attack. This can be attributed to the involvement level of fraternity members who live in the chapter house; as typically the most involved and invested members, they are likely to have experienced training on these topics. They may also be the most dedicated members to upholding the fraternity's values. Additionally, they are more likely than non-resident fraternity men and non-fraternity members to utilize bystander intervention strategies in a sexual violence situation. Because they are residents of the fraternity chapter house, they have likely been exposed to these scenarios and understand how to mitigate risk (McCready et al., 2022, p. 229). While fraternity members in general are more likely to display sexual attitudes that are negative to victims, residents of fraternity house are less likely to present these attitudes and are more likely than any other college student to positively intervene in a sexual violence incident.

Student Success and Satisfaction

In addition to substance use and sexual activity, existing research on college housing types contains themes of student success and satisfaction. While students who live on-campus have greater academic performance, retention and persistence, and social adjustment, there has not been a verdict on whether sorority and fraternity residence status has had a similar impact on

academic performance (Long, 2014, p. 67, 71). Research has shown that membership in a Greek organization can both harm and improve academic success, due to the prevalence of resources (Long, 2014, p. 71). Discussed earlier, the Long study used data from an institutional housing assessment and a sorority and fraternity assessment from five institutions, assessing academic success specifically in relation to housing type. Data from this survey revealed that, overall, living in a residence hall or Greek housing had no impact on academic performance, in terms of study hours and GPA. However, the study did reveal that women reported better and increased amounts of study habits than men, suggesting that on-campus residence halls may provide an improved academic environment for men (Long, 2014, p. 67-68). Based on existing research, there has been no verdict on whether academic performance of residents in sorority and fraternity housing differs from students in on-campus residence halls.

Existing research also demonstrates how sorority and fraternity housing can be linked to student development. A 2011 study used a survey to assess students on the “Thriving Quotient.” This theory of “thriving” was rooted in five factors: engaged learning, diverse citizenship, academic determination, social connectedness, and positive perspective. The results were compared between students who lived in on-campus residence halls, in on-campus Greek housing, or in off-campus alternatives (Vetter, 2011, p. 60). From the 105 responses, the researchers determined that living in close proximity to campus created higher levels of student involvement and engagement, leading to higher reports of “thriving” indicators. Because sorority and fraternity housing at this institution is on-campus, students in a sorority and fraternity reported similar levels of student success to the students in residence halls, while students living in neither of these options reported significantly lower levels (Vetter, 2011, p. 66). However, sorority and fraternity members reported higher levels of Social Connectedness. Like with

literature on academic success, living in a sorority or fraternity house has not been connected with any detriment to students' success, and existing research has demonstrated how sorority and fraternity housing can provide a similar environment as institutional housing for student engagement.

Sorority and fraternity membership and residence has been linked to higher rates of leadership development. A 2012 study surveyed sorority and fraternity members from 15 institutions and found that throughout their membership, they had experienced growth in scholarship, leadership, friendship, and service. In leadership, they reported that they had gained confidence in their decision making, time management, and oral communication skills (Long, 2012, p. 19-20). Likewise, a 2021 study of active and alumni members of NPC sorority organizations found that throughout their sorority membership, they developed leadership skills that were sought after in political leadership. These skills included socialization, public speaking, and self-confidence (Susemihl, 2021, p. 52). Membership in a sorority or fraternity organization is attributed to leadership development, and residency in a Greek chapter house can further this development, as residents are typically more invested and involved in chapter activities and planning (Long, 2014, p. 67-68). A 2002 study compared survey responses of students living in sorority and fraternity housing to students living in on-campus residence halls (Hallenbeck, 2002, p. 58). Using Astin's theory of involvement, the researcher created a theoretical framework of leadership, with two factors: Go-Getter and Artistic. The Go-Getter framework was measured using four subscales: scholar, social activist, leader, and status striver. Students who resided in a sorority or fraternity house scored higher in the Go-Getter factor, reporting higher levels of academic aspirations, social self-confidence, and activism in social causes

(Hallenbeck, 2002, p. 76). Both sorority and fraternity membership and residence creates experiences for students to develop leadership skills.

Existing research has shown that students residing in sorority and fraternity houses have different levels of satisfaction with their living arrangements, in comparison to their residence hall counterparts. While sorority and fraternity residents report lower levels of satisfaction with their physical living conditions, they report higher levels of satisfaction with programming in the facility. Because sorority and fraternity housing is led by its own student leaders, members are more involved and invested in the programming planning process and can create desired programming. Higher satisfaction in programming is also linked to higher levels of peer interaction and socialization (Long, 2014, p. 75-76). However, despite higher levels of student satisfaction in programming and socialization, students living in sorority and fraternity housing feel less safe than students in on-campus residence halls. To improve safety, the 2014 Long study suggests that Sorority and Fraternity Life offices encourage private House Corporation Boards to conduct yearly safety, fire, and health inspections on their facilities. The study also encourages the training of sorority and fraternity housing staff, whether they are Resident Assistants, Graduate Assistants, or House Directors (Long, 2014, p. 78). Improving student satisfaction and safety can prompt higher education institutions to increase oversight of privately-owned sorority and fraternity houses. In conclusion, existing research outlines the differences between university residence halls and sorority and fraternity housing, describes the benefits of Greek housing, and demonstrates the need for institutional oversight into privately-owned facilities to ensure the safety and success of students.

Legal Relationships

Understanding the legalities and rights of Greek organizations is also important groundwork for understanding institutional oversight of private sorority and fraternity houses. Existing research reveals several themes in the legal relationship between sororities and fraternities and higher education institutions. The first is response to conduct and risk management concerns, and who is responsible for addressing these safety concerns. Fraternities and sororities can be placed on probation, suspended, or have their charter revoked for offenses including sexual assault, alcohol misuse, and hazing. Privately-owned Greek housing can create conflict when responding to these concerns. For example, the national headquarters may revoke the charter of an offending chapter, but since they still own their chapter house, they can rebrand themselves as a local sorority or fraternity, maintain their same membership, and continue operations, and the headquarters has little power to stop it. In contrast, an institution could revoke recognition from a sorority or fraternity chapter, but the chapter could continue residing in their private residence and continue to receive support from its local alumni boards and headquarters. For this reason, Greek organizations rely on partnerships with institutions, and vice versa, to maintain compliance with policy and ensure student safety (Paterson, 2013, p. 48-49). The University of South Dakota does not recognize local fraternity or sorority chapters, in order to maintain this partnership (Sorority and Fraternity Life, 2022, p. 25). Although sororities and fraternities are private organizations, institutions do become involved when the safety and wellbeing of the student body is in question.

Another theme in existing research is the level of liability an institution holds in relation to activities of fraternities and sororities. Until the late 1970s, universities followed the legal precedent of *in loco parentis*, where they operated as de facto parental guidance for students,

controlling their “physical and moral welfare” (Mumford, 2001, p. 3). In 1979, *Bradshaw v. Rawlings* ended *in loco parentis*, and changed institutional liability in regard to student safety from strict to “no duty,” meaning they hold little responsibility for the actions of students or student organizations. For this reason, in lawsuits for fraternity-related injuries such as deaths from hazing or overconsumption, the institution is often not held liable. Instead, either the local chapter members or the national organization are held responsible (Mumford, 2001, p. 21). However, response to conduct and safety concerns is a responsibility of an institution, specifically in sorority and fraternity organizations. Since national organizations are often not physically present for management of a local chapter, they rely on management from the university to respond to alcohol, hazing, and sexual assault violations. While the national organizations hold the right to revoke a charter, higher education institutions that are hosts to sororities and fraternities have authority to create preventative programming and sanctions that are specific to the needs of the local chapter (Mumford, 2001, p. 22). Institutions have put policies in place to prevent fraternity-related injuries, such as alcohol and social event guidelines, mandating dry facilities, notifying parents of high-risk behavior, and implementing strict punishments for hazing. If the institution was found to be knowledgeable of the harmful activity, they can be held liable (Mumford, 2001, p. 10). Sorority and fraternity organizations rely on their host institutions to implement risk mitigation programming and procedures, yet they are still the party likely to be held responsible for wrongful actions.

Another gray area in the legal relationship between privately-owned sorority and fraternity housing and an institution is in accessibility compliance. Unlike most on-campus residence halls, privately-owned sorority and fraternity facilities are not bound by the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA). The ADA protects the rights of individuals with physical

and mental disabilities, ensuring that they have access to public accommodations. Privately-owned sorority and fraternity housing falls under the “private clubs” exemption to the ADA, due to the applicability of several exemption clauses, including the selective nature of the organizations, the lack of public funding, and the lack of access of the establishment to members not in the organization. However, sorority and fraternity housing that is owned or operated by a federally funded university is required to comply with ADA (McCarthy & Eckstein, 2008). Privately-owned sorority and fraternity facilities are exempt from ADA, but facilities built after 1990 are typically constructed with the potential to be ADA-compliant, should they have a member who needs those accommodations (Viera, 2014). Privately-owned sorority and fraternity housing may also be required to provide accommodations under the Fair Housing Act, similar to other landlords. This law allows sorority and fraternity organizations to rent only to their own members, but it prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, national origin, religion, sex, disability, and familial status (Clowney, 2023). While privately-owned sorority and fraternity houses do not fall under the ADA, there are cases where they have been held to similar standards through the Fair Housing Act, because they receive a type of federal funding, or an institutional employee had oversight of the facility.

Additionally, privately-owned sorority and fraternity houses have recently been navigating their responsibility to allow service animals and emotional support animals (ESA’s) to reside in their facilities. There have been several cases that have set precedence in this area. In the 2013 Supreme Court case *United States v. University of Nebraska-Kearney*, a student applied for on-campus housing with a dog trained to respond to her panic attacks. The university denied her request under the claim that residence halls were not “dwellings” and did not fall under the Fair Housing Act. The court ruled against the university, and the precedent was set for ESA’s in

on-campus residence halls (Wisch, 2015). Even though sorority and fraternity housing is not owned by the university, several cases have found them responsible for allowing service or emotional support animals. In 2017 at The Ohio State University, a sorority member was required to move out of the privately-owned, off-campus Chi Omega house due to her service animal, which was trained to physically respond to panic attacks by laying on her chest. Another Chi Omega claimed that the dog aggravated her allergies and asthma, which in turn triggered her Crohn's disease. Since both members had registered disabilities, the university argued that the member with the service dog needed to move out, since she signed her lease after the member with allergies. The member sued the university for violating the ADA and the Fair Housing Act, even though the university offered the option to move into on-campus housing. The case is still ongoing, but in the meantime, a judge ruled that the member was allowed to return to her sorority house with her dog (Watts & Stapleton, 2017). Although this sorority house was privately-owned, it demonstrates the legal responsibility an institution holds when it interferes with accessibility compliance. The more involvement and oversight an institution has in a sorority and fraternity house, the more liable they may be held in disability discrimination lawsuits (McCarthy, 2015, p. 4). Accessibility compliance in privately-owned sorority and fraternity housing can create uncertainty for universities navigating oversight of these facilities, demonstrating the complicated nature of legal relationships between Greek housing and higher education institutions.

Another theme in the legal relationship between Greek chapters and institutions is the rights of private organizations in a higher education setting, particularly in terms of membership selection and restrictions. Under the First Amendment, sororities and fraternities have the right to associate and exist, despite their exclusionary recruitment strategies and risk concerns (*Freedom*

of Association, 2019). One of the most well-known cases against freedom of association is at Harvard University. In 2016, the Harvard University president issued an order to social sororities and fraternities that they needed to become co-ed, or their members would lose their ability to hold other campus leadership positions and receive scholarships. Sororities and fraternities at Harvard University are private organizations, with no official affiliation or recognition by the university. Many of these organizations are also national sororities and fraternities, meaning that their membership selection and gender affiliation is managed by their headquarters or umbrella organization (NPC or NIC). The national organizations of several sororities and fraternities at Harvard University, including Kappa Alpha Theta, Alpha Phi, and Sigma Alpha Epsilon, filed lawsuits against the university, claiming that their members were being denied rights and privileges available to other undergraduates. In 2020, this policy was revoked, but several of these chapters had already closed after being unable and unwilling to change their single-gender status (Field, 2018). The attack on the right to associate as a single-gender organization at Harvard University is an example of an institution violating sorority and fraternity rights as private organizations. Research and litigation demonstrate that the legal relationships between sororities and fraternities and their host institutions can be complicated, with liability and oversight assigned to both parties.

Risk Management Strategies

This study operationalizes risk management as the policies and practices that reduce and prohibit unsafe behavior. Risk management can also be viewed as the practices that decrease the liability of a Greek organization or institution. Existing research demonstrates that there are different lenses with which to view the risk management of sorority and fraternity activities. The first is through the lens of the institution. A 2009 study published in *The Journal of Sorority and*

Fraternity Research and Practice provides a description of liability that an institution holds within its sorority and fraternity organizations. Although this article was published 15 years ago, it continues to provide a comprehensive examination of institutional liability that is consistent with other recent literature. Since the 1980s, courts have transitioned from the *in loco parentis* view of higher education to a “duty” model, where the institution does not hold parental responsibility for a student, but rather has a duty to serve them. This duty suggests the responsibility of an institution to implement risk management policies and procedures, but the institution is often not held liable in the case of substance-related injuries. This is because the institution has played its role in the implementation of risk management practices, but it cannot control the individual’s actions. Therefore, the institution cannot be found negligent (Hall, 2009, p.31-32). There are several best practices for risk management implementation that both promote safety for students and minimize risk for legal action against the institution. The first is creating collaborations with student organizations and other stakeholders to define unsafe behaviors, develop consistent policies, and draft fair consequences. The incorporation of student and stakeholder input increases the adherence to these risk management policies (Hall, 2009, p. 35). The second is requiring student attendance at mandatory educational sessions held by the institution. These trainings should cover topics that are pertinent to the institution, such as safe alcohol consumption, sexual assault prevention, or hazing. These programs should not only define the risks but allow students to discuss bystander intervention strategies and their potential responses (Hall, 2009, p. 35). Throughout the article, the author emphasizes the importance of partnerships between the institution and the student body in order to generate trust (Hall, 2009, p. 36-37). By implementing risk management policies and prevention, an institution can promote safety among students and protect itself from accusations of negligence.

The second lens with which to view risk management is through the Greek organization itself. A 2019 article published in *The Journal of Sorority and Fraternity Research and Practice* describes how the use of social norming can be used to decrease risky behaviors by using the members' influence on chapter culture. In this approach, surveys are conducted to assess chapter members' opinions on common risk concerns in sororities and fraternities, including excessive alcohol use, drug use, sexual assault, hazing, and bias incidents (Maples et al., 2019, p. 1). This article then suggests using data to create new "social norms" for the organizations. Social norms are defined as "expected or desired behaviors in a given situation shared among a specific social population." Social norms define the culture of an organization, are reflected in behaviors of the group, demonstrate the group's collective conscience, and are more impactful in social organizations like sororities and fraternities (Maples et al., 2019, p. 4). An example of the use of social norms would be to survey first-year members about drinking habits. If a portion of the population was found to not participate in underage drinking, this data could be shared with the rest of the chapter to normalize not participating and reduce peer pressure. Culture and social norms within an organization are more impactful than institutional training and resources (Maples et al., 2019, p. 5). Because they are values-based organizations that use selective recruitment practices, Greek organizations can recruit members who have similar social norms, creating a culture of risk management.

Another approach to risk management is through partnerships between the Greek organizations and their host institutions. Since both entities have a stake into sorority and fraternity members, either as members of their organization or as students at the institution, they both should prioritize safety and well-being of the members. Likewise, they both should have concerns on the impact of risk incidents on their liability or reputation. The creation of a

partnership between the institution and a Greek national organization can be a successful approach to promoting risk management in local chapters (Paterson, 2013, p. 48). Both institutions and national organizations face challenges in risk management implementation and accountability. First, national organizations and their staff are likely not located in the town or city of the individual chapter, making it difficult for them to monitor their operations and facilities. It would not be challenging for a fraternity organization to defy risk management policies with the national's knowledge. For this reason, the national organization relies on the institution to monitor the chapter, provide them with campus resources, and understand their chapter culture. Likewise, host institutions for Greek organizations can revoke recognition status for offending Greek organizations, but if they have privately-owned facilities, they may continue their operations as usual, continuing to place students at risk. For this reason, institutions rely on national organizations to revoke offending chapters' chapter facilities and charter, as previously described in the context of legal relationships. Institutions also may rely on organizational leadership to provide training and education, and vice versa (Paterson, 2013, p. 49). As Paterson describes, "Both colleges and universities and inter/national fraternity headquarters have limited authority and ability to change the behavior of a chapter that does not want to change" (Paterson, 2013, p. 48). In this study, interviews were conducted with institutional staff and Greek organizational representatives to describe elements of effective partnerships in responding to student conduct concerns. The most important elements identified were timely notification of the incident and clear communication throughout the process. Both the institution and organizations shared that they valued the practice of keeping one another informed. They also identified elements of ineffective partnerships. Institutions shared the challenge of adversarial responses from national representatives, who would disagree with the outcome or argue that it was not fair.

They also shared frustrations of incidents that would be privately investigated through the national organization but would not be communicated with the institution, either in notification of the incident or results of the investigation (Paterson, 2013, p. 60-61). Organizational representatives explained that exclusion from the conduct process hinders the partnership; they value the ability to weigh in on potential insight and consequences (Paterson, 2013, p. 61-62). A successful approach to risk management is the creation of partnerships between an institution and its Greek organizations.

In conclusion, this chapter reviewed existing research and literature using relevant themes to this study, including history of sorority and fraternity housing and structure, outcomes of housing choice for college students, existing legal relationships between institutions and Greek organizations, and approaches to risk management. This study will use this literature review as a basis for the analysis of qualitative data collected from the interviews and documents. After a narrative constructing the reciprocal partnership is presented, the conclusion of Chapter Four will compare the results of the study to the content discussed in this literature review.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

Research Design

A case study was chosen for this descriptive study due to the nature of the research question. In order to explore how the University of South Dakota has constructed and has managed this reciprocal partnership, multiple forms of data are used to create this prototype. Case studies allow for the in-depth analysis of an organization process and can incorporate multiple forms of data to tell the story (Yin, 2018, p. 5). In the Results chapter, the partnership between the University of South Dakota and the privately-owned Greek housing facilities is described utilizing qualitative data collected from interviews with multiple individuals in each category. To supplement the information collected from the interviews, institutional and Greek organizational documents are used as support. Through qualitative data from interviews and documents, a prototype for institutional oversight into private sorority and fraternity housing is created.

Case Context

The University of South Dakota is a public university in southeastern South Dakota (*At a Glance*, 2023). It is located in the town of Vermillion, South Dakota, with a population of 11,802 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2021). The campus is home to four national sorority chapters and seven national fraternity chapters. Each of these 11 chapters has a housing facility or is in the process of rebuilding (Poppe & Susemihl, 2023, p. 10). The university's total enrollment in Fall 2023 was 9,868. The enrollment of full-time, undergraduate students at the Main Campus in Vermillion was 4,104 students (Enrollment Dashboard, 2023). Of these students in that semester, 795 students were members of a sorority or fraternity chapter, making up 19.4% of that population. Of those 795 Greek students, 308 live in a sorority or fraternity house; 7.5% of the

full-time, undergraduate population at the Vermillion Main Campus are residents of privately-owned Greek housing (Susemihl, 2024).

Role of the Researcher

As the Assistant Director for Sorority and Fraternity Life at the University of South Dakota, my professional role sparked my interest in this study. As I have implemented components of the reciprocal partnership between the institution and the Greek organizations, such as hiring Graduate Assistants, reviewing safety inspections, and granting Greek Releases, I have a unique perspective on the logistics of the partnership. Through attendance at national conferences and conversations with national representatives, I have also found that components of this reciprocal partnership, particularly the live-in Graduate Assistants, are unique, and many colleagues were interested in the mechanics of the program. As the primary researcher, I conducted the interviews of both institutional staff and Greek organizational representatives. Although I have prior relationships with these individuals, the interviews focused on the logistics of their role in the relationship, rather than their specific emotions or feelings. As a part of my reflexive journaling, I interviewed myself prior to the participant interviews to record my own insights and basis for the study.

Interview Participants

Interviewees fall into two categories: university staff and Greek organizational representatives. The interviews did not take place in any particular order but were based on the availability of the participants. There were six base interview questions asked to each participant, with follow-up questions as necessary (Appendix C). The first group of interviewees are university staff. The University of South Dakota requires that a Graduate Assistant live in each fraternity or sorority facility that does not have a House Director. These Graduate Assistants are

hired by the Office of Sorority and Fraternity Life, and they live in a private apartment in the chapter facility they are assigned. They are responsible for ensuring chapter adherence to risk management policies, following emergency procedures, and being the liaison between the chapter and the university (Appendix D). They meet regularly with chapter leadership and report any concerns to the Office of Sorority and Fraternity Life (Sorority and Fraternity Life, 2022, p. 12-13). In addition to Graduate Assistants, in special circumstances of an outstanding applicant or lack of graduate student interest, the Office of Sorority and Fraternity Life can also hire undergraduate students as Fraternity Resident Assistants (Appendix E). For this case study, one current and one former Fraternity Graduate Assistant was interviewed, as well as one current Fraternity Resident Assistant. They were asked questions related to their experience being a liaison between chapter leadership and the university and how physically residing in the Greek housing facility has influenced their role with the chapter.

One university staff that was interviewed was the Director of Housing at the University of South Dakota. Follow-up questions for this staff member inquired about the Greek Release process and experiences of students living in on-campus residence halls. Another interview was conducted with the Chief of the University Police Department, with follow-up questions regarding Clery Act reporting in regard to Greek housing and police jurisdiction over these properties. Finally, an interview was conducted with the university's General Counsel, the attorney responsible for providing legal advice and assistance to other university administrators, with questions regarding liability of the university for actions of fraternities and sororities. As the Sorority and Fraternity Life Advisor is the primary researcher of this study, policies, manuals, and reports are used as support documents in conjunction with a self-interview with this

administrator. In total, six interviews were conducted with university staff, in addition to the one self-interview.

The second group of interviewees are Greek organizational representatives. At the University of South Dakota, chapter facilities are privately owned by either Chapter House Corporation Boards or the chapter's Headquarters. Chapter House Corporation Boards are typically composed of local alumni members from the organization. For this research, interviews with two fraternity Chapter House Corporation Board members and two sorority Chapter House Corporation Board members were conducted. To incorporate the experience of the chapter that is owned by their Headquarters through a Fraternity Housing Corporation model, an interview was conducted with a chapter advisor that oversees housing operations in that organization.

Questions for each type of representative inquired about their experiences with the Graduate Assistant program or the implementation of a House Director, the financial and social impacts of Greek Releases, and their role in owning and managing the facility. In addition to the facility owners and managers, student leadership was also interviewed. Two former sorority and two former fraternity chapter presidents were interviewed, with similar follow-up questions regarding their chapter's Graduate Assistant or House Director, impact of Greek Releases, and their role in facility management, as well as their own experience with applying for a Greek Release, if applicable. Nine interviews were conducted with Greek organizational representatives, with a total of 16 interviews being conducted throughout the research.

Figure 1

Interview Participants

Institutional Staff	
Chief, University Police Department	FHC Chapter Advisor 1
General Counsel	CHC Member 1
Director, Housing	CHC Member 2
Graduate Assistant 1	CHC Member 3
Graduate Assistant 2	CHC Member 4
Fraternity Resident Assistant	Chapter President 1
Assistant Director, Sorority and Fraternity Life (Researcher)	Chapter President 2
	Chapter President 3
	Chapter President 4

Interview Protocol

To describe the reciprocal partnership that the University of South Dakota has built with privately-owned Greek houses and to create a prototype for other universities seeking to increase their oversight of these facilities, qualitative interviews with relevant constituents were conducted. Participants were contacted via email, and the interviews were conducted either in-person or via Zoom. Participants were chosen based on their position either at the University of South Dakota or within their Greek organization. All interviews were recorded and transcribed, with consent from the participants (Appendix B). The participants were permitted to read the questions before the interview. Each interview lasted approximately 30 minutes.

There were several steps taken to protect the confidentiality and privacy of the participants. First, data presented from the interviews did not share identifying information that

would reveal the identity of any individual chapter or individual member. Questions in the interviews were focused on the partnership between the privately-owned house and the University of South Dakota, rather than situations with individual members. Examples were given if they did not violate the privacy of the Greek organization or individual students by revealing identifying or sensitive information. Interviews share the position title of the individual, but not their name. Likewise, data shared from reports by the Office of Sorority and Fraternity Life did not include the names of individual organizations or students.

Second, Zoom interview rooms were password protected to ensure privacy between the participant and the interviewer. Additionally, confidentiality of the interviewee was maintained throughout the study through anonymity. The researcher recorded the interview on either a cell phone recording device or Zoom, then transcribed the recording within 48 hours of the interview. The transcription was stored on a secure hard drive. The name of the participant was removed from the transcript, and the files were coded according to their position title (ex. President_1, CHCMember_2, etc.). Other identifiers, such as the name of the specific sorority and fraternity chapter, were replaced with “CHAPTER” throughout the transcript.

The primary researcher is the Assistant Director for Sorority and Fraternity Life at the University of South Dakota and has a prior relationship with the participants. In order to protect the participants, questions in interviews (Appendix C) were focused on prior experiences and policies in the housing model, without venturing into personal opinions of the partnership structure. There was no penalization for any staff member or Greek representative that did not wish to participate in the research, and this was clearly stated in the participation request via email. The undergraduate student leadership that was requested to participate was former chapter leadership, as to not interfere with the advisor/student leader relationship dynamic.

Data Analysis

Data analysis in this qualitative study utilized data collected from the 16 interviews and documents. In order to address the research question “How can higher education institutions build partnerships with Greek organizations to increase their oversight and risk management of privately-owned Greek housing?” the following questions were used as guide when constructing the narrative of the reciprocal partnership:

1. What role does live-in institutional staff play in a private fraternity or sorority facility?
2. What role do Greek Releases play in the implementation of institutional policy?
3. What are ways the reciprocal partnership has benefitted the institution or the private Greek organization?
4. What impact have the initiatives in the reciprocal partnership had on risk management and reduction?
5. What impact have the initiatives in the reciprocal partnership had on student success and development?
6. Is there pushback from Greek organizations on increased institutional oversight of their facilities?

Throughout the various aspects of the reciprocal partnership, each of these questions are addressed with qualitative data and quotes collected from the interviews and supporting documents.

Figure 2

Table of Documents

Document Title	
Fraternity Graduate Assistant Job Description	Office of Sorority and Fraternity Life, USD
Policies and Procedures Handbook	Office of Sorority and Fraternity Life, USD
Graduate Assistant Contract	Office of Sorority and Fraternity Life, USD
Resident Assistant Contract	Office of Sorority and Fraternity Life, USD
Handbook for Campus Safety and Security Reporting	U.S. Department of Education
SDBOR Policy Manual	South Dakota Board of Regents

The combination of these three data sources allow for personal insight from stakeholders in the reciprocal partnership, supported by quantitative data and policy. Due to my professional role in the University of South Dakota’s Office of Sorority and Fraternity, I maintained a reflexive journal throughout the interview and data analysis process. This study outlines the partnership built between the University of South Dakota and private Greek organizational housing, but sparks the need for more quantitative research on the relationship between this oversight and risk management (Yin, 2018, p. 205).

CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS

Through the analysis of interviews and documents, each of the research questions is explored through a narrative of various aspects of the partnership. These elements include the structure of the partnership, the live-in Graduate Assistant program, the Greek Release process, and considerations for the institution. Throughout the chapter, the importance of the partnership is repeatedly identified. This chapter will describe the construction and application of this reciprocal partnership, using qualitative data identified from documents and interviews. The chapter will conclude with a discussion of the results, a comparison to the literature review, limitations of the study, and recommendations for further research. The purpose of this chapter is to use the University of South Dakota's reciprocal partnership with its Greek organizations as a prototype for institutions seeking to create partnerships with their privately-owned Greek facilities.

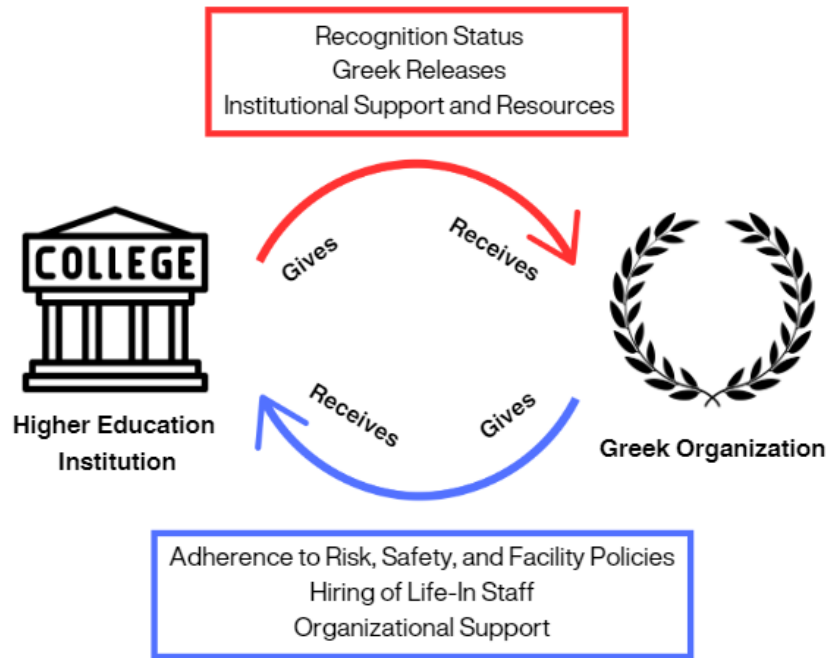
Structure of the Partnership

The first element of the narrative is the structure of the partnership between the University of South Dakota and its privately-owned Greek chapter houses. All eleven sorority and fraternity organizations at the University of South Dakota have privately-owned Greek housing facilities, meaning they are not considered on-campus housing, and the university does not manage these facilities. (Poppe & Susemihl, 2023, p. 10). However, the University of South Dakota has built a reciprocal partnership with the privately-owned facilities, where the institution offers privileges in exchange for following policies that benefit risk management and student success and development. The institution creates a partnership with the staff and students in the privately-owned houses, which benefits the institution, the organization, and the students that reside there. Specifically, the institution offers official recognition of the organization and the

ability of second-year students to live in their facility, in exchange for the chapters providing adequate living facilities, abiding by safety regulations, and hiring live-in staff.

Figure 3

Illustration of the Reciprocal Partnership



Recognition Status

First, organizations must follow specific policies within their private facilities in order to remain recognized organizations under the institution’s Office of Sorority and Fraternity Life.

The Policies and Procedures Handbook outlines the requirements of a recognized Sorority and Fraternity organization:

1. The fraternity or sorority must have established a working relationship with the Office of Sorority and Fraternity Life.

2. The purpose and activities of the fraternity or sorority must be compatible with the mission of the Division of Student Services and the Office of Sorority and Fraternity Life.
3. Chapters must be fully chartered and comply with the rules of their inter/national organizations. In the case of an expanding group, it must be under the supervision of the inter/national organization.
4. Chapter operations and activities must comply with all federal and state laws and local ordinances.
5. Chapter operations and activities must comply with all intern/national fraternity and sorority charters, constitutions, and by-laws.
6. Chapter operations and activities must comply with all University regulations and policies, specifically including those outlined in the Sorority and Fraternity Life Policies and Procedures handbook and the Student Code of Conduct, SDBOR Policy 3:4.
7. Chapter operations and activities must comply with policies determined by the governing council (Interfraternity Council and Panhellenic Council) of which they are a member.
8. Chapters must meet, at minimum, recognized status, as defined by the Greek Scorecard.
(Sorority and Fraternity Life, 2022, p. 5)

Several items required for organizational recognition directly relate to this study. First, in order to receive recognition, the sorority or fraternity must develop a working relationship with the institution. Second, item five demonstrates the partnership between the institution and the Greek organization; if a chapter is violating their national policies, the institution will support the national organization by not recognizing the chapter. Third, item six states that sorority and fraternity chapters must follow the policies outlined in the Policies and Procedures Handbook.

These policies include, but are not limited to, social hosting risk management policies, facility safety requirements, and a live-in Graduate Assistant or House Director requirement. Each of these requirements related to the reciprocal partnership will be discussed in-depth throughout the chapter.

Having institutional recognition allows sorority and fraternity organizations to receive certain benefits. First, only recognized organizations are allowed to participate in the council recruitment processes. Second, only recognized organizations are allowed to affiliate with the university by utilizing campus spaces, receiving staff support, or using the University of South Dakota name or logo on any branding. Third, unrecognized sorority and fraternity organizations cannot receive Greek Releases, which means their second-year membership class would not be permitted to live in their chapter house. Not being a recognized organization can significantly influence the success and recruitment of an organization. When an organization does not have recognition status, it is published by the institution, in order to promote transparency with prospective students and their guardians. These constituents will be informed that the organization did not or does not abide by risk, safety, or facility requirements, meaning they may be an unsafe environment. Although the University of South Dakota does not have any unrecognized Greek organizations at the time of publication, an example of this can be found on Illinois State University's website:

Any operation of these groups is considered underground activity, is against University policy, and is not sanctioned by Sorority and Fraternity Life. Therefore, students should carefully consider their potential student conduct record before associating with an unrecognized group. These organizations have had their recognition revoked for various reasons, including hazing, alcohol and drug abuse, risk management violations, and

failure to comply with policies and expectations. These organizations have, in almost all cases, also had their charter suspended or revoked by their inter/national organization because they were not upholding fraternal values and were engaging in risky behaviors that endangered the members and other students. (*Statement on Unrecognized Groups*, 2024)

This description, which precedes a list of the institution's unrecognized groups, is similar to the course of action the University of South Dakota would follow if groups were to lose recognition status or unrecognized groups were to form.

In their interviews, several participants identified how this recognition status influences Greek organizations' actions. One Chapter President shared that institutional recognition is important because it creates unified structures between the chapters, sharing:

If we didn't have an organized rush time, I think everybody's membership would just be terrible. And I think when you talk about a fraternity or a sorority going unrecognized on a campus, not only is that obviously not a great look for the fraternity, it also impacts their ability to participate in recruitment. (Chapter President 1)

Recognized chapters are able to utilize institutional resources, which includes participating in the organized recruitment process. Not participating could harm the recruitment success for an organization, as well as their reputation. A Chapter Advisor also shared that the fear of becoming unrecognized, and the subsequent impact on recruitment, influences that chapter's dedication to enforcing both institutional and organizational policies:

If we were to look the other way, as far as risk management, let things get out of control and not follow rules, that's going to affect us, our long-term viability, and we're not going to get members and it's not going to work in the long run. (FHC Chapter Advisor 1)

Greek organization representatives view institutional recognition status and its associated benefits as crucial to the success of their organization. The importance of remaining recognized organizations promotes the adherence to both the institution's and organization's policies, making it an important element in the reciprocal partnership.

In order to maintain recognition status, Greek organizations must also ensure that their housing is safe and supportive to the students that reside there. The Policies and Procedures Handbook outlines several requirements that Greek organizations must complete to ensure quality living for their residents, including:

1. Chapters have a fire inspection and meet all fire code requirements prior to December 31st (once per year). Chapter conducts fire and evacuation drills once per semester.
2. Chapter has a risk manager and a list of members responsible in case of emergency.
3. 75% of active Chapter members and 100% of New Members participate in Acute Alcohol Intoxication Training in the fall semester.
4. 75% of the active Chapter members and 100% of New Members participate in Sexual Assault Prevention Training in the fall semester. (Sorority and Fraternity Life, 2022, p. 9)
5. All chapters make available to members a meal plan.
6. All chapters restrict the possession and/or use of firearms or explosive devices of any kind within the confines and premises of the chapter house.

7. All chapters with housing must have a House Director or Live-in Graduate Assistant that reports regularly to the Office of Sorority and Fraternity Life.

(Sorority and Fraternity Life, 2022, p. 11-12)

Due to the Greek Release process, where second-year students can be approved to live in sorority and fraternity facilities rather than University Housing, the institution holds a responsibility to ensure that its students are still in controlled environments (Director, Housing). In order to promote safety for the students residing in privately-owned Greek facilities, the institution outlines requirements for organizations to maintain healthy living environments.

The consequences that would result from a loss of recognition promote risk management in the organizations, since they must follow guidelines set by the institution. Wet event policies are one example of these guidelines. Of the seven fraternities at the University of South Dakota, four fraternity chapters have “wet” facilities, meaning they can have alcohol in their facility in controlled settings. The three chapters that do not allow alcohol have either self-selected to create this policy or have a policy set by their national headquarters. All four of the sororities do not allow alcohol in their facilities, as per NPC guidelines. The fraternities that allow alcohol in their facilities can only do so in controlled settings, following the risk management guidelines described in the Office of Sorority and Fraternity Life’s Policies and Procedures Handbook:

1. If a fraternity chooses to host a social event with alcohol in their facility, the consumption of alcoholic beverages must be limited to fraternity common spaces for the duration of the event; alcohol will not be consumed in private residential spaces during organizational events or socials. Alcohol is allowed in private residential spaces, if all individuals occupying the room are of legal drinking age. Larger gatherings of

individuals must be registered via USD Involved and should not take place in private residential space. Sororities are substance-free.

2. All chapters prohibit the possession, use or dispensing of alcoholic beverages at organizational functions or in the organizational residence by persons under the age of 21 and the provision of alcoholic beverages to persons under the age of 21, in compliance with local/national laws and the Student Code of Conduct.
3. The University of South Dakota prohibits the presence of alcohol products above 15% ABV in any chapter facility or at any chapter event, except when served by a licensed third-party vendor. (Sorority and Fraternity Life, 2022, p. 11-12)

Specifically, these policies also require that events that will include alcohol be registered at least ten days in advance with the Office of Sorority and Fraternity Life, allocate at least 10% of their guest list to be trained sober monitors for the event, prohibit common-source alcohol and only allow BYOB (bring your own beverage) drinks, ensure that hard liquor is not brought into the facility, and provide a list of guests and sober monitors at least 24 hours prior to the event (Sorority and Fraternity Life, 2022, p. 11-12). For the chapters with dry facilities, these policies apply if they have an event at a third-party location, such as a hotel or bar.

Qualitative data collected from interviews describes the impact of risk management policies outlined for recognition status. One Chapter President describes the extra level of accountability that it gives him while leading his chapter through planning social events:

Like I said, that extra layer of accountability... especially with you for some events, like submitting like those health and safety plans for like formals and stuff. I would assume, maybe for like some chapters in the state or in the U.S., if their like institution never required them to submit a plan, like in case something happened, they probably wouldn't

do it. So it's good that our institution is asking us to do that; we better be safe and sorry.

(Chapter President 4)

As this President explains, these institutional guidelines create expectations for the chapters to implement risk management strategies that will create safer environments. One Graduate Assistant participant was a member of a Greek organization at another institution where there was no partnership between the institution and the privately-owned Greek facilities. This participant identified how the absence of a partnership created risk management concerns, sharing, “Because of the lack of that relationship, there was a big lack of risk management... there weren't really any rules.” He furthered described how the partnership’s benefits, such as Greek Releases, give the institution authority to enforce these risk management policies:

We did not have live-in Graduate Assistants, and some of the houses for sororities and fraternities were owned by the national offices. Mine was not. So we had no structure... It was chaos. There was no structure or rhyme or reason. There were no Greek releases, can't even tell you if we needed them or not. We could have just ignored them, because there was no way that our Greek Advisor would really be able to do anything [about it].

(Graduate Assistant 1)

Institutional requirements help ensure that safety and legal standards are being met. Having a reciprocal partnership, where maintaining a relationship with the institution provides benefits to the Greek organizations, creates a structure for accountability and enforcement.

Desire to perpetuate the partnership can also promote adherence to risk management.

Another Chapter President shared that their desire to have a positive relationship with institutional staff encourages positive behavior, saying,

We pride ourselves on having a good relationship with the university because we want to be role models for people on campus and in the community, and we respect the university. I feel like that's kind of why we don't do bad things. (Chapter President 2)

Risk management requirements also create expectations and standards for students to follow, and the fear of losing institutional partnership promotes the observance of these policies. The creation of set institutional expectations can benefit the Greek organization, along with the institution and its students. One Chapter Advisor shared that an additional source of accountability, in conjunction with the rules of the National Headquarters, is helpful in reinforcing the importance of a positive community image, saying:

Respect for the university is what leads these girls to do the right thing: to be model students, to step forward in community relations and volunteer opportunities...They have expectations beyond what there is for their membership in this house, that the university as well has a very high standard for what they expect of a student. (FHC Chapter Advisor 1)

Many Greek organizational participants shared that a positive relationship with the institution is important to maintain. Providing benefits, such as Greek Releases and recognition status, to organizations that maintain this partnership can enforce the adherence to institutional risk management policies and promote the safety of students residing in private Greek facilities.

This adherence to risk management and the insurance that guidelines are followed are also benefits to the institution. The University of South Dakota's General Counsel described the financial impact that risk harm from a Greek organization can have on the institution, saying:

Things like alcohol related deaths, sexual assaults, things like that have a definite reputational harm on the university... can have a major financial impact. If the university

becomes a place that has a reputation for dangerous activity and students getting harmed or deaths, enrollment drops 100 students, that has a greater financial impact. (General Counsel)

This quote demonstrates that having a partnership to ensure risk management is a priority in Greek housing; in addition to legal liability and an institution's desire to keep its students safe, it also protects the institution's reputation. By incorporating recognition status as an element of the reciprocal partnership, adherence to risk, safety, and facility policies can be enforced. The partnership that the University of South Dakota has created with its privately-owned Greek organizations has created a culture of collaboration and accountability, through the exchange of certain privileges and adherence to policies.

Graduate Assistant Program

A majority of participants identified the live-in Graduate Assistant requirement and program as one of the key components of the partnership between the University of South Dakota and its Greek organizations. Several elements were identified within this program: structure, role, comparison to a House Director, risk management, student success, and the live-in component.

Structure

Another institutional policy requires the sorority and fraternity chapters to hire live-in staff, whether a House Director or Graduate Assistant. This policy reads, "All chapters with housing must have a House Director or Live-in Graduate Assistant that reports regularly to the Office of Sorority and Fraternity Life" (Sorority and Fraternity Life, 2022, p. 11-12). The structure and expected responsibilities of Graduate Assistants were identified through the researcher's self-interview, participant interviews, Office of Sorority and Fraternity Life

documents, and the Graduate Assistant/Resident Assistant contracts (Appendix D and E). The live-in Graduate Assistant program was consistently named by participants as a key component of the reciprocal partnership.

Graduate Assistants are hired by the Sorority and Fraternity Life Office. While Housing Directors are private, full-time employees hired by the organization, Graduate Assistants are part-time employees. In most cases, they are full-time graduate students, with a preference for students studying Adult and Higher Education or Counseling. Once hired, the Graduate Assistants then participate in “Placement Day,” where they have the opportunity to meet with student and alumni representatives from each of the Greek organizations and receive a tour of each of the facilities. After Placement Day, both the Greek organizations and the Graduate Assistants rank their preferences for assignment. Contracts (Appendix D) are signed for each academic year, by the Sorority and Fraternity Advisor, a CHC member, the Chapter President, and the Graduate Assistant. During the spring term, Graduate Assistants are evaluated by their supervisor, the Sorority and Fraternity Advisor, and the decision to re-extend their contract is made. At that time, the Greek organizations have the ability to decide whether they would like to re-hire their Graduate Assistant, or if they would like to re-enter the Placement Day process. Graduate Assistants can also express their desire to re-enter the Placement Day process and receive a different assignment. Graduate Assistants may also be hired in the middle of the academic year, if there is an opening. In this case, the newly hired Graduate Assistant would be placed in the chapter where there is an opening (Assistant Director, SFL). Although Greek organizations have a voice in the placement process, the Office of Sorority and Fraternity Life manages and oversees Graduate Assistant hiring and placement.

For their employment, Graduate Assistants receive a stipend consisting of their hourly pay, a private apartment in their Greek facility, a meal plan equivalent to 9 meals a week, and a tuition reduction. The stipend for their hourly pay is split between the Office of Sorority and Fraternity and the Greek organization, since they split their hours in half between these two entities. The Office of Sorority and Fraternity Life receives the funding for Graduate Assistant stipends through an allocated fund for Graduate Assistants through Student Services. The private apartments consist of a bedroom, a living room, and a bathroom, which are located in the Greek chapter facility. The Greek organization is responsible for the upkeep and management of these spaces. The meal plan is also provided by the Greek organization and must be equivalent to 9 meals per week. Organizations provide these meals in different modes, typically structured after their meal plans for their own live-in members. These meal plans are provided through in-house meals prepared by a cook, catering, money allocated to the Graduate Assistant via a campus meal plan, or a check (Appendix D). In addition to hourly pay, these additional benefits of Fraternity Graduate Assistantships are appealing to prospective employees.

The Office of Sorority and Fraternity Life also has the potential to alter contracts to meet the needs of other institutional departments, to adjust to a lower candidate pool, or to lower costs for the Greek organization. For example, the Office of Sorority and Fraternity Life is a part of the Department of Student Engagement, which also consists of the Office of Service Learning, the Office of Multicultural Affairs, Student Activities, and Spirit Teams. In the case where a Graduate Assistant in another Student Engagement office is in need of housing, or another office is in need of a Graduate Assistant, a contract can be split three ways, to allow the Graduate Assistant to work for both offices. For example, the weekly hours can be increased (although they cannot exceed 40), and the Graduate Assistant could work seven hours for their Greek

organization, seven hours for the Office of Sorority and Fraternity Life, and another seven hours for another Student Engagement department. This contract adjustment can benefit the Greek organization they are hired by, as they will pay less for their overall hourly stipend. It can also be used as a response to a shortage of qualified applicants to fulfill the need to have a live-in Graduate Assistant in each Greek house. Another solution to a shortage of applicants can be the implementation of a live-in Resident Assistant program (Appendix E). At the University of South Dakota, a Resident Assistant fulfills similar job responsibilities to a Graduate Assistant, but as an undergraduate student. Historically, this program has only been utilized in the absence of a qualified Graduate Assistant candidate and can be filled by either a member or non-member of the Greek chapter. Another non-typical Graduate Assistant contract is in the case that a Greek chapter does not have a physical housing facility. This could be in the case that there is a new Greek organization that does not yet have funding for their own facility, but also in a rebuilding year. In this scenario, the Graduate Assistant's allocated hours could be split into thirds: one third with their live-in chapter, one third with their chapter they additionally advise, and one third with the Office of Sorority and Fraternity Life. Likewise, their costs would also be split in thirds among those entities (Assistant Director, SFL). Altered Graduate Assistant contracts allow for flexibility to adjust to the needs of different chapters, reduce costs, create collaboration with other departments, and adjust for a hiring shortage.

Role

The typical Graduate Assistant contract (Appendix D) allows the student to work a maximum of 20 hours per week. This 20 hours is split in half between the Sorority and Fraternity Life Office and the Greek chapter they are employed by. For their ten hours per week assigned in the Sorority and Fraternity Office, each Graduate Assistant has one to two "project areas." These

project areas are designed around the Panhellenic and Interfraternity Council executive positions, as well as other needs of the office. Examples of project areas include mental health, multicultural affairs, special events, philanthropy, scholarship, sustainability, marketing, and data collection. Within these project areas, the Graduate Assistants can plan community programming, create materials for chapter executive teams, or give requested or required presentations. Examples of community programming include a day-long Study-A-Thon event, a recycling contest, and a community-wide theme social event. Examples of materials created for executive teams include a guide for mental health committees or sober monitor training guides. Examples of requested or required presentations include healthy alcohol consumption after a risk incident, hazing prevention, liability of hosting a wet event, and diversity, equity, and inclusion workshops. One Graduate Assistant elaborated on the presentations she has led at chapters, including self-care workshops, identity development, and how to cope with academic stress (Graduate Assistant 2). These presentations can be given to their own chapters or to other chapters that have requested or required to have them. One Chapter President shared that having their own Graduate Assistant is useful when they are strategizing their yearly presentations, since they are a convenient option for a presenter:

At the beginning of every semester with our chapter, we kind of plan out the rest of the semester for membership development stuff. So, instead of asking you who [can] cover scholarship, we can just ask our GA... sometimes, you know, they're the specific person we're looking for. (Chapter President 4)

In addition to annual programming and presentations, each Graduate Assistant is required to do one large-scale project for their area in the spring semester, whether that be a presentation, a data collection, or an event. The Graduate Assistants work on their project area initiatives during

scheduled office hours at the student union building. Project area initiatives are led by the Graduate Assistants, with the direction of the Sorority and Fraternity Advisor. During their office hours, Graduate Assistants may also be called upon to assist the Sorority and Fraternity Advisor with various tasks.

In addition to their project areas and office hours, each Graduate Assistant also serves on the on-call rotation twice a semester. The on-call weekend begins Fridays at noon and continues until 8 a.m. on Monday. During this time, the on-call Graduate Assistant must remain sober and within an hour driving radius of Vermillion, where the University of South Dakota is located. On-call Graduate Assistants are used in situations where the Sorority and Fraternity Advisor has been called for an incident, such as the report of an unregistered social event, and there is a need for a physical investigation into the report. They may also be used for crisis intervention, if a member is having a mental health concern, or if a member over consumes a substance (Assistant Director, SFL).

The remaining ten hours per week in their contract is assigned with their Greek organization, primarily through individual meetings and programming. Each week, the Graduate Assistant meets with their Greek organization's Chapter President and may hold additional meetings with housing officers or risk managers. Additionally, they may communicate with their Greek organization's CHC members, particularly if there is a concern with members or the facility. During the chapter hours, the Graduate Assistant may also assist their chapter members with programming, such as helping set up for a philanthropy event or decorate for a social event. Graduate Assistants may also create their own programming that allows for relationship building, both among chapter members and between the Graduate Assistant and the chapter members. This programming has included gaming tournaments, cooking lessons, watch parties

for sporting events or movies, or a designated space and time for studying and homework (Assistant Director, Sorority and Fraternity Life) Priorities for chapter programming include building relationships and providing education.

There is opportunity for growth in the Graduate Assistant's role in the chapter facility. In the absence of a physically present CHC member in town, or in absence of an involved Chapter Advisor, a Graduate Assistant can help fill those gaps. One CHC member shared that they would like to see additional leadership roles from their Graduate Assistant, including attending chapter meetings, attending executive meetings, helping the executive team create strategic plans, and helping chapter leaders set goals. While desired level of involvement could vary depending on the chapter leadership, this member shared:

I think if we're going to continue to build that relationship, what I would like to see her do is maybe be part of a retreat, like an executive board retreat, goal setting retreat, whether it's for her, for the chapter, for the executive board... They should be able to do a SWOT analysis or at least some sort of goal setting... Who's going to facilitate that and bring in some different ideas? That could be the Graduate Assistant. (CHC Member 1)

This CHC member shared that he would like to see additional advisory roles held by the Graduate Assistant. Similarly, Graduate Assistants can be used to reduce the need for additional full-time institutional staff. While a campus professional should remain responsible for high-level concerns and risk management, Graduate Assistants can assist in planning office programming, staffing university events, or leading roundtable discussions with chapter leaders.

One participant identified this Graduate Assistant role, sharing:

How large would our Sorority and Fraternity Life office have to be if we didn't have them? If we pause and think for a second, if we didn't have those live-in Graduate

Assistants, we would definitely have to change that model. And so, looking today, we might not have enough to have five or six additional full-time employees, but if we can look at some of those stipends, provide that they have live-in oversight, so they have that constant, you know, point of contact and things. I think it just provides them an extra level of that connection that's truly proven to be effective. (Chief, UPD)

In an institutional setting with less capacity to hire multiple full-time professional staff for their Sorority and Fraternity Life offices, Graduate Assistants can help fulfill advising needs for a fraction of the cost, as well as provide the additional benefit of providing live-in support.

Within their Greek organization, Graduate Assistants also hold responsibility in crisis situations. As outlined in their contracts, they will “help chapter leadership to respond to emergency and crisis situations as they arise and contract appropriate personnel” and “report inappropriate and illegal behavior of chapter members and their guests to chapter leadership and if no resolution is reached, report incidents to the Office of Sorority and Fraternity Life” (Appendix D & E). This reporting can also include regular communication with the CHC Board. Another CHC member shared that the Graduate Assistant serves as a resource for chapter members in a crisis situation, as well as share any concerning information with CHC Board or Chapter Advisors:

They are the ones that if there's a crisis or if something just happens in that house that the women cannot handle... they can turn to this person as like the first line of defense or offense and just request help emotionally or physically. For me, from the corporation board, [they can serve as a resource] to check in and be like, “Hey, what have you noticed around the house, that maybe the women haven't communicated, that an adult might communicate?” (CHC Member 2)

Although chapter members are typically legal adults, the Graduate Assistant provides a more senior leadership role in the house that can appropriately respond to crises and know when to communicate concerns. There are also several professional expectations outlined for the role, including providing a mature and trustworthy influence, not dating members from their Greek chapter, and not violating alcohol law.

In addition to their job expectations as outlined by CHC members and their contract, there are also additional, spontaneous roles that a Graduate Assistant may fill in the chapter. The first is conflict resolution. One Graduate Assistant shared that she was often a mediator of conflict in the chapter, since she was seen as a neutral third party:

“You can bring [your conflict] to somebody and it won't impact anything for you. Like, in terms of, instead of going to the president and like you're saying something's institutionally problematic or something. It's nice to have, like, an impartial third person if there's conflict between two members. (Graduate Assistant 2)

Because of their non-membership status, this Graduate Assistant shared that he was a successful mediator of conflict in the house, since he could be trusted for confidentiality and would be impartial. Another non-contractual role that the Graduate Assistant can fill is helping the students with the operations of a large student organization and house. One Chapter President shared that their Graduate Assistant assisted them with painting and decorating banners for events (Chapter President 1). Additionally, one Graduate Assistant shared that her presence in the chapter facility has allowed her to be a resource in many areas of her fraternity members', including resolving personal conflict, giving relationship advice, or helping them prepare large meals, saying:

Just checking in, you know, and making sure they know that I'm genuinely interested and invested in them. [Helping them with] girlfriend things, and cooking has been one of

them. Helping people just make food in the kitchen, or like helping them prepare big dishes or things like that for everybody. That's my favorite. (Graduate Assistant 2)

A successful Graduate Assistant in this program fulfills their contractual obligations of project areas, chapter programming, and reporting and responding to emergencies, but also takes an interest in their members' experiences and development.

Role Model.

As another aspect of a Graduate Assistant's non-contractual responsibilities, many participants identified them as role models for chapter members. Specifically, Chapter Presidents shared that this is a major impact of the implementation of the Graduate Assistant program, and that it is a key benefit for their members. One Chapter President described this role model relationship as the "unofficial role of an older sister." She further elaborated on this role, sharing that their Graduate Assistant can give advice on school, friendships, and "just life" (Chapter President 3). One Graduate Assistant echoed the "big sister" sentiment, sharing "I like to think of it more as a big sister mentoring thing. It's a nice way to know someone is supportive and cares" (Graduate Assistant 2). Additionally, Graduate Assistant participants shared that they would give their members advice on organization skills, share studying and academic tips, and help them navigate college life (Graduate Assistant 1, Graduate Assistant 2). Similarly, CHC Members shared that Graduate Assistants have provided members a "sounding board" when making leadership decisions (CHC Member 3). Multiple Chapter Presidents also shared that while the Graduate Assistants have more life experiences than an undergraduate student, they also possess relatability that a professional staff member may not. One Chapter President shared:

It's a very good, personable approach to student development. I think like for some institutions, or I think just as students, we're used to faculty and staff teaching us these

things, but I think if it comes from one of our peers, even though they're in graduate school, they're still our age. And it's more personable; most people retain that information, or it affects them way better than it would from a faculty member. (Chapter President 4)

Because of the Graduate Assistants' relatability, this Chapter President shared that he is able to have a larger impact as a role model than professional Sorority and Fraternity staff. Graduate Assistants may also be seen as more accessible than professional staff: "You're not setting up a meeting three weeks out with your GA; you'll see them tomorrow (Graduate Assistant 2).

One Graduate Assistant also shared how he would advise his chapter members in a more informal style, saying:

Personally, my advising style, since I was such a similar age to them, I felt like a lot of them... wouldn't pay attention if it was in a formal setting. So I approached them more from a friend setting, under the guise of friendship... to where they were caught off guard. They didn't know that it was happening. (Graduate Assistant 1)

Similarly, another Graduate Assistant participant shared that communication style is what has built trust within the partnership, saying, "They trust us. They trust GA's and they know that we get whatever's going on with them" (Graduate Assistant 2). Each of these participants' quotes demonstrate the unique impact that a Graduate Assistant can have as a role model on undergraduate members of sororities and fraternities.

The institutional knowledge that a Graduate Assistant possesses also allows them to be an effective role model, particularly while responding to any crisis situations. One Chapter President shared that the "life experiences" of a Graduate Assistant allow them to appropriately navigate emergencies, sharing:

She's hired through the university, so she is very up to date and knowledgeable about the policies with the school. But she also has life experience. So if we do run into a situation, maybe an unsafe [situation] with substances, she's someone we can go to, and not only does she know the specific policy and steps we're supposed to take, but she's also there just as a calming presence because she's probably seen something similar before.

(Chapter President 3)

The institutional knowledge possessed by a live-in Graduate Assistant, as well as their status as a role model, allows them to assist chapter members in crisis situations. The relatability, accessibility, and institutional knowledge that a Graduate Assistant possesses makes them a unique component of the reciprocal partnership, allowing the University of South Dakota to provide positive role models to members of sororities and fraternities.

Comparison to House Directors

To fulfill requirements outlined in the Policies and Procedures Handbook, sorority and fraternity chapter houses must hire a live-in House Director or Graduate Assistant (Sorority and Fraternity Life, 2022, p. 11-12). At the time of publication, the University of South Dakota has seven fraternities and one sorority participating in the Graduate Assistant program, and three sororities that hire House Directors. There are similarities and differences between the two options. Both provide adult supervision in the chapter facilities. Although chapter members are most typically legal adults, the supervision from an individual with additional "life experiences" provides an additional level of accountability (Chapter President 3). Additionally, both a Graduate Assistant and a House Director can serve as role models and third-party mediators for chapter members (FHC Chapter Advisor 1). Like Graduate Assistants, House Directors can also

create presentations, advise chapter members, and provide resources, depending on their relationship with the chapter (Chapter President 2).

However, several differences between the Graduate Assistant role and the House Director role were identified by participants. First, House Directors carry a larger financial burden to the Greek organization than a Graduate Assistant. House Directors, sometimes informally known as “House Moms,” are full-time employees that are hired by the private Greek organization. Like a Graduate Assistant, they live in an apartment. However, because they are full-time employees, they require additional compensation than a part-time Graduate Assistant. According to a salary comparison website, in 2024, a sorority House Director makes an average annual wage of \$26,121 (*Sorority Mother*, 2024). This is in contrast to the Graduate Assistant annual stipend of \$8,134, which the Greek chapter is only responsible for paying half of (Appendix D). These financial differences can be a key factor in the CHC Board’s decision between the two options, with one CHC member sharing:

There's folks [advocating] for the house mother structure and feel that that was the way to go. But, I don't know if anybody can afford it anymore. So the reality is that that's cute, but I don't know if anybody's got an extra, twenty, thirty thousand [dollars] hanging around or not. (CHC Member 3)

In order to decrease financial spending for their organization, CHC members may choose to participate in the Graduate Assistant program, rather than hire a full-time House Director. House Directors also tend to have a wider age gap between themselves and the chapter members than Graduate Assistants do, which can allow them to be perceived as more of an authority figure (FHC Chapter Advisor 1). Although relatability was previously identified as a benefit of

Graduate Assistants, some CHC members may see the age gap as a benefit, with one Chapter Advisor sharing:

I think a full time House Director is actually more beneficial only because there's just more consistency and I feel like there is a level of parental [guidance] that sometimes 19-year-olds and 20-year-olds need. It's a transition in their lives and I feel like sometimes that extra reassurance from someone who's a little bit older is nice. (CHC Member 2)

This Chapter Advisor sees a House Director as a parental figure, where Graduate Assistants were previously identified as fulfilling an older brother or sister role. The age and life stage differences between a Graduate Assistant and a House Director can also contribute to the additional financial strain of the latter option.

The role of a House Director in the chapter facility also varies from a Graduate Assistant; while Graduate Assistants focus on advising, programming, emergency response, and serving as role models, House Directors take on additional maintenance roles in the physical facility. As the Chapter Advisor from the FHC model describes, a House Director oversees the daily operations of the house, including the cook staff, the housekeeping staff, and any property maintenance needs (FHC Chapter Advisor 1). A House Director also responds to any repairs, stocks the pantry, calls for snow removal, and oversees new construction projects during the summer (Chapter President 2). One Chapter President describes the importance of the House Director to the operations of the chapter facilities, sharing “She keeps things up to date, which may seem kind of minimal, but when you have a house with 60 girls and it's an old house, things have to be repaired quite frequently” (Chapter President 2). The importance of physical maintenance of the chapter facility is also a factor in the decision between a House Director and a Graduate

Assistant. One CHC member shared why her organization continues to utilize the House Director model, despite its additional costs, saying:

Our concern with graduate people is that they're only 10 hours a week [with the chapter]. Here's the situation: I can't get girls to empty a garbage can. How am I going to get them to schedule a fire inspection? How am I going to get them to walk through a health inspection? Those are the things that House Directors do that I don't know that I would be comfortable asking the chapter members to do, because I just don't think it would get done. (CHC Member 4)

In the Graduate Assistant model, chapter members and chapter alumni, who are primarily unpaid volunteers, are required to take on additional responsibility of facility maintenance, in exchange for the lower financial cost (CHC Member 2). Because Graduate Assistants work less hours, have academic responsibilities, and have different chapter responsibilities, the roles of the House Director must be dispersed elsewhere.

In contrast, despite the decreased facility maintenance responsibilities of a Graduate Assistant, their ability to create a partnership between the institution and the Greek organization is seen as a key benefit of the program. Although House Directors work full-time for the organization, they also are permitted to take vacations and weekends off. This can create a challenge for CHC members to find supervision for the chapter house, whereas in the Graduate Assistant model, a Graduate Assistant on-call could provide support and supervision in this scenario. One CHC member described their transition from a House Director to a Graduate Assistant, sharing:

That is definitely where the Graduate Assistantship totally wins over the House Director is when the GA needs to go home for a week, and Sorority and Fraternity Life just kind

of takes over and it's like, yep, we got them covered. Any crisis that comes up, we've got that handled. It's like one less responsibility that a bunch of volunteers has to handle for the house. (CHC Member 2)

The ability of the Graduate Assistant program to create a partnership between the institution and a privately-owned Greek facility can relieve burdens of responsibility from the CHC members. The relationship that the Graduate Assistant program fosters also promotes increased involvement and communication with the institution, which provides additional benefits in the creation of a reciprocal partnership. One of these benefits is institutional training opportunities for risk management and emergency response. While House Directors may receive training through the national headquarters, the institution is not able to verify its completion. Training via the institution, rather than the private Greek organization, also allows for consistency in crisis management among Greek chapters. One chapter also shared that their transition to the Graduate Assistant model allowed for increased communication with the university, saying:

Having a GA this year helped us be more involved in the university... She also just kind of knows the general culture around campus and how things work, how things go. She's a lot easier to talk to; she's more involved in the things that we're involved in, as opposed to having someone who is not through the university, they don't really have much in that sense. There's a lot of things that if we ask them about, they just might not know.

(Chapter President 3)

For this chapter, the Graduate Assistant model helped their chapter become more involved on campus and have additional access to campus resources. Although there are pros and cons to both the House Director and Graduate Assistant models, the latter allows for increased

institutional oversight and the ability to enhance the reciprocal partnership between the institution and the Greek organization.

Risk Management

Participants also reported that the Graduate Assistant program has benefitted risk management in the chapter facility. At the University of South Dakota, Graduate Assistants are designated as Campus Security Authorities (CSAs) through the Clery Act, meaning they are mandatory reporters of Clery crimes. Clery crimes fall into four categories: criminal offenses including homicide, manslaughter, rape, sexual assault, burglary, and arson; hate crimes that are motivated by bias; domestic violence, dating violence, and stalking; and illegal possession of a weapon, drugs, or alcohol (*The Handbook*, 2016, p. 53). At the University of South Dakota, Graduate Assistants are designated as CSAs due to their oversight of residence facilities that are owned by student organizations, in this case, sorority and fraternity organizations. Like other CSAs, Graduate Assistants are only required to report crimes that are directly reported to them in their official capacity, not if they receive the information indirectly through overhearing conversations or gossip. The Sorority and Fraternity Advisor is also a CSA, due to their advisory role in student organizations (*The Handbook*, 2016, p.109-110). In contrast, fraternity alumni advisors and CHC Boards are typically not CSAs. The NIC opposes the designation of alumni advisors as CSAs because they do not meet the definition of an individual responsible for campus security, and it creates additional burdens on their volunteers. Because Graduate Assistants are paid, institutional employees, the NIC would not oppose this designation (*Campus Security Authorities*, 2024). Clery Act reporting, and its relation to sorority and fraternity housing, is described in additional detail later in the chapter. In addition to being CSAs, Graduate Assistants are also contractually obligated to report emergency situations and unresolved

inappropriate and illegal behavior to the Office of Sorority and Fraternity Life (Appendix D&E). A Chapter President described the way in which the reporting structure of the Graduate Assistant program holds chapter members accountable, saying, “Since she's on file through the university, there's not a whole lot that's gonna slide on by with her” (Chapter President 3). The structure by which Graduate Assistants are contractually and legally obligated to report crimes and emergencies allows them to be risk management authorities in their fraternity and sorority houses.

Graduate Assistants are also able to watch for dangerous situations regarding hazing and substance abuse. Several CHC members shared that having a third-party adult figure present in the house gives both the institution and the Greek organization peace of mind that any policy violations would be reported. He shared, “I would suspect that if there's physical hazing... always having an adult in there... controls them a little bit more and makes them have a little bit more respect” (CHC Member 1). Likewise, another CHC member shared that this third-party presence can help enforce the adherence to social hosting policies, described earlier in Chapter 4. These policies, designed to keep chapter members and guests safe, as well as protect the liability of Greek organizations, include registering social gatherings, restricting underage access to alcohol, prohibiting the consumption of hard liquor in the chapter facility, and implementing trained sober monitors. This CHC member shared that the Graduate Assistant would be able to report the defiance of risk policies, saying, “The presence of having that person in the house, even if the interactions aren't super strong, and knowing that... things can be discovered. Things can be reported. Things could be taken to another level if something goes wrong” (CHC Member 3). Both CHC members shared that the quality or additional responsibilities of the Graduate Assistant, such as being a strong role model or providing leadership development, are additional

benefits, but the main benefit of a Graduate Assistant is that their presence promotes the adherence to risk management policies. A Resident Assistant participant also shared that the role of a Graduate Assistant in a dry facility may look different than the role in a facility that allows alcohol, but their purpose of third-party surveillance remains the same (Resident Assistant 1). If risk management policies are not followed by chapter members, the presence of a Graduate Assistant reassures Greek organizational leaders that the crime will be reported, and the organization can properly respond.

Two participants also identified how the Graduate Assistant program's role in risk management has made the reciprocal partnership at the University of South Dakota unique. One Resident Assistant, who had previously attended other institutions with Greek systems, shared how his previous institutions struggled with risk management, which is different from his perception of the Greek system at the University of South Dakota. He attributes this difference to the role of the Graduate Assistant, saying:

I've been at three different universities, and the other two universities I've been at don't have this system, where they have a GA living in the house. I'd say, in Greek Life at those other two schools, they had a lot more issues with substance abuse, alcohol problems, partying, sexual assault, stuff like that. Just comparing from the other universities I've been to, I think this is a great protocol to put in place to help things flow more smoothly and stay safer. (Resident Assistant 1)

According to this participant, the partnership that the Graduate Assistant program is able to foster between the institution and the Greek organization makes the University of South Dakota unique in its approach to risk management. One Graduate Assistant also articulated how the presence of a Graduate Assistant allows the institution to manage risk in a more approachable

way. Rather than professional staff becoming involved in every report, the Graduate Assistant can serve as a mediator between the two entities. This participant shared that chapter leadership is responsible for risk management in the chapter facilities, but sometimes a situation can become overwhelming, and the Graduate Assistant can be there to help. This participant views herself as an advocate for both the institution and her Greek chapter members in the partnership, sharing:

I feel like the chapters are very good at self-governing and self-voicing and those kinds of things. But when it gets bigger or is more challenging than they can manage, they know that they have somebody that they can trust, and the university also does the same. Like, they understand that. We can do our jobs; they have made sure we've been competent and know the protocol and what to do. I'd say [the partnership creates] peace of mind for both in the same situation without having to involve each other too much. I think it's a nice way to be like, "You're still your own thing, we get it, but also we're making sure you're taken care of." (Graduate Assistant 2)

This Graduate Assistant described the model as a way for the institution to ensure that students are safe, but also giving them the autonomy of living in their own facilities and managing their own situations. The Graduate Assistant program contributes to the partnership between the institution and the Greek organizations by promoting risk management in the privately-owned facilities. Their presence creates structure for off-campus environments and can give both the institutional and the Greek organizational representatives peace of mind that their students are safe.

Student Success

Several participants identified that the Graduate Assistant program has positive effects on student success. Due to the relatability and accessibility that allows Graduate Assistants to become role models for the chapter members, they also can provide services that contribute to the success of students in the Greek organization. In this study, student success is operationalized by academic performance, safety, professional development, and feelings of belonging and community. The Graduate Assistant program's impact on safety was discussed as an aspect of the risk management element.

Participants shared that the Graduate Assistant program has contributed to increased academic performance by chapter members. Because Graduate Assistants are also full-time graduate students, they have proven their ability to academically succeed in their undergraduate programs. Chapter Presidents identified Graduate Assistants as resources for their chapter members, a majority who are still in their undergraduate programs, by offering homework advice and study tips. One participant also shared that they were able to tutor their chapter members in undergraduate history courses, since that was their graduate program area. Graduate Assistants are also able to serve as resources to chapter members who are applying for graduate programs themselves, assisting them with their professional development. One Graduate Assistant shared that they would help their members write and proofread their application essays. One CHC member also identified the ability of the Graduate Assistant to serve as an academic role model to chapter members, sharing:

I think there's potential there for that relationship to really help on the scholastic side. Especially if you've got graduate students; not everybody gets into graduate school, so you probably already have some built-in pretty decent students that are living in our

houses... I think it's a natural area for a GA to be able to assist them... Not only be a role model just as a person, but also as a student too. (CHC Member 3)

This CHC member shared that the academic and professional role model relationship can occur naturally between the Graduate Assistant and chapter members. Another CHC member shared that this is a unique benefit to a Graduate Assistant, rather than a House Director, saying:

They're able to ask them, "Hey, when did you start applying for grad school?" Or, "Hey, when did you start looking for a job?" or "When do I start looking for a rental?" And so it just kind of feeds into that life cycle of what their next stage is. (CHC Member 2)

The additional academic and life experiences of a Graduate Assistant can allow them to be a natural role model for chapter members. However, project area presentations, such as mental health programming during finals week, are also a benefit to academic performance (Graduate Assistant 2). Additionally, chapter programming that incorporates "study tables," which is a designated time and place for homework and studying, also creates a culture of academic success within the Greek chapter facility (Resident Assistant 1). The accessibility of graduate students to undergraduate chapter members can provide them with additional resources and implement academic and professional role models.

Graduate Assistants can also contribute to student success by developing spaces that foster belonging and community. Similar to the environment that a Resident Assistant can create on a traditional on-campus dormitory floor, a Graduate Assistant can continue to provide those benefits even after the student moves off-campus into their sorority and fraternity house (Graduate Assistant 2). One Chapter President shared that their Graduate Assistant's ability to foster community has increased retention in their chapter, saying:

I know a lot of our freshmen... when they come over to the house, [our Graduate Assistant] makes an effort to talk with them. Sometimes it's hard for [chapter leadership] because there's so many freshmen. But our Graduate Assistant is always out of her room, always in the living room, the dining room, just sitting, and she makes an effort to talk to whoever's over, which I think is helpful when the freshmen come over, because they're like, "Oh, there's this older person, that has so much knowledge and knows what she's doing in life." I feel like sometimes the freshmen get close to [older chapter members], and then they kind of realize we don't have it together. But our Graduate Assistant always looks like she has it together... It's like a mom almost, but close to our age, so it's very comforting to have at school. (Chapter President 3)

This Chapter President shared that their Graduate Assistant goes out of her way to support members of their chapter, particularly younger members who are visiting the chapter facility. By creating a space for members to feel heard and supported, the Graduate Assistant program was able to increase retention for one of the University of South Dakota's Greek organizations. All of the Graduate Assistant and Resident Assistant participants shared that they intentionally checked in on their members regularly, ensuring that they knew they had someone who was there for them. The Graduate Assistant program has the capacity to promote student success among undergraduate chapter members in academic performance, safety, professional development, and creating a sense of belonging.

Benefits for Graduate Assistants.

The Graduate Assistant program also contributes to the student success of the Graduate Assistants themselves, who are also students at the University of South Dakota. One participant identified the professional development and community that this program can provide to the

Graduate Assistants. First, this Graduate Assistant explained how this opportunity has allowed them to develop skills that will be beneficial for their future career in mental health counseling, which is one of the preferred programs in the Graduate Assistant hiring process. Specifically, she shared that working with college students has allowed her to develop experiences in identity development, saying:

I like this population because identity development is my favorite piece of counseling. It's just people getting to learn about who they are and getting comfortable in that. And college is such an explosive time for identity development... It's really cool to get to watch that and learn about how that looks for different people, especially being a woman living amongst young men. (Graduate Assistant 2)

In her role as a Graduate Assistant, this participant was able to work with chapter members on their identity development. This participant also identified that she was able to gain hand-on experiences with “group think,” conflict management, and advocacy, and she shared that her fellow Graduate Assistants have also reported growth in these areas. The experience of working with fraternity men allowed this Graduate Assistant to gain professional experiences that will benefit her for her professional career.

This participant also identified that the Graduate Assistant program can serve as an interdisciplinary cohort and community for the involved graduate students. She shared that her participation in the program assisted her in her transition to the University of South Dakota and helped her find her community, sharing:

It is a unique experience to live in a Greek house. It just absolutely is not for everybody. But for the people that it's for, it's such a bonding thing. And like, all of my best friends last year were people who were not in my program... These kinds of people were just the

kinds of people that I get along with easily, which are just people who care a lot about students. (Graduate Assistant 2)

According to this participant, although the Graduate Assistants may not be in the same academic programs or live in the same facility, the experience has given them a sense of unity and community. Additionally, this sense of unity also was transferred to undergraduate chapter members; as Graduate Assistants built relationships, they were able to increase communication between chapters as well (Graduate Assistant 2). She shared that this program is “best case scenario for most chapters,” saying:

You get to be a good thing for people, and that's been a really good thing for me throughout grad school. [It has been] a big learning experience in all the best ways. Like, of course it sucks living when people play music until three in the morning, but you sign up for it and you learn to like it because you know [the chapter members] are happy and they become your community. (Graduate Assistant 2)

In addition to the benefits of increased academic performance, professional development, and belonging and community for the undergraduate chapter members, the Graduate Assistant program can provide similar benefits to the Graduate Assistants themselves. The implementation of the Graduate Assistant program in the reciprocal partnership has impacted student success for multiple constituents in the partnership.

Live-In Component

Many of the described elements of the Graduate Assistant program are made possible by the live-in component of their roles, as described by many participants. Each Graduate Assistant is required to live in the chapter facility, with a private apartment provided to them, as a condition of their employment (Appendix D). As previously stated, participants have shared how

the physical presence of Graduate Assistants in the chapter facility allows them to be accessible as role models, to serve as liaisons with CHC Board members and institutional staff, and effectively oversee risk management. Additionally, participants have identified how the live-in component of the position helps to strengthen the partnership between the University of South Dakota and its privately-owned Greek housing. As opposed to the professional staff, who do not live in the facility, the Graduate Assistants are able to use their role to bolster the institution's partnership with the Greek organization. One participant described how accessibility is a key factor, sharing:

It's one thing to have more people in the office, Monday through Friday, 8 to 5, but to have someone that's around more frequently and more involved on that level, it just provides that additional level of service and connection that we can't provide institutionally with full-time administrative staff in an office. (Chief, UPD)

This institutional staff member shared that Graduate Assistants can more effectively bridge the gap between the institution and private organizations than a non-live-in administrative staff member can. Likewise, one Graduate Assistant identified that chapter members often feel more comfortable with graduate students than full-time staff, sharing, "Sometimes they're afraid to talk to SFL, so they wanted to go through me" (Graduate Assistant 1). Another Graduate Assistant echoed this sentiment, sharing that this presence helps build trust with chapter members, saying:

Because we're in it. For example, sexual assaults; we're also living in these spaces that have been deemed unsafe. [Chapter members] understand that we get how stressed they are about this. Like, we don't get to go home and ignore it, like that kind of thing, where we only have to face this at work. (Graduate Assistant 2)

Live-in Graduate Assistants offer a unique benefit to complement the services of the professional staff. Because of their physical residence in the chapter facility, they can effectively build relationships with chapter members, oversee the implementation of the risk management program, and create a sense of community, accountability, and trust.

In conclusion, the live-in Graduate Assistant program was identified as a crucial aspect of the construction of the reciprocal partnership between the University of South Dakota and its privately-owned sorority and fraternity houses. There are several elements that make up the Graduate Assistant program, such as the structure of the program, the role of the Graduate Assistant, the comparison to a House Director, their impact on risk management and student success, and the live-in component. Their impact on the partnership between the institution and the Greek organizations has increased communication, trust, and efficiency between the two entities in the partnership, which has had a positive impact on student success and safety.

Greek Release Process

Another element repeatedly identified in the reciprocal partnership between the University of South Dakota and its Greek chapters is the Greek Release process, in which the institution releases students from its on-campus living requirement to live in their Greek houses instead. If a chapter did not adhere to institutional policies, the university reserves the right to withhold Greek Releases, making this an integral piece of the implementation of the reciprocal partnership. There were several aspects of the Greek Release process identified by the documents and interviews: structure, financial impact, student success, and implementation of the partnership.

Structure

The University of South Dakota is a member of the South Dakota Board of Regents (SDBOR) system, which has a two-year on-campus living requirement for its member institutions. SDBOR Policy 3:6 reads: “Students who are enrolled at a university for a minimum of six (6) on-campus credits are required to live in on-campus housing during the first two (2) years following their high school graduation. Institutions may grant waiver exceptions to the housing requirement based on the waiver exceptions.” One of these waiver exemptions reads: “To students living in Greek housing who have met campus housing release requirements.” Likewise, students living in on-campus housing at SDBOR member institutions are required to purchase a meal plan through Campus Dining (*Housing and Meal Plan Requirements, 2023*). As outlined in the SDBOR policy, students who are members of Greek organizations may apply for an exemption to these requirements. At the University of South Dakota, the request for a waiver of the on-campus housing and meal plan requirements are referred to as the Greek Release application process. A Greek Release is the exemption granted to a student to be released from the SDBOR’s two-year campus residence policy in order to reside in their Greek chapter facility. According to the Office of Sorority and Fraternity Life’s Policies and Procedures Handbook, sorority and fraternity members are granted a Greek Release if they are a member of their chapter, graduated high school at least one full calendar year prior (are a second-year student), have completed 24 credit hours, and have a 2.0 cumulative grade point average (Sorority and Fraternity Life, 2022, p. 14).

Confirmation is received from the member’s respective sorority or fraternity to ensure they have a housing contract on file with the organization. In partnership, the Sorority and Fraternity Life Advisor and the Director of Housing review the Greek Release applications for

each fall and spring semester and approve or deny the applications. The Director of Housing and Sorority and Fraternity Life office work in collaboration to monitor the Greek Release process, ensuring that members who were not approved are still charged for their on-campus housing and are not “ghost living” in the Greek chapter facility (Director, Housing). Students who are denied can appeal the decision with a letter explaining why living in their Greek housing facility would benefit their personal and academic success (Sorority and Fraternity Life, 2022, p. 15). After a student receives a Greek Release, they can sign a lease with their Greek organization. This lease is between the individual student and the private Greek organization, and the university has no authority to grant or revoke leases in private Greek residences. If a student who has not been granted a Greek Release signs a lease with a private organization, they will still be charged for their University Housing residence and meal plan, as they have not been exempted out of their on-campus requirement (Sorority and Fraternity Life, 2022, p. 12).

In the Greek Release process, the Greek organizations also must maintain certain requirements and standards in order to have their members eligible to receive an exemption to live in their house. These requirements are described in the Office of Sorority and Fraternity Life’s Policies and Procedures Handbook, and the chapter president and advisor sign a relationship agreement that they are aware of these requirements each year (Sorority and Fraternity Life, 2022, p. 24-26). These requirements, described in-depth earlier in the chapter, include having a Live-In Graduate Assistant or House Director that reports regularly to the Office of Sorority and Fraternity Life, providing a meal plan of nine meals a week to residents, passing an annual fire inspection, and prohibiting the possession and use of firearms and explosives on the property. In order to receive Greek Releases for their members, sororities and fraternities must also agree to abide by alcohol and risk management processes, including

limiting social events with alcohol to common areas outside of private residential spaces, registering organizational events with alcohol through the university's event registration process, and prohibiting the consumption and possession of alcohol for individuals under the age of 21 (Sorority and Fraternity Life, 2022, p. 11-12). If a Greek organization chooses to not adhere to policies, they risk losing recognition status from the institution and their ability to receive Greek Releases.

Financial Impact

The Greek Release process has financial implications for both the institution and its Greek organizations. First, releasing students from the on-campus living requirement allows the university to create additional space in the on-campus residence halls. In years, where University Housing is overwhelmed by capacity, this is a benefit to the institution, since they can use the open beds to house more non-Greek students. In contrast, releasing students into Greek housing can also have a negative financial impact for the institution, if capacity for University Housing is on a decline. However, the Director of Housing shared that despite the positive or negative financial impact, releasing students into Greek housing is an overall benefit for the institution, saying:

We believe in the process of allowing them off campus any year, whether it's a good or maybe a down year for occupancy for us, because we believe that what they can get in the Greek Life house closely mirrors what we can provide, but it's with people they might have a better connection with... I think that's a huge benefit to giving the students the experience they want, defining their own experience at USD, so we're not cookie cutting it for everyone... I think it benefits the student having a positive outlook at the institution more than anything. (Housing Director)

By releasing second-year students into Greek housing, this institutional staff member recognizes that the process is a benefit for the students, which makes it a priority of the institution to continue the program, despite any negative financial impact.

While the Greek Release process can have both positive and negative financial implications for the institution, all Greek organizational representatives identified the positive financial impact that Greek Releases have on individual chapters. Most notably, the release of second-year students from on-campus housing allows them to sign housing contracts with their Greek housing facility, which increases revenue for Greek organizations. These privately-owned facilities have a variety of costs that are associated with the operation, which can create pressure on the CHC Board to fill beds. Additional Greek organizations also release certain chapter members, typically upperclassmen and those with medical conditions, from the organization's requirement to live in the chapter facility, which increases this need for second-year students. One CHC member described the intensity of a Greek organization's financial needs and subsequent desire to fill beds, sharing:

We have a budget that says we need 38 women living in the house. We let seven people out of their housing contracts, now all of a sudden we have 30, but expenses don't change. You're going to go in the red. How are you going to manage this?...How are you going to pay for a cook to feed people when you don't have the budget? Because now all of a sudden you've got 26,000 [dollars] that you've invested, but you've let six people go, and that's going to decrease your food budget to 20,000. And you never know when there's going to be another pandemic and everybody needs a refund. (CHC Member 4)

The high cost associated with the operation of a privately-owned Greek house makes it imperative that as many members live in the houses as possible. In particular, this budget is

needed for the upkeep of the facility, to repair maintenance concerns, to feed live-in chapter members, and pay for the House Director or Graduate Assistant. The ability to have second-year students living in their house was described as crucial to the existence of privately-owned Greek facilities by all CHC members and Chapter Advisors. In particular, one CHC member shared, “I don't think too many of the Greek houses would survive without that ability or capability” (CHC Member 3). The need for additional students living in Greek chapter facilities is so prevalent that Greek organizations have asked the University of South Dakota to release first-year Greek members from the on-campus housing requirement as well, although this conversation will largely be driven by University Housing occupancy (CHC Member 2). The large financial contribution that second-year students receiving Greek Releases make to the Greek organizations significantly contribute to the adherence to institutional requirements of the reciprocal partnership. The potential for the revocation of Greek Releases is discussed further later in the chapter.

Student Success

The Greek Release process also has a positive impact on the student success of the participating second-year students who receive them. Greek organizational representatives identified that the ability for second-year sorority and fraternity members to live in their Greek chapter facility has positively impacted their students’ academic performance, safety, and feelings of belonging and community.

First, the participants shared that the ability to live in the house chapter facility allows second-year students to have increased access to the academic accountability and support that a Greek organization can provide. Specifically, one Chapter President’s organization hosts mandatory study tables, which is a designated time and space for chapter members to study and

do homework. These events are often held at the chapter house, which makes them more accessible for the live-in members. She explained the impact that this accessibility can have on an underclassman, sharing:

Usually we'll group up at tables, and so you can go to people that have taken those classes before or are in your same major... Sophomore year is pretty tough. Usually you're getting out of those gen eds, so it's nice to have people that have taken the classes or use our study bank, which is also at the house. (Chapter President 3)

In addition to the accessibility to academic resources, living in the chapter house can also be a benefit for chapter members during the harsh South Dakota winters. As another Chapter President described, their chapter facility is equipped with “a million different study spots,” as well as whiteboards and other academic supplies. She shared that this is especially beneficial for sophomore members, as students living in University Housing typically need to walk to the library during the winter months (Chapter President 2). The accessibility to physical resources, chapter programming, and older members makes the Greek Release process an academic benefit to second-year students.

The Greek Release process can also create a safe transition from on-campus to off-campus housing. Several participants described the Greek houses as a hybrid form of on-campus and off-campus housing styles, despite their privately-owned, off-campus status. The strong partnership, created by the adherence to institutional policies and the use of Graduate Assistants, helps support this hybrid approach. The Director of Housing said this hybrid approach helps the institution have confidence that their students will continue to be safe, even outside of their official oversight, sharing:

Outside of Greek Life, we're sending them into the unknown. Our job as student affairs practitioners is to make sure students can be as successful as possible... When we give a student an exemption to go live off-campus, not in a Greek house, I can't control that environment... They could crash and burn... I think Greek life is an extension of Housing, frankly. I think it's on campus housing with an asterisk. (Housing Director)

This institutional staff member described how the ability to release students into a controlled off-campus environment allows there to be a safe transition, which is in the best interest of the institution. Another institutional staff member shared the “happy medium” approach that the Greek Release process has created at the University of South Dakota, saying:

The proximity to campus that our private Greek housing is a couple blocks in most cases, at most, and I think that that provides the opportunity for freedom from institutional housing, but the proximity of “I can still walk or ride my bike to campus”... I feel that our Greek community at our institution is still very much a part of the campus community, even when they're in their privately owned housing. (Chief, UPD)

This institutional staff echoed the sentiment that the off-campus, privately-owned Greek facilities continue to still feel like a part of the on-campus community, due to the implementation of Graduate Assistants and the institution’s continued oversight in the facilities. This oversight allows the institution to continue to implement risk management policies, promote student development and role modeling, and support the students with live-in staff. This model can be a benefit to students as they transition from on-campus to off-campus options.

Another impact that the Greek Release process can have on student success is the sense of belonging and community that is associated with living in a Greek chapter house. All Greek organizational participants identified the significant impact that this experience has on a second-

year member. At the University of South Dakota, living in a Greek facility is an opportunity to live with up to 60 peers that have similar interests, goals, and values. The ability to live with other chapter members was identified by a Chapter President as the most effective method of relationship-building. She described how the Greek Release process allows second-year students to obtain those benefits early on in their college experience, sharing:

You get a lot closer with the people in the organization once you move into the house. You're just living with them. Most people end up walking to class at the same time. You just establish those deeper relationships that most people, when they join Greek Life, one of their reasons is to make these lifelong friendships. And just being able to live together and see so much of each other's lives gives us a good understanding of each other.

(Chapter President 3)

According to several participants, the ability to live in the chapter facility allows second-year students to participate in one of the most important aspects of Sorority and Fraternity Life, which is community. These strong relationships are what makes the Greek experience unique. One institutional staff member shared how the immersive experience of Greek residency can contribute to the member's sense of pride in the organization:

I think that it's one thing to be a member of an organization where you go to a meeting. It's another thing to be a member of an organization where you live and breathe that organization for that period of time. It becomes part of your persona... Being a member that attends meetings but never lived in the house has a different relationship, I would venture to guess, with their chapter, than those that lived in the house for a year or two years or three years. (Chief, UPD)

The partnership constructed by the Greek Release process allows Sorority and Fraternity Life to provide unique benefits and experiences that promote student success to its Chapter members. Other participants identified that this sense of pride and belonging translates into retention for their organization; members who live in the chapter facility are more connected with the organization and are more likely to remain members. Likewise, members who live out of the house are most likely to become disconnected with their sorority or fraternity (Chapter President 1). One Chapter President shared that if Greek Releases were not given to second-year students, they may see a decline in retention for their organization (Chapter President 1). The ability to live in the Greek chapter house creates a sense of belonging and community for chapter members, which is a benefit for the individual student and their organization.

The ability for second-year students to live in the chapter facility also has an impact on future leadership roles both within and outside the organization. Because they are socialized with older chapter members also living in the house, particularly those that hold leadership positions, younger members are exposed to upperclassmen role models. One Graduate Assistant shared their observation that this collaboration between membership classes takes place primarily in the chapter facility, describing “You know, like, never really meet people unless you're all living in the same house at the same time outside of chapter meeting” (Graduate Assistant 2). The ability to build close relationships with upperclassmen who hold leadership positions allows the second-year members to ask questions and plan their own leadership goals. Additionally, living in the chapter facility creates an increased investment and passion for the organization, which can spur the desire to hold future leadership positions within the chapter (Chapter President 1). This impact can extend to leadership involvement outside of the chapter, as younger members observe upperclassmen participating in other campus organizations. As another Chapter President

describes, the ability to build community with upperclassmen allows second-year students to be exposed to new opportunities:

When the sophomores come in and they see the juniors are going to a meeting for this club, or they have this going on, then they're more likely to just ask and be like, "Can I go with you today?" So I think that's been hugely beneficial, it's less intimidating to just go with someone you already know, instead of trying to find someone who's also interested in this thing and trying to convince them to go. (Chapter President 3)

The ability for second-year students to live in Greek chapter facilities allows for increased socialization with their own membership class and upperclassmen. In particular, a student's second year of college was identified by participants as a crucial time for a student to receive this socialization experience. One Chapter President described their impactful experience as a sophomore living in her Greek facility, sharing:

I think being able to connect with older girls is really important because they've been through where you are and they are great friends. They are great people to talk to and help you out if you're having a tough situation in school, life, whatever it is. That was probably like one of my favorite things being a sophomore. Also, I think sophomore year is the biggest time where you connect with your class and you become close with your class and you kind of get the feel for what being in the sorority is like. Most of the time, like that's when our class really bonded...I just loved living in the house. It was the best, especially sophomore year. (Chapter President 2)

This sense of belonging and community positively contributes to their success as a student. The impact of Greek Releases on student success was identified by many participants as one of the most impactful benefits of the reciprocal partnership.

Implementation of the Reciprocal Partnership

The University of South Dakota has the right to revoke Greek Releases for failure to comply with requirements and expectations of the university. As an example, in the fall semester of 2020, as the University of South Dakota returned to on-campus, in-person learning amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, the Dean of Students Office communicated to sorority and fraternity chapter presidents and advisors that they would revoke Greek Releases from chapters that were violating CDC guidelines. This letter read:

As a privilege, the University has long granted live-on campus housing requirement exemptions to students living in chapter housing. However, if it is determined that activities hosted by sororities or fraternities pose a threat to the health and safety of the campus community, or the activities of one or more Greek organizations result in significant spread of COVID-19 among our student population, the University may take action to revoke this privilege in the future. (Grieve, 2020)

This letter referenced the Sorority and Fraternity Life's Programming Plan in response to COVID-19. This policy acknowledged the university's lack of authority to intervene in the chapters' rights to offer leases and operate as a facility but did assert their right to deny Greek Releases to sophomores seeking exemption to the SDBOR on-campus residence requirement.

The policy read:

It is important to note that houses are privately owned facilities that are asked to follow certain protocol to be deemed "safe" by the university (see the Policies and Procedures Handbook), but do not have metrics in place to require any chapter to open, close or restrict occupants at the university level. Should a chapter not follow CDC guidelines, the university's methods of recourse include denying or removing Greek Releases,

suspending recognition of the chapter with notification to headquarters, and/or notification to the city of loss of recognition which would suspend their Greek Zoning ability. The University, as always, reserves the right to make periodic visits to ensure the safety of the facility or address complaints. (Sorority and Fraternity Life, 2020, p. 1)

This is an example of a scenario in which the University of South Dakota did not have authority to intervene in the operations of a privately-owned Greek facility (such as requiring masking, distancing, or sanitation), but they utilized their reciprocal partnership to ensure that expectations were being met. No Greek Releases or chapter recognition statuses were revoked as a result of this particular COVID-19 policy. However, this example demonstrates the use of Greek Releases in the reciprocal relationship; if the Greek organization no longer follows the policies and expectations of the institution, they can have their Greek Releases revoked, negatively impacting the chapter's financial capacity. The revocation of Greek Releases would negatively impact multiple constituents in this partnership, since the Greek Release process allows University Housing to create additional space in residence halls, positively contributes to private organization finances, and presents an affordable housing option for students (*Sorority Recruitment*, 2023, p. 3). The Greek Release process also works in conjunction with the Graduate Assistant program; not having a live-in Graduate Assistant or House Director would cause a chapter to lose recognition status and Greek Releases. The institution's offering of Greek Releases and Graduate Assistants, programs that have demonstrated their benefits in risk management and student success, has successfully created a partnership between the Greek organizations and the institution. This partnership has allowed both entities to positively impact sorority and fraternity students at the University of South Dakota.

Considerations

Another element that participants identified in the reciprocal partnership were potential considerations for the institution. These considerations are important for institutions who may be choosing to implement a similar model.

Legal Relationships

There are several considerations to recognize in the institutional and governmental structures that guide the partnership between the University of South Dakota and its privately-owned Greek houses. The first is liability. Because sororities and fraternities are recognized student organizations, and their members are students at the institution, the host institution holds liability into the organizations' activities. Primarily, this liability only occurs when an institution was knowledgeable about an unsafe situation and did not respond appropriately. As described by General Counsel, the university can be considered liable for a crime, such as a hazing injury or sexual assault, if they were considered "indifferent" to the knowledge of the incident. He elaborates on this standard, sharing, "Generally, we try to strive to be a much higher bar than indifference... Liability would not often fall on the university, unless the university has knowledge of it and takes action to continue to put people into that situation" (General Counsel). However, an institution's liability can be increased with additional oversight into the activities taking place in a privately-owned chapter facility. In the case of the Graduate Assistant program, this is a factor for institutions to consider. With an institutional staff member living on-site of the facility, there is an increased chance that they will witness an unsafe activity and be able to stop and report the crime. However, there is also an increased likelihood of a Graduate Assistant being made aware of a crime and not properly reporting or intervening. The General Counsel compared this liability to that of private citizens, saying:

If you take on a duty of taking care of someone who's over consumed and you fail in those duties, [there would be] similar [liability] to private citizens. If you take on a duty helping someone and then abandon them or are grossly neglectful in how you're rendering that care, rather than simply not knowing what you're doing. So that increased oversight, like having the Graduate Assistants in the facility, while that does offer more risk management for them, it also does increase liability because you have a university employee who could possibly be neglectful. There's some decreased risk and some increased risk. (General Counsel)

The General Counsel makes a distinction between intentional and unintentional neglect, sharing that an uninformed Graduate Assistant who responds inappropriately to an emergency is less likely to be held liable. However, his comments point to the importance of hiring qualified Graduate Assistants and training them with proper emergency response. Overall, the implementation of the Graduate Assistant increases risk management and the adherence to risk reduction policies, but it increases the risk of the institution being held liable for a crime or injury.

Another consideration in the reciprocal partnership is that under the *Clery Act*, even privately-owned sorority and fraternity properties are considered part of the campus geography. The *Jeanne Clery Disclosure of Campus Security Policy and Campus Crime Statistics Act*, more commonly known as the *Clery Act*, was implemented in 1998. It requires higher education institutions to publicly disclose statistics on crimes that occur in the campus geography (*The Handbook*, 2016, p. 12). This geography can include locations that are not technically on-campus, but that are frequently used or overseen by the institution. The definition provided by *The Handbook for Campus Safety and Security Reporting*, states that crimes that occur on these

locations must be disclosed in the annual report and may justify a timely warning being sent to institutional faculty, staff, and students:

1. Any building or property owned or controlled by an institution within the same reasonably contiguous geographic area and used by the institution in direct support of, or in a manner related to, the institution's educational purposes, including residence halls; and
2. Any building or property that is within or reasonably contiguous to the area identified in paragraph (1) of this definition, that is owned by the institution but controlled by another person, is frequently used by students, and supports institutional purposes (such as a food or other retail vendor) (*The Handbook*, 2016, p. 25)

More specifically, the handbook outlines the definition of an "on-campus housing facility." Even if sororities and fraternities are located off-campus and are privately-owned by the Greek organization, their affiliation with student activities and residence qualifies them as on-campus housing for *Clery Act* reporting. The relevant on-campus housing qualifications read:

1. For purposes of the *Clery Act*, any student housing facility that is owned or controlled by the institution or is located on property that is owned or controlled by the institution, and is within the reasonably contiguous geographic area that makes up the campus is considered an on-campus student housing facility.
2. This definition includes the following types of housing:
 - a. Buildings that are owned by a third party that has a written agreement with your institution to provide student housing. It doesn't matter whether the

rent is paid to the third party by the institution on behalf of the students or paid directly by the students.

- b. These locations could include buildings that are used exclusively for student housing, or hotels or apartment buildings in which a subset of the available units have been leased for student housing.
- c. Housing for officially and not officially recognized student groups, including fraternity or sorority houses, that are owned or controlled by your institution or are located on property that your institution owns or controls.

- 3. Note that it doesn't matter whether the housing falls under the management of a residential life or similar office, your real estate office or another office. Be sure to include any facility that meets the definition of an "on-campus student housing facility." (*The Handbook*, 2016, p. 31-32)

As described in this policy, there are several reasons why sorority and fraternity housing remains "on-campus housing" for the purposes of the *Clery Act*, including a written agreement to provide student housing (Greek Releases), that the location is used exclusively for student housing (non-students cannot be members of Greek organizations, and therefore cannot live in the chapter facility), and that the housing is intended for student organization groups. Another important distinction is that a sorority or fraternity facility still falls in *Clery Act* geography, even if the organization loses its institutional recognition status (*The Handbook*, 2016, p. 31-32). The General Counsel and the Chief of the University Police Department both verified that the sorority and fraternity houses at the University of South Dakota are designated as campus locations under the *Clery Act*. Even with the elimination of the elements of the partnership, such

as the Greek Release process and the Graduate Assistant, these locations would still be considered a reporting duty because of their frequent use for student activities (General Counsel). For institutions using this model as a prototype, the impact of *Clery Act* reporting is an important consideration for institutional staff.

Potential Pushback

Another consideration that was identified in the interviews was caution for institutions about potential pushback from private Greek organizations on increased oversight into their privately-owned facilities. Institutions who wish to implement this model as a prototype should be mindful of this potential pushback. As previously described in the comparison to house directors, Greek organizations may resist the Graduate Assistant program because of the increased workload it creates for CHC Boards. If the organization no longer hires a full-time employee, the maintenance and operations responsibilities previously completed by the House Director may be shifted onto alumni volunteers. This could create challenges for organizations to find volunteers to serve on the CHC Boards (CHC Member 4).

Another concern for potential pushback is resentment from Greek organizations that they are held to higher standards and have additional requirements than other off-campus housing. One CHC member expressed this sentiment in his interview, stating: "We own our house. We own our property. What's the deal here? Why do we have to live up to different rules than the folks at [off-campus apartments for students] or any place else?" (CHC Member 3). A Chapter President echoed the same concerns, sharing that he and other Chapter Presidents have felt that some of the institutional regulations for Greek chapters are too many rules and regulations that are "impractical to follow." He elaborated further, saying:

To be honest, some of the third-party vendor guidelines are a little impractical for fraternities, having the resources that they do. Where they feel that they are limited in how they can operate most effectively... If you're more focused on a social aspect, well then having 10 percent of your chapter be sober monitors means that you have a limited number of people at your party because your entire chapter is not going to be a sober monitor... That's been the main complaint. I think people are pretty happy with how the university has allowed IFC and PHC to function for the most part. (Chapter President 1)

This Chapter President shared that chapter leadership can feel burdened by the additional regulations placed on Greek chapters, but that overall, they are content with the partnership they have built with the institution. In contrast, other Chapter Presidents, CHC members, and Chapter Advisors could not identify any areas of potential pushback. One Chapter Advisor shared that the institutional requirements for Greek organizations are no more stringent than the requirements the organizations already must meet for their national organizations, stating:

I have not experienced anything where we have felt that the university was telling us to do something that was contrary to what we thought was right, what we thought was important... Typically the expectation that the university puts on the Greek houses for the different education models and the training that they have to go through on a yearly basis are not anything other than what our fraternity is also requiring and what is very critical. (FHC Chapter Advisor 1)

Although the General Counsel's explanation of sorority and fraternity houses as Clery locations, due to their high level of student activity, explains why Greek organizations must have additional requirements, this continues to be an area of consideration.

Another area of potential pushback is with the Graduate Assistant program. Several Chapter President participants identified that chapter membership can be resistant to the live-in Graduate Assistant. Specifically, chapter members may feel like the Graduate Assistant exists to “get the chapter in trouble.” One Graduate Assistant elaborated on this role as the “bad guy,” sharing:

The majority of [Greek offices] are there to help the students in Greek Life. Their national offices are not there to get them in trouble; they're there to help them. But college students in Greek life think the opposite. That you and your role (the Sorority and Fraternity Advisor) and nationals, those are the bad guys. That I was a bad guy.

(Graduate Assistant 1)

This Graduate Assistant expressed that chapter members negatively perceive the presence of the Graduate Assistant, particularly in their chapter facility. One Chapter President explained the perception of some Graduate Assistants, saying:

They feel like the GA is there to essentially spy on them or act like a law enforcement figure by the university, that there is no benefit to be derived from the GA and that really things must be done in secret and kept from the GA. (Chapter President 1)

This participant identified the resistance that some chapters have had towards the Graduate Assistant program. CHC members also have noticed chapter member reluctance to Graduate Assistants, with one CHC member sharing: “I think that might be what guys are a little bit afraid of; they're not perfect. And there might be a little bit there that they don't want this person to know too much” (CHC Member 3). These criticisms point to the importance of Graduate Assistants building healthy relationships with their chapters.

While some participants identified negative perceptions of Graduate Assistants, others were able to identify scenarios where there were positive perceptions of the Graduate Assistant program. When there was a negative perception of the Graduate Assistant, the relationship with the institution was hindered; when there was a positive perception of the Graduate Assistant, the partnership was strengthened (Chapter President 1). In these scenarios, the ability of the Graduate Assistant to build trust with chapter members was important. In these scenarios, the Graduate Assistant also was able to provide tangible benefits to the chapter that justified their presence. These benefits, described in detail earlier in the chapter, included role modeling, academic support, community building, and presentations and workshops. One Graduate Assistant reflected on his positive relationship with the chapter members and described how he built that trust, sharing:

They love me. But, I was able to talk to them like equals. They listened to me.

Whenever they got in trouble, I let them know that they were in trouble, so there was mutual respect. Plus, I was in Greek life, so that helps too. I think if there was a Graduate Assistant who hated Greek Life, it'd be a lot different. (Graduate Assistant 1)

This Graduate Assistant highlights the importance of communication style between Graduate Assistant and chapter members, as well as the importance of hiring Graduate Assistants that understand and respect the Greek Life experience. Another Graduate Assistant described her experience with building relationships with chapter members in order to increase mutual respect, sharing:

I don't feel resistance from them, but I also think it's a balancing act. It could easily be taken as, "This is a person that's threatening, that's living in our home, who's here to get me in trouble, or to narc... I think the best part is having a very person-to-person

connection... I think it's kind of how you present it. If you're like, “Hey, I'm here because the university wants me to get you in trouble,” that's going to be received very differently than, “Hey, I'm just a person that's here to care for you and keep you safe.” (Graduate Assistant 2)

This Graduate Assistant explained how the pushback felt by a Graduate Assistant can be very similar to the resistance a Resident Assistant experiences in University Housing. Similar to the other participants, this Graduate Assistant shared that it is important to properly communicate their role to chapter members, in a way that allows them to feel safe and supported. Although the Graduate Assistant program has can receive pushback from chapter members who are worried about “getting in trouble,” there are multiple other benefits, including examples of positive relationships, of the program described earlier in the chapter. Potential pushback to increased institutional oversight focused on additional requirements and regulations for Greek organizations, primarily the Graduate Assistant program. Institutional staff seeking to implement this prototype should be considerate of liability for the institution, *Clery Act* reporting guidelines, the burden of additional regulations, and the perception of the Graduate Assistant.

In summary, qualitative data from the 16 interviews with institutional staff and Greek organizational representatives and relevant documents revealed several elements that comprise the reciprocal partnership. Using the University of South Dakota and its privately-owned Greek facilities as a model, this chapter created a prototype for the construction of a reciprocal partnership between an institution and privately-owned Greek housing through the implementation of Graduate Assistants and Greek Releases.

Discussion

Qualitative data collected from interviews and documents can be connected to each section of the literature review, demonstrating how this study fits into existing research on management of sorority and fraternity housing.

Sorority and Fraternity History

Existing literature on the history and structure of sorority and fraternity housing aligned with the results of the study. First, the literature review discussed the structure of Chapter House Corporation Boards, which are the groups of alumni who own and manage the facilities (*House Corporation*, n.d., p. 5). Records demonstrate that this is the most common model of sorority and fraternity housing, which is evident in the 10 out of 11 chapters at the University of South Dakota who use this model. This practice, which began in the late 19th century, was consistent with the role of CHC Boards at the University of South Dakota. CHC member participants shared that their roles in the partnership included maintenance of the facility, managing budgets, and overseeing support staff. In addition to the structure description in the literature review, the results of the study also revealed the nuances of a Fraternity House Corporation model, where the national organization manages, and sometimes owns, the facility. Additionally, existing literature also described the financial pressures of sorority and fraternity housing, explaining that recruitment can often focus on finding enough members to fill the chapter house and meet financial obligations (Anson & Marchesani, 1991, p. 2-3). In their descriptions of the importance of Greek Releases, CHC member participants stressed the importance of financial responsibility, even explaining that a lack of live-in members would eventually close their chapters. This study was able to add to existing literature in several ways, by providing qualitative descriptions to the

structure, operations, and financial obligations of privately-owned sorority and fraternity housing.

Outcomes of Student Housing Options

In the literature review, several outcomes of student housing options were discussed, using on-campus dormitories, sorority and fraternity housing, and off-campus arrangements as comparatives. The interviews discuss both the positive and negative outcomes of living in privately-owned sorority and fraternity housing, as well as elaborating on how the reciprocal partnership addresses those outcomes. First, the literature review discusses the increased risks that privately-owned sorority and fraternity housing brings to an institution, in terms of substance abuse and sexual activity. While the interviews and documents did not specifically address the frequency of those activities in University of South Dakota facilities, as that was outside the scope of the study, they did highlight how the elements of the reciprocal partnership encouraged them to “not do bad things” (Chapter President 2). Specifically, the fear of having recognition status revoked encouraged chapters to adhere to risk prevention strategies such as controlled social events, alcohol consumption training, and the hiring of live-in staff, to name a few. Additionally, Chapter President participants identified that the risk management practices required by the institution allow them to hold their members accountable and are supportive in social event planning. The Graduate Assistant program was the element most attributed to risk management, with both institutional and Greek organizational representatives sharing that their presence allows them to be role models, sounding boards, trained emergency responders, and conflict resolvers, all of which promote risk management in the organizations. Likewise, the Graduate Assistants employment through the institution makes them an accessible resource to chapters to seek clarification on policies, and their presence in the facility reminds that chapter

that they cannot defy policies without experiencing consequences. The participants in this study described how the reciprocal partnership promotes risk management in the sorority and fraternity houses. This study contributes to existing research by giving potential solutions to the increased risk found in privately-owned Greek facilities.

Participants also described the impact of the reciprocal partnership on student success. In the literature, various elements of student success were discussed in relation to sorority and fraternity facilities. Specifically, a student's residence in a Greek housing facility yielded positive results for student development, social connectedness, and leadership development within the chapter. As described in the literature review, no correlation has been found between academic success and residence in a sorority and fraternity house (Long, 2014, p. 67, 71). Two elements of the reciprocal partnership specifically addressed their impact on student success programs: the Graduate Assistant program and the Greek Release process. Interview participants identified that the Graduate Assistants are able to serve as role models for undergraduate students, both academically and personally. In this area, this study contributes to existing research by addressing the lack of correlation between sorority and fraternity housing and academic performance. While quantitative data was outside of the scope of this study, these results provided an example of academic development that takes place within Greek facilities. Graduate Assistants can also foster welcoming environments in the chapter facility, which can contribute to higher rates of social connectedness.

The Greek Release process was also significantly identified as a contributor to student success. Participants shared that allowing students to live in their Greek housing early in their college experience allows them to build community, be exposed to leadership opportunities, network with older members, and invest into their Greek organization. Increased investment in

the chapter can also contribute to increased bystander intervention strategies, as described in the literature review (McCready et al., 2022, p. 226). Likewise, the Greek Release process also promotes risk reduction by creating a transitional period between on-campus and off-campus living, where the institution can still play a role in their success. Research has also shown that students living in sorority and fraternity housing feel less safe than their on-campus counterparts (Long, 2014, p. 78). One study on perceptions of safety recommended the use of live-in staff to address these concerns. This case study on the reciprocal partnership adds to existing literature by providing a prototype of the creation of a live-in Graduate Assistant, which can be used by other Sorority and Fraternity Life professionals to promote safety and student success in their facilities.

Legal Relationships

Existing literature described the existing legal relationships between institutions and their Greek organizations. Throughout this study, legal relationships were typically perceived as partnerships or working relationships with the university, rather than a contractual obligation. However, institutional staff participants, primarily the Director of Housing, the Chief of the University Police Department, and the General Counsel, as well as the collaborating documents, outlined the policies that create a structure of this partnership. Both the literature review and the results discussed liability and responsibility between institutions and sororities and fraternities. As discussed in Chapter Two, the General Counsel reiterated that institutions are usually not held liable for actions of sororities and fraternities, as long as appropriate response was taken when it was made knowledgeable of a crime or injury. Typically, the institution still prioritizes its duty to protect its students from harm “strive to be a much higher bar than indifference” (General Counsel). The results of the study add to the discussion of legal relationships between sororities

and fraternities by outlining the reporting structure in privately-owned facilities as required by the *Clery Act*, as well as providing recommendations for the addition of relationship-building partnerships to the legal structure.

Risk Management Strategies

Risk management was identified as a key benefit of the relationship between the University of South Dakota and its privately-owned sorority and fraternity housing. In Chapter Two, three different approaches to risk management were presented, which aligned with the results of the study. First, both existing literature and this study elaborated on the concept of risk management as reducing the liability for the institution, particularly in terms of implementing risk prevention policies, education, and initiatives (Hall, 2009, p. 35). At the University of South Dakota, the adherence to these policies is enforced by the institution's ability to revoke recognition status or Greek Releases from the offending organization. Because they have implemented these requirements, they have legally upheld their "duty" to protect students (Hall, 2009, p. 35). The unique nature of the live-in Graduate Assistant program also demonstrates how the University of South Dakota has prioritized risk prevention, since participants reported that the presence of the institutional staff member reminds them and supports them in making safe decisions.

Another approach to risk management, as described in the literature review, is through social norming among chapter members. One particular study recommends promoting safe behaviors and decisions through member culture, which is especially powerful and effective in social organizations like sororities and fraternities (Maples et al., 2019, p. 4). This case study at the University of South Dakota demonstrates how elements of the reciprocal partnership can positively influence chapter culture. The first is through the implementation of the Graduate

Assistant program, where participants reported that they viewed these staff members as role models. When Graduate Assistants display positive decision-making, they contribute to chapter culture. Since members see Graduate Assistants as role models, they may not want to disappoint them. Additionally, the Greek Release process can promote social norming by allowing second-year members to be exposed to chapter culture earlier on in their career. If chapter leadership and upperclassmen living in the facility are promoting positive values, this has the potential to extend to younger members living in the facility. Participants reported that living in the chapter facility is what created close brotherhood and sisterhood bonds, which suggests that social norming would be most effective in a live-in setting. This study contributes to existing research on risk management strategies by providing a narrative of the live-in experience on developing mentorships between students and among students and staff.

Throughout existing literature on risk management, the importance of partnerships between private Greek organizations and their host institutions is emphasized. Since neither the institution nor the organization have complete authority over an individual Greek chapter, they must work together to promote the safety and success of chapter members and the overall community (Paterson, 2013, p. 48). As demonstrated in this case study with the University of South Dakota, this partnership can be constructed through the implementation of recognition status, the Graduate Assistant program, and Greek Releases. In the field of sorority and fraternity risk management, this case study contributes significantly to its application and practice, by describing how an effective partnership between institutions and their privately-owned sorority and fraternity houses can be built. Specifically, this study adds to risk management research by offering a live-in approach to institutional supervision, even in privately-owned facilities.

The implications of this study suggest that other institutions could increase the oversight of their private Greek facilities by instituting a Graduate Assistant program, in which they require live-in staff in private facilities in exchange for offering benefits such as Greek Releases and recognition status. This study also demonstrates how the case study of the University of South Dakota's relationship with its Greek organizations can serve as a prototype for institutions seeking to reduce risk and promote student success in the privately-owned Greek facilities.

Limitations

There are several potential limitations in this study. The findings of this study recommend that institutions build partnerships with Greek organizations in order to promote risk management in privately-owned sorority and fraternity housing. The first limitation is the potential pushback to this model, as discussed earlier in this chapter. It is critical for Sorority and Fraternity Life professionals to create a space where Graduate Assistants can build positive relationships with chapter members and not micromanage this experience, especially since Graduate Assistants are viewed as the "relatable" liaison between the chapter and institutional staff. It is also important for Sorority and Fraternity Life professionals to continue to respect the rights of private organizations, including their right to membership selection and single-gender organizations. The professional should also be mindful of only creating facility policies that are crucial to the safety of their students; requiring a fire inspection is reasonable, but requiring the walls to be painted a certain color is a violation of the private facility. This relationship should be viewed as a partnership, not as a means for the institution to gain control.

Another potential limitation to this study is the lack of response to participation from the Vermillion Police Department and House Directors. However, while their interviews may have contributed interesting context into the operation of a sorority or fraternity house, their

participation was not crucial to the scope or success of the study. Likewise, additional interviews with chapter members who have received Greek Releases may have added to the study, but the potential for conflict of interest with the researcher (as the Sorority and Fraternity Advisor) suggested that this data may be unreliable. Instead, data on this topic was collected from Chapter Presidents, who had all received a Greek Release earlier in their college experience.

Recommendations for Further Research

This study sparks the need for subsequent research. First, further research could incorporate a mixed-methods design into this study. While the researcher uses qualitative data to describe the relationship built between the University of South Dakota and private Greek organizational housing, this study also sparks the need for more quantitative research on the relationship between increased institutional oversight and risk management. A future extension of this study could include the quantitative data on risk management incidents at Greek organizations at the University of South Dakota, although rights to private organizations' conduct data may be challenging to obtain. In a mixed methods study, quantitative data generated from the annual *Clery Act* statistics could be used to compare and contrast with the qualitative descriptions, particularly those on risk management.

This research primarily focused on the implementation of risk management policies that prevent substance abuse and sexual assault. This focus was determined by the case context, as the University of South Dakota Greek organizations do not have a particularly negative history with hazing. Because of this, many of the participants did not discuss hazing in their interviews, and the Policies and Procedures Handbook lacks specific guidance related to hazing, except that the University of South Dakota has a no-tolerance policy (Sorority and Fraternity Life, 2022, p. 10). A future study could expand on the specific impact of the reciprocal partnership on hazing

reduction. Likewise, a future study could also expand on the potential for the reciprocal partnership to respond to hate crimes or bias incidents.

Future research could also further explore the Greek Release program. A mixed-methods study design could be utilized to compare this study's qualitative data with quantitative data on retention and persistence of students who receive Greek Release. Specifically, the University of South Dakota could use this research to justify any future decisions on releasing first-year students into Greek housing as well as second-year students, which Greek organizations have been requesting. Financial impact of Greek Releases for the student could also be explored in this future research. Although this study could inspire several future research ideas, the qualitative data presented thoroughly covers the scope of the study.

Conclusion

This study serves as a prototype of a reciprocal partnership model between an institution and its privately-owned sorority and fraternity housing. Through qualitative data collected through interviews and documents, a narrative of this partnership was presented. Notably, the benefits of the Graduate Assistant program, particularly in areas of role modeling, risk management, and student success, were highlighted. Likewise, the Greek Release program was also emphasized, with its financial implications, impact on student success, and the degree to which Greek organizations rely on this exchange. The uniqueness of these two elements and the effective implementation of the reciprocal partnership allows the University of South Dakota to serve as a model for institutions seeking productive partnerships with their Greek organizations. With the increased risk of privately-owned sorority and fraternity housing on a college campus, it is imperative that institutions are proactive in their approach to ensure the safety of their students.

CHAPTER FIVE: CASE REPORT

This chapter will provide a condensed summary of this study's design and findings. The use of this chapter is intended for institutional use and potential journal publications. The brevity of this version is intended to be engaging to other Sorority and Fraternity Life professionals by providing the key findings and recommendations from the case study. According to the submission guidelines from the *Journal of Sorority and Fraternity Life Research and Practice*, the institution's name has been removed from this report (*Submissions*, 2024).

Abstract

Higher education institutions with sorority and fraternity systems have different models of sorority and fraternity housing. There are two primary models incorporated into this study; some institutions have sorority and fraternity housing incorporated into their on-campus residence halls, while other sorority and fraternity housing is privately-owned by local House Corporation Boards or by the chapter's national headquarters. The institution used in this study, a mid-sized state institution in the Midwest, follows the latter model, with each of their eleven chapters having a privately-owned chapter house. Research shows that with privately-owned sorority and fraternity housing, there is an increased risk of substance abuse and sexual activity, while there are benefits of increased student involvement and leadership development. With this risk in mind, institutions may be seeking increased oversight of and partnerships with privately-owned sorority and fraternity housing. This research uses this institution as a model for a reciprocal partnership between privately-owned sorority and fraternity housing and an institution. Notably, this institution requires live-in Graduate Assistants or House Directors, the adherence to alcohol/substance policies, and other safety measures in privately-owned sorority and fraternity housing in order for the chapter to receive "Greek Releases." These releases are exemptions for second-year students to live in their sorority and fraternity chapter house, rather than the state Board of Regents two-year on-campus living requirement. Sorority and fraternity chapters rely on the Greek Release process and the ability of second-year members to live in their house in order to remain financially solvent, which encourages their adherence to university policies. The partnership also allows the institution to implement programs that promote overall student success, including increased academic performance, role modeling, and safety measures. With qualitative data collected from interviews with university staff and representatives from sorority and fraternity organizations, this research creates a prototype for higher education institutions seeking to build a reciprocal partnership with their privately-owned sorority and fraternity housing.

Introduction

Each summer, tens of thousands of students across the continent move their belongings into sorority and fraternity houses (Syrett, 2009, p. 162) This institution recognizes seven national, social fraternities and four national, social sororities. All seven fraternities are members of the

Interfraternity Council, and all four sororities are members of the Panhellenic Council (Pope & Susemihl, 2023, p. 5-6). All sorority and fraternity chapters at this institution have an off-campus chapter facility/house where a portion of their members reside. Ten of these facilities are owned by local house corporation boards, composed of chapter alumni. One facility is owned by a local house corporation board but managed by their international headquarters. Not every member of a sorority and fraternity at this institution resides in their chapter's housing facility. (Pope & Susemihl, 2023, p. 10). This research creates a prototype for a partnership between an institution and private-owned sorority and fraternity housing facilities.

Definition of Terms

Chapter House Corporation Board: Chapter House Corporation Boards own and manage privately-owned sorority and fraternities housing. They are typically alumni of the organization, and they are responsible for leasing the house to undergraduate members, hiring house staff to provide housekeeping and culinary services, overseeing risk management and insurance, and maintaining and renovating the physical space (*House Corporation*, n.d., p. 5).

Graduate Assistant: A Graduate Assistant is a part-time employee of the institution who receives an hourly salary and a tuition reduction. Graduate Assistants in the Sorority and Fraternity Life Office at this institution live in private apartments in the fraternity and sorority houses. Overseeing risk management and being a liaison between the institution and chapter leadership, they receive a tuition reduction, an hourly salary, room and board in the sorority or fraternity facility, and a meal plan (Sorority and Fraternity Life, 2022, p. 11-12).

Greek Release: A Greek Release is the exemption granted to a student to be released from the state BOR's two-year campus residence policy in order to reside in their sorority or fraternity chapter facility. Sorority and fraternity members may be granted a Greek Release if they are a member of their chapter, graduated high school at least one full calendar year prior (are a second-year student), have completed 24 credit hours, and have a 2.0 cumulative grade point average (Sorority and Fraternity Life, 2022, p. 14).

Risk Management: In this study, risk management is operationalized by policies and practices that reduce unsafe behavior, such as substance abuse, hazing, and sexual assault. Risk management can also be viewed as practices that reduce the liability of a sorority and fraternity organization or institution. For example, risk management can include the implementation of policies, even if they are defied by individuals unknowingly of the organization.

Student Success: In this study, student success is operationalized by academic performance, safety, professional development, and feelings of belonging and community.

Reciprocal Partnership: This term refers to the partnership that this institution has created with its sorority and fraternity organizations that own and manage their own chapter facilities. The relationship has been created by the organizations agreeing to follow the institution's policies, in order to maintain their recognition status and receive Greek Releases.

Who is the Researcher?

The Assistant Director for Sorority and Fraternity Life at this institution is the researcher for this study. Their professional role sparked their interest in the study, as they have regularly implemented components of the reciprocal partnership between the institution and the sorority and fraternity organizations, such as hiring Graduate Assistants, reviewing safety inspections, and granting Greek Releases. They have also found that certain components of this reciprocal partnership, notably the live-in Graduate Assistants, are unique, and other professionals were intrigued by the mechanics of the program. The researcher conducted interviews of both institutional staff and sorority and fraternity organizational representatives. Because of their prior relationships with these individuals, the interviews focused on the logistics of their role in the relationship, rather than their specific emotions or feelings.

Existing Research

Existing literature explored the topics of sorority and fraternity history and structure, outcomes for students residing in either sorority/fraternity and university housing systems, legal relationships between higher education institutions and sorority and fraternity systems, and current strategies for risk management.

Sorority and Fraternity History and Structure

Throughout the 19th century, due to their small membership sizes, fraternity and sorority chapters were able to live together in boarding houses or on-campus housing. Chapter meetings and events were held in on-campus lecture halls or classrooms. However, as membership sizes increased in the 1890s, so did chapter funding, and sorority and fraternity chapters were able to purchase or rent their own housing facilities specifically dedicated to residence for chapter members. Fraternity and sorority houses became social hubs for campus, hosting parties, reunions, and extracurricular activities and housed students who were leaders in student government and politics (Anson & Marchesani, 1991). The chapter houses became a way for sorority and fraternity organizations to provide exclusive housing to their membership and isolate and differentiate themselves from other groups on campus (Waxman, 2017). As the importance of sorority and fraternity houses increased in the political and social college environment, so did their financial importance for both campus administration and sorority and fraternity organization leaders. For sorority and fraternity organizations, a focus of sorority and fraternity recruitment became pledging enough members to keep chapter houses full and financially secure (Anson & Marchesani, 1991, p. 2-3). The presence of sorority and fraternity housing also became important for campus administrators, as they allowed the institution to accept more students without needing to provide them with on-campus housing (Gibson et al., 2017).

From the beginning of privately-owned sorority and fraternity houses, chapter alumni collected rent payments, maintained the facility, and handled legal issues, while collegiate chapter members focused on the day-to-day operations of organization and member management (Anson & Marchesani, 1991, p. 2-3). This is still the case for privately-owned sorority and fraternity facilities today, where the national headquarters or a local alumni group own and manage the

chapter house. According to the Phi Delta Theta fraternity Chapter House Corporation Board manual, purposes of such groups are to own and manage the real estate for the chapter; lease the chapter house to the undergraduate chapter members; maintain equipment, furnishings, and financial records; oversee risk management and insurance; and hire and supervise chapter employees, such as House Directors, housekeeping, or culinary services. Even if a sorority or fraternity chapter has housing that is owned by their host institution, they likely still have a Chapter House Corporation Board to assist in management of the space and leasing of bed to capacity (*House Corporation*, n.d., p. 5). Alumni and other non-undergraduate chapter leaders play a role in sorority and fraternity housing, whether on or off campus.

Student Housing Choice Outcomes

Research demonstrates that privately-owned sorority and fraternity housing poses an increased risk for the university, the sorority/fraternity organization, and the organization's members, in comparison to on-campus housing alternatives (Gibson et al., 2017). Although they report higher rates of risk mitigation, leadership skills, and overall involvement, students residing in sorority and fraternity housing are more likely to drink alcohol, use marijuana, and smoke tobacco products (Tyler et al., 2018, p. 724). This risk can extend to their non-affiliated peers, and off-campus sorority and fraternity housing can increase substance use for the entire student body (Gibson et al., 2017, p. 310). Sorority and fraternity members also report higher levels of sexual activity, and attitudes of sexual assault are higher in fraternity members than non-affiliated students (Gibson et al., 2017, p. 308).

In addition to substance use and sexual activity, existing research on college housing types contains themes of student success and satisfaction. While students who live on-campus have greater academic performance, retention and persistence, and social adjustment, there has not been a verdict on whether sorority and fraternity residence status has had a similar impact on academic performance (Long, 2014, p. 67, 71). Existing research also demonstrates how sorority and fraternity housing can be linked to student development. A 2011 study used a survey to assess students on the "Thriving Quotient." This theory of "thriving" was rooted in five factors: engaged learning, diverse citizenship, academic determination, social connectedness, and positive perspective. The results were compared between students who lived in on-campus residence halls, in on-campus sorority and fraternity housing, or in off-campus alternatives (Vetter, 2011, p. 60). From the 105 responses, the researchers determined that living in close proximity to campus created higher levels of student involvement and engagement, leading to higher reports of "thriving" indicators. Sorority and fraternity housing at this institution is on-campus, and students in a sorority and fraternity reported similar levels of student success to the students in residence halls, while students living in neither of these options reported significantly lower levels (Vetter, 2011, p. 66).

Students residing in sorority and fraternity houses have different levels of satisfaction with their living arrangements, in comparison to their residence hall counterparts. While sorority and fraternity residents report lower levels of satisfaction with their physical living conditions, they report higher levels of satisfaction with programming in the facility. Because sorority and fraternity housing is led by its own student leaders, members are more involved and invested in the programming planning process and can create desired programming. Higher satisfaction in

programming is also linked to higher levels of peer interaction and socialization (Long, 2014, p. 75-76). However, despite higher levels of student satisfaction in programming and socialization, students living in sorority and fraternity housing feel less safe than students in on-campus residence halls (Long, 2014, p. 78). Improving student satisfaction and safety can prompt higher education institutions to increase oversight of privately-owned sorority and fraternity houses.

Legal Relationships

Understanding the legalities and rights of sorority and fraternity organizations is also crucial groundwork for understanding institutional oversight of private sorority and fraternity houses. Existing research reveals several themes in the legal relationship between sorority and fraternities and higher education institutions. The first is response to conduct and risk management concerns, and who is responsible for addressing these safety concerns. Fraternities and sororities can be placed on probation, suspended, or have their charter revoked for offenses including sexual assault, alcohol misuse, and hazing. Privately-owned sorority and fraternity housing can create conflict when responding to these concerns. For example, the national headquarters may revoke the charter of an offending chapter, but since they still own their chapter house, they can rebrand themselves as a local sorority or fraternity, maintain their same membership, and continue operations, and the headquarters has little power to stop it. In contrast, an institution could revoke recognition from a sorority or fraternity chapter, but the chapter could continue residing in their private residence and continue to receive support from its local alumni boards and headquarters. For this reason, sorority and fraternity organizations rely on partnerships with institutions, and vice versa, to maintain compliance with policy and ensure student safety (Paterson, 2013, p. 48-49).

Another theme in existing research is the level of liability an institution holds in relation to activities of fraternities and sororities. Until the late 1970s, universities followed the legal precedent of *in loco parentis*, where they operated as de facto parental guidance for students, controlling their “physical and moral welfare” (Mumford, 2001, p. 3). In 1979, *Bradshaw v. Rawlings* ended *in loco parentis*, and changed institutional liability in regard to student safety from strict to “no duty,” meaning they hold little responsibility for the actions of students or student organizations. For this reason, in lawsuits for fraternity-related injuries such as deaths from hazing or overconsumption, the institution is often not held liable. Instead, either the local chapter members or the national organization are held responsible (Mumford, 2001, p. 21). However, response to conduct and safety concerns is a responsibility of an institution, specifically in sorority and fraternity organizations. Since national organizations are often not physically present for management of a local chapter, they rely on management from the university to respond to alcohol, hazing, and sexual assault violations. While the national organizations hold the right to revoke a charter, higher education institutions that are hosts to sororities and fraternities have authority to create preventative programming and sanctions that are specific to the needs of the local chapter (Mumford, 2001, p. 22). Institutions have put policies in place to prevent fraternity-related injuries, such as alcohol and social event guidelines, mandating dry facilities, notifying parents of high-risk behavior, and implementing strict punishments for hazing. If the institution was found to be knowledgeable of the harmful activity, they can be held liable (Mumford, 2001, p. 10). Sorority and fraternity organizations rely on their

host institutions to implement risk mitigation programming and procedures, yet the organizations themselves are still the party likely to be held responsible for wrongful actions.

Risk Management

This study operationalizes risk management as the policies and practices that reduce and prohibit unsafe behavior. Risk management can also be viewed as the practices that decrease the liability of a sorority/fraternity organization or institution. Existing research demonstrates that there are different lenses with which to view the risk management of sorority and fraternity activities. The first is through the lens of the institution. There are several best practices for risk management implementation that both promote safety for students and minimize risk for legal action against the institution. The first is creating collaborations with student organizations and other stakeholders to define unsafe behaviors, develop consistent policies, and draft fair consequences. The incorporation of student and stakeholder input increases the adherence to these risk management policies (Hall, 2009, p. 35). The second is requiring student attendance at mandatory educational sessions held by the institution. These trainings should cover topics that are pertinent to the particular institution, such as safe alcohol consumption, sexual assault prevention, or hazing. These programs should not only define the risks but allow students to discuss bystander intervention strategies and their potential responses (Hall, 2009, p. 35).

The second lens with which to view risk management is through the sorority/fraternity organization itself. One approach to risk management through the organization itself is via social norming. Surveys can be conducted to assess chapter members' opinions on common risk concerns in sororities and fraternities, including excessive alcohol use, drug use, sexual assault, hazing, and bias incidents (Maples et al., 2019, p. 1). With this data, new "social norms" can be created for the organizations. Social norms are defined as "expected or desired behaviors in a given situation shared among a specific social population." Social norms define the culture of an organization, are reflected in behaviors of the group, demonstrate the group's collective conscience, and are more impactful in social organizations like sororities and fraternities (Maples et al., 2019, p. 4). An example of the use of social norm creation would be to survey first-year members about drinking habits. If a portion of the population was found to not participate in underage drinking, this data could be shared with the rest of the chapter to normalize not participating and reduce peer pressure. Culture and social norms within an organization are more impactful than institutional training and resources (Maples et al., 2019, p. 5). Because they are values-based organizations that use selective recruitment practices, sorority and fraternity organizations can recruit members who have similar social norms, creating a culture of risk management. Throughout both models, an emphasis is placed on creating effective partnerships between the institution and the sorority/fraternity organization. Because national sorority and fraternity organizations are often not physically present to enforce policy, they rely on the host institution to monitor chapter behavior. Vice versa, host institutions do not have complete authority and oversight into the activities of private organizations, and therefore rely on the national organization to impose sanctions or revoke a chapter's charter. (Paterson, 2013, p. 60-61)

Literature demonstrates that privately-owned sorority and fraternity houses serve several purposes, including providing housing for membership and initiating a sense of belonging. They

can provide an opportunity for student development, a physical space for chapter functions, and an alternative to on-campus housing. However, they also bring an additional risk to an institution, as campuses with private sorority and fraternity housing have higher rates of substance use, and sorority and fraternity members have higher rates of sexual activity. In order to manage this risk for their students, institutions may seek to increase their oversight into privately-owned facilities.

Design and Methods

A case study was chosen for this descriptive study due to the nature of the research question. In order to explore how this institution has constructed and has managed this reciprocal partnership, multiple forms of data are used to create this prototype. Qualitative data collected from interviews and documents describes the nature and implementation of this partnership.

Participants and Data Sources

Interviewees fall into two categories: institutional staff and sorority/fraternity organizational representatives. There were six base interview questions asked to each participant, with follow-up questions as necessary (Appendix C). The first group of interviewees are university staff. (Appendix D). For this case study, one current and one former Fraternity Graduate Assistant was interviewed, as well as one current Fraternity Resident Assistant. They were asked questions related to their experience being a liaison between chapter leadership and the university and how physically residing in the sorority or fraternity housing facility has influenced their role with the chapter.

In total, six interviews were conducted with institutional staff, in addition to the one self-interview. One university staff that was interviewed was the institution’s Director of Housing. Follow-up questions for this staff member inquired about the Greek Release process and experiences of students living in on-campus residence halls. Another interview was conducted with the Chief of the University Police Department, with follow-up questions regarding Clery Act reporting in regard to sorority and fraternity housing and police jurisdiction over these properties. Finally, an interview was conducted with the university’s General Counsel, the attorney responsible for providing legal advice and assistance to other university administrators, with questions regarding liability of the university for actions of fraternities and sororities. As the Sorority and Fraternity Life Advisor is the primary researcher

Interview Participants

Institutional Staff	Greek Organizational Representatives
Chief, University Police Department	FHC Chapter Advisor 1
General Counsel	CHC Member 1
Director, Housing	CHC Member 2
Graduate Assistant 1	CHC Member 3
Graduate Assistant 2	CHC Member 4
Fraternity Resident Assistant	Chapter President 1
Assistant Director, Sorority and Fraternity Life (Researcher)	Chapter President 2
	Chapter President 3
	Chapter President 4

of this study, policies, manuals, and reports are used as support documents in conjunction with a self-interview with this administrator.

The second group of interviewees are sorority and fraternity organizational representatives. For this research, interviews with two fraternity Chapter House Corporation Board members and two sorority Chapter House Corporation Board members were conducted. To incorporate the experience of the chapter that is owned by their Headquarters through a Fraternity Housing Corporation model, an interview was conducted with a chapter advisor that oversees housing operations in that organization. Questions for each type of representative inquired about their experiences with the Graduate Assistant program or the implementation of a House Director, the financial and social impacts of Greek Releases, and their role in owning and managing the facility. In addition to the facility owners and managers, student leadership was also interviewed. Two former sorority and two former fraternity chapter presidents were interviewed, with similar follow-up questions regarding their chapter’s Graduate Assistant or House Director, impact of Greek Releases, and their role in facility management, as well as their own experience with applying for a Greek Release, if applicable. Nine interviews were conducted with sorority and fraternity organizational representatives, with a total of 16 interviews being conducted throughout the research.

Various documents were used to support the qualitative data described in the interviews, particularly to describe the policies that guide the partnership, including *Clery Act* reporting, the state BOR on-campus two-year living requirement, and Sorority and Fraternity Life policies and procedures.

Documents

Document Title	Source
Fraternity Graduate Assistant Job Description	Office of Sorority and Fraternity Life, USD
Policies and Procedures Handbook	Office of Sorority and Fraternity Life, USD
Graduate Assistant Contract	Office of Sorority and Fraternity Life, USD
Resident Assistant Contract	Office of Sorority and Fraternity Life, USD
Handbook for Campus Safety and Security Reporting	U.S. Department of Education
SDBOR Policy Manual	South Dakota Board of Regents

Data Analysis

Data analysis in this qualitative study utilized data collected from the 16 interviews and documents. In order to address the research question “How can higher education institutions build partnerships with sorority and fraternity organizations to increase their oversight and risk management of privately-owned sorority and fraternity housing?” the following questions were used as guide when constructing the narrative of the reciprocal partnership:

1. What role does live-in institutional staff play in a private fraternity or sorority facility?
2. What role do Greek Releases play in the implementation of institutional policy?
3. What are ways the reciprocal partnership has benefitted the institution or the private sorority or fraternity organization?
4. What impact have the initiatives in the reciprocal partnership had on risk management and reduction?
5. What impact have the initiatives in the reciprocal partnership had on student success and development?
6. Is there pushback from sorority and fraternity organizations on increased institutional oversight of their facilities?

Throughout the various aspects of the reciprocal partnership, each of these questions are addressed with qualitative data and quotes collected from the interviews and supporting documents.

Key Findings

Interviews with constituents of the reciprocal partnership, as well as relevant documents, revealed several recommendations for institutions seeking to build partnerships with sorority and fraternity organizations. Specifically, these recommendations describe elements that were identified as beneficial to the partnership, as well as potential considerations for implementation.

Recommendation #1: Recognition Status

The first recommendation for the construction of a reciprocal partnership is the implementation of recognition status. Having institutional recognition allows sorority and fraternity organizations to receive certain benefits. First, only recognized organizations are allowed to participate in the council recruitment processes. Second, only recognized organizations are allowed to affiliate with the university by utilizing campus spaces, receiving staff support, or using the institution's name or logo on any branding. Third, unrecognized sorority and fraternity organizations cannot receive Greek Releases, which means their second-year membership class would not be permitted to live in their chapter house. Not being a recognized organization can significantly influence the success and recruitment of an organization. When an organization does not have recognition status, it is published by the institution, in order to promote transparency with prospective students and their guardians. By being unrecognized, these constituents will be informed that the organization did not or does not abide by risk, safety, or facility requirements, meaning they may be an unsafe environment. In order to maintain recognition status, sorority and fraternity organizations must also ensure that their housing is safe and supportive to the students that reside there. The Policies and Procedures Handbook outlines several requirements that sorority/fraternity organizations must complete to ensure quality living for their residents, including:

1. Chapters have a fire inspection and meet all fire code requirements prior to December 31st (once per year). Chapter conducts fire and evacuation drills once per semester.
2. Chapter has a risk manager and a list of members responsible in case of emergency.
3. 75% of active Chapter members and 100% of New Members participate in Acute Alcohol Intoxication Training in the fall semester.

4. 75% of the active Chapter members and 100% of New Members participate in Sexual Assault Prevention Training in the fall semester. (Sorority and Fraternity Life, 2022, p. 9)
5. All chapters make available to members a meal plan.
6. All chapters restrict the possession and/or use of firearms or explosive devices of any kind within the confines and premises of the chapter house.
7. All chapters with housing must have a House Director or Live-in Graduate Assistant that reports regularly to the Office of Sorority and Fraternity Life. (Sorority and Fraternity Life, 2022, p. 11-12)

The consequences that would result from a loss of recognition promote risk management in the organizations, since they must follow guidelines set by the institution. These guidelines can include restricting alcohol access to minors, implementing sober monitors at the event, or prohibiting hard liquor in the facility (Sorority and Fraternity Life, 2022, p. 11-12).

Institutions can use the element of recognition status in the reciprocal partnership as a motivation to follow policies.

By clearly setting and communicating standards for recognized organizations, and having consequences for those who are not recognized, institutions can exercise power over their privately-owned sorority and fraternity facilities.

“Like I said, that extra layer of accountability... especially with you for some events, like submitting like those health and safety plans for like formals and stuff. I would assume, maybe for like some chapters in the state or in the U.S., if their like institution never required them to submit a plan, like in case something happened, they probably wouldn't do it. So it's good that our institution is asking us to do that; we better be safe and sorry.”

-Chapter President 4

Recommendation #2: Live-In Graduate Assistant Program

This institution requires that a Graduate Assistant live in each fraternity or sorority facility that does not have a House Director. These Graduate Assistants are hired by the Office of Sorority and Fraternity Life, and they live in a private apartment in the chapter facility they are assigned. They are responsible for ensuring chapter adherence to risk management policies, following emergency procedures, and being the liaison between the chapter and the university. The Graduate Assistant has several responsibilities for the chapter and the institution. First, they are each assigned Project Areas, with focuses on mental health, cultural competency, academic, risk management, etc. In those areas, the Graduate Assistants create presentations and plan programming for the community. Within their assigned chapters, they advise chapter leaders, assist in chapter activities, and respond to emergency situations (*Fraternity Graduate, 2024*).

As identified by interview participants, Graduate Assistants have several benefits for the sorority or fraternity chapters. First, Graduate Assistants can serve as role models to chapter members. Chapter Presidents shared that this is a major impact of the implementation of the Graduate

“It’s a very good, personable approach to student development. I think like for some institutions, or I think just as students, we’re used to faculty and staff teaching us these things, but I think if it comes from one of our peers, even though they’re in graduate school, they’re still our age. And it’s more personable; most people retain that information, or it affects them way better than it would from a faculty member.”

- Chapter President 4

Assistant program, and that it is a key benefit for their members. One Chapter President described this role model relationship as the “unofficial role of an older sister.” She further elaborated on this role, sharing that their Graduate Assistant can give advice on school, friendships, and “just life” (Chapter President 3). One Graduate Assistant echoed the “big sister” sentiment, sharing “I like to think of it more as a big sister mentoring thing. It’s a nice way to know someone is supportive and cares” (Graduate Assistant 2). Additionally, Graduate Assistant participants shared that they would give their members advice on organization skills, share studying and academic tips, and help them navigate college life

(Graduate Assistant 1, Graduate Assistant 2). Similarly, CHC Members shared that Graduate Assistants have provided members a “sounding board” when making leadership decisions (CHC Member 3). Multiple Chapter Presidents also shared that while the Graduate Assistants have more life experiences than an undergraduate student, they also possess relatability that a professional staff member may not.

Participants also reported that the Graduate Assistant program has benefitted risk management in the chapter facility. At this institution, Graduate Assistants are designated as Campus Security Authorities (CSAs) through *the Clery Act*, meaning they are mandatory reporters of Clery crimes. A Chapter President described the way in which the reporting structure of the Graduate Assistant program holds chapter members accountable, saying, “Since she’s on file through the university, there’s not a whole lot that’s gonna slide on by with her” (Chapter President 3). Graduate Assistants are also able to watch for dangerous situations regarding hazing and substance abuse. Several CHC members shared that having a third-party adult figure present in the house gives both the institution and the sorority or fraternity organization peace of mind that any policy violations would be reported. He shared, “I would suspect that if there’s physical hazing... always having an adult in there... controls them a little bit more and makes them have a little bit more respect” (CHC Member 1). Likewise, another CHC member shared that this third-party presence can help enforce the adherence to social hosting policies, described earlier in Chapter 4. These policies, designed to keep chapter members and guests safe, as well as protect the liability of sorority and fraternity organizations, include registering social gatherings, restricting underage access to alcohol, prohibiting the consumption of hard liquor in the chapter facility, and implementing trained sober monitors. This CHC member shared that the Graduate Assistant would be able to report the defiance of risk policies, saying, “The presence of having

that person in the house, even if the interactions aren't super strong, and knowing that... things can be discovered. Things can be reported. Things could be taken to another level if something goes wrong" (CHC Member 3). Both CHC members shared that the quality or additional responsibilities of the Graduate Assistant, such as being a strong role model or providing leadership development, are additional benefits, but the main benefit of a Graduate Assistant is that their presence promotes the adherence to risk management policies.

The implementation of a live-in Graduate Assistant program can also have a positive impact on student success. Participants shared that the Graduate Assistant program has contributed to increased academic performance by chapter members. Because Graduate Assistants are also full-time graduate students, they have proven their ability to academically succeed in their undergraduate programs. Chapter Presidents identified Graduate Assistants as resources for their chapter members, a majority who are still in their undergraduate programs, by offering homework advice and study tips. One participant also shared that they were able to tutor their chapter members in undergraduate history courses, since that was their graduate program area. Graduate Assistants are also able to serve as resources to chapter members who are applying for graduate programs themselves, assisting them with their professional development.

Graduate Assistants can also contribute to student success by developing spaces that foster belonging and community. Similar to the environment that a Resident Assistant can create on a traditional on-campus dormitory floor, a Graduate Assistant can continue to provide those benefits even after the student moves off-campus into their sorority and fraternity house (Graduate Assistant 2). By creating a space for members to feel heard and supported, the

"I've been at three different universities, and the other two universities I've been at don't have this system, where they have a GA living in the house. I'd say, in Greek Life at those other two schools, they had a lot more issues with substance abuse, alcohol problems, partying, sexual assault, stuff like that. Just comparing from the other universities I've been to, I think this is a great protocol to put in place to help things flow more smoothly and stay safer."

-Resident Assistant 1

"It is a unique experience to live in a Greek house. It just absolutely is not for everybody. But for the people that it's for, it's such a bonding thing. And like, all of my best friends last year were people who were not in my program... These kinds of people were just the kinds of people that I get along with easily, which are just people who care a lot about students."

-Graduate Assistant 2

Graduate Assistant program was able to increase retention for one of this institution's sorority organizations. All of the Graduate Assistant and Resident Assistant participants shared that they intentionally checked in on their members regularly, ensuring that they knew they had someone who was there for them. The Graduate Assistant program also contributes to the student success of the Graduate Assistants themselves, who are also students at the institution. One participant identified the professional development and community that this program can provide to the Graduate Assistants. First, this Graduate Assistant explained how this opportunity has allowed them to develop skills that will be beneficial for their future career in mental health counseling, which is one of the preferred programs in the Graduate Assistant hiring process. This participant also identified that the Graduate Assistant program can serve as an interdisciplinary cohort and community for the involved graduate students. She shared that her participation in the program assisted her in her transition to graduate school (Graduate Assistant 2). The implementation of a live-in Graduate Assistant program allows institutions to increase their risk management and oversight of privately-owned facilities, while also providing additional benefits of role modeling and sense of belonging.

Recommendation #3: Greek Release Process

Another element repeatedly identified in the reciprocal partnership between this institution and its privately-owned sorority and fraternity houses is the Greek Release process, in which the institution releases students from its on-campus living requirement to live in their sorority and fraternity houses instead. If a chapter did not adhere to institutional policies, the university reserves the right to withhold Greek Releases, making this an integral piece of the implementation of the reciprocal partnership.

The Greek Release process has financial implications for both the institution and its sorority and fraternity organizations. First, releasing students from the on-campus living requirement allows the university to create additional space in the on-campus residence halls. In years, where University Housing is overwhelmed by capacity, this is a benefit to the institution, since they can use the open beds to house more non-affiliated students. In contrast, releasing students into sorority and fraternity housing can also have a negative financial impact for the institution, if capacity for University Housing is on a decline.

All sorority and fraternity organizational representatives identified the positive financial impact that Greek Releases have on individual chapters. Most notably, the release of second-year students from on-campus housing allows them to sign housing contracts with their sorority or fraternity housing facility, which increases revenue for sorority and fraternity organizations. These privately-owned facilities have a variety of costs that are associated with the operation, which can create pressure on the CHC Board to fill beds. The ability to have second-year students living in their house was described as crucial to the existence of privately-owned sorority and fraternity facilities by all CHC members and Chapter Advisors. In particular, one CHC member shared, "I don't think too many of the Greek houses would survive without that ability or capability" (CHC Member 3). The need



for additional students living in sorority and fraternity chapter facilities is so prevalent that organizations have asked the institution to release first-year sorority and fraternity members from the on-campus housing requirement as well, although this conversation will largely be driven by University Housing occupancy (CHC Member 2). The large financial contribution that second-year students receiving Greek Releases make to sorority and fraternity organizations significantly contribute to the adherence to institutional requirements of the reciprocal partnership.

The Greek Release process also has a positive impact on the student success of the participating second-year students who receive them. First, the participants shared that the ability to live in the house chapter facility allows second-year students to have increased access to the academic accountability and support that a sorority or fraternity organization can provide. Specifically, one Chapter President's organization hosts mandatory study tables, which is a designated time and space for chapter members to study and do homework. These events are often held at the chapter house, which makes them more accessible for the live-in members. In addition to the accessibility to academic resources, living in the chapter house can also be a benefit for chapter

"Outside of Greek Life, we're sending them into the unknown. Our job as student affairs practitioners is to make sure students can be as successful as possible...

When we give a student an exemption to go live off-campus, not in a Greek house, I can't control that environment... They could crash and burn... I think Greek life is an extension of Housing, frankly. I think it's on campus housing with an asterisk."

-Housing Director

members during the state's harsh winters. As another Chapter President described, their chapter facility is equipped with "a million different study spots," as well as whiteboards and other academic supplies. She shared that this is especially beneficial for sophomore members, as students living in University Housing typically need to walk to the library during the winter months (Chapter President 2). The accessibility to physical resources, chapter programming, and older members makes the Greek Release process an academic benefit to second-year students.

The Greek Release process can also create a safe transition from on-campus to off-campus housing. Several participants described the sorority and fraternity houses

as a hybrid form of on-campus and off-campus housing styles, despite their privately-owned, off-campus status. The strong partnership, created by the adherence to institutional policies and the use of Graduate Assistants, helps support this hybrid approach. Specifically, the Director of Housing described how the ability to release students into a controlled off-campus environment allows there to be a safe transition, which is in the best interest of the institution. Another institutional staff member shared that this partnership has allowed sorority and fraternity housing to be a "happy medium" approach (Chief, University Police Department).

Another impact that the Greek Release process can have on student success is the sense of belonging and community that is associated with living in a sorority or fraternity chapter house. All organizational participants identified the significant impact that this experience has on a second-year member, providing an opportunity to live with up to 60 peers that have similar interests, goals, and values. The ability to live with other chapter members was identified by a Chapter President as the most effective method of relationship-building (Chapter President 3). According to several participants, the ability to live in the chapter facility allows second-year students to participate in one of the most important aspects of Sorority and Fraternity Life, which is community. These strong relationships are what makes the sorority and fraternity experience unique and living in the chapter facility can generate a sense of pride for members. Other participants identified that this sense of pride and belonging translates into retention for their organization; members who live in the chapter facility are more connected with the organization and are more likely to remain members. Likewise, members who live out of the house are most likely to become disconnected with their sorority or fraternity (Chapter President 1). One Chapter President shared that if Greek Releases were not given to second-year students, they may see a decline in retention for their organization (Chapter President 1). The ability to live in the sorority and fraternity chapter house creates a sense of belonging and community for chapter members, which is a benefit for the individual student and their organization.

"I think that it's one thing to be a member of an organization where you go to a meeting. It's another thing to be a member of an organization where you live and breathe that organization for that period of time. It becomes part of your persona... Being a member that attends meetings but never lived in the house has a different relationship, I would venture to guess, with their chapter, than those that lived in the house for a year or two years or three years."

-Chief, University Police Department

The ability for second-year students to live in the chapter facility also has an impact on future leadership roles both within and outside the organization. Because they are socialized with older chapter members also living in the house, particularly those that hold leadership positions, younger members are exposed to upperclassmen role models. One Graduate Assistant shared their observation that this collaboration between membership classes takes place primarily in the chapter facility, describing "You know, like, never really meet people unless you're all living in the same house at the same time outside of chapter meeting" (Graduate Assistant 2). The ability to build close relationships with upperclassmen who hold leadership positions allows the second-year members to ask questions and plan their own leadership goals. Additionally, living in the chapter facility creates an increased investment and passion for the organization, which can spur the desire to hold future leadership positions within the chapter (Chapter President 1). This impact can extend to leadership involvement outside of the chapter, as younger members observe upperclassmen participating in other campus organizations.

Interview participants identified the Greek Release process as one of the most impactful elements of the reciprocal partnership, since Greek Releases are necessary for this institution's sorority and fraternity housing to survive financially. Institutions seeking to increase their risk management of privately-owned sorority and fraternity housing can utilize on-campus living requirements as a bargaining tool to impact revenue for the sorority and fraternity organizations. If revenue will be negatively impacted, the organization's adherence to risk management policies will be encouraged. When implementing this recommendation, it is critical for the Sorority and Fraternity Life Office to work in collaboration with their institution's Housing office, in order to manage occupancy numbers and issue releases.

Recommendation #4: Liability

Institutions should be mindful of liability associated with certain elements of this reciprocal partnership. Because sororities and fraternities are recognized student organizations, and their members are students at the institution, the host institution holds liability into the organizations' activities. Primarily, this liability only occurs when an institution was knowledgeable about an unsafe situation and did not respond appropriately. As described by General Counsel, the university can be considered liable for a crime, such as a hazing injury or sexual assault, if they were considered "indifferent" to the knowledge of the incident. He elaborates on this standard, sharing, "Generally, we try to strive to be a much higher bar than indifference... Liability would not often fall on the university, unless the university has knowledge of it and takes action to continue to put people into that situation" (General Counsel). However, an institution's liability can be increased with additional oversight into the activities taking place in a privately-owned chapter facility. In the case of the Graduate Assistant program, this is a factor for institutions to consider. With an institutional staff member living on-site of the facility, there is an increased chance that they will witness an unsafe activity and be able to stop and report the crime. However, there is also an increased likelihood of a Graduate Assistant being made aware of a crime and not properly reporting or intervening.

Another consideration in the reciprocal partnership is that under the *Clery Act*, even privately-owned sorority and fraternity properties are considered part of the campus geography. The *Jeanne Clery Disclosure of Campus Security Policy and Campus Crime Statistics Act*, more commonly known as the *Clery Act*, was implemented in 1998. It requires higher education institutions to publicly disclose statistics on crimes that occur in the campus geography (*The Handbook*, 2016, p. 12). This geography can include locations that are not technically on-campus, but that are frequently used or overseen by the institution. The definition provided by *The Handbook for Campus Safety and Security Reporting*, states that crimes that occur on institutionally-affiliated locations must be disclosed in the annual report and may justify a timely warning being sent to institutional faculty, staff, and students. Because of the written agreement to provide student housing (Greek Releases), that the location is used exclusively for student housing (non-students cannot be members of Greek organizations, and therefore cannot live in the chapter facility), and that the housing is intended for student organization groups, privately-owned sorority and fraternity properties are part of the *Clery Act* geography. Crimes reported on campus can have a reputational, and therefore financial, impact on the institution.

Recommendation #5: Potential Pushback

It is also recommended that institutions are mindful of potential pushback they may receive from sorority and fraternity students and alumni in response to increased oversight. There are several measures an institution can take to minimize pushback on the partnership, which is crucial for the implementation's longevity. First, there may be resentment from sorority and fraternity

"Things like alcohol related deaths, sexual assaults, things like that have a definite reputational harm on the university... can have a major financial impact. If the university becomes a place that has a reputation for dangerous activity and students getting harmed or deaths, enrollment drops 100 students, that has a greater financial impact."

-General Counsel

organizations that they are held to higher standards and have additional requirements than other off-campus housing. One CHC member expressed this sentiment in his interview, stating: We own our house. We own our property. What's the deal here? Why do we have to live up to different rules than the folks at [off-campus apartments for students] or any place else?" (CHC Member 3). A Chapter President echoed the same concerns, sharing that he and other Chapter Presidents have felt that some of the institutional regulations for sorority and fraternity chapters are too many rules and regulations that are "impractical to follow." This Chapter President shared

that chapter leadership can feel burdened by the additional regulations placed on sorority and fraternity chapters, but that overall, they are content with the partnership they have built with the institution. In order to minimize pushback, it is recommended that institution's are mindful of only implementing necessary and relevant guidelines for the sorority and fraternity organizations. These guidelines should be centered around student safety and success, and not the needs of the institution.

Participants also identified the importance of healthy relationships and boundaries between the Graduate Assistants and chapter members. Several Chapter President participants identified that chapter membership can be resistant to the live-in Graduate Assistant. Specifically, chapter members may feel like the Graduate Assistant exists to "get the chapter in trouble." While some participants identified negative perceptions of Graduate Assistants, others were able to identify scenarios where there were positive perceptions of the Graduate Assistant program. When there was a negative perception of the Graduate Assistant, the relationship with the institution was hindered; when there was a positive perception of the Graduate Assistant, the partnership was strengthened (Chapter President 1). In these scenarios, the ability of the Graduate Assistant to build trust with chapter members was important. Additionally, successful Graduate Assistants were able to be relatable to chapter members, promoted their belief in the sorority and fraternity experience, and were honest with them when they were reporting them for a policy violation. In these scenarios, the Graduate Assistant also was able to provide tangible benefits to the chapter

“The majority of [Greek offices] are there to help the students in Greek Life. Their national offices are not there to get them in trouble; they’re there to help them. But college students in Greek life think the opposite. That you and your role (the Sorority and Fraternity Advisor) and nationals, those are the bad guys. That I was a bad guy.”

-Graduate Assistant 1

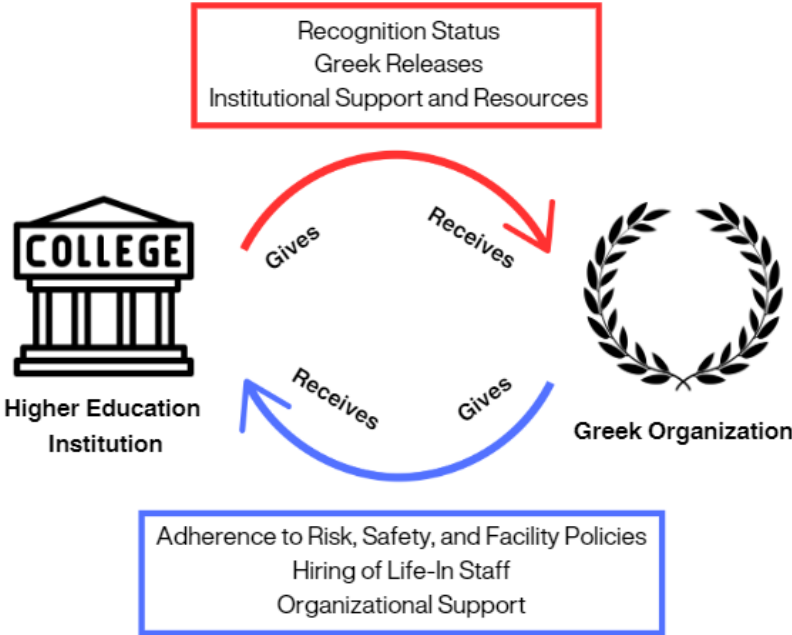
that justified their presence. These benefits, described in detail earlier in the chapter, included role modeling, academic support, community building, and presentations and workshops.

Recommendation #6: Implementation of the Partnership

Through the creation of this partnership, the institution gains bargaining power if a sorority or fraternity organization deviates from policies, particularly if they are risking harm to other students or themselves. The illustration of the reciprocal partnership demonstrates the give and take nature of the relationship.

If a sorority or fraternity organization stopped giving one of their elements, the institution can revoke the giving of one of their benefits. Because of the financial and recruitment implications of the institution’s benefits, the sorority and fraternity organizations are motivated to maintain their adherence to institutional policies. In the reciprocal partnership, both the institution and the private organization benefit, and if the institution no longer gave benefits, the sorority or fraternity organization could also choose to no longer affiliate with the institution.

Illustration of Reciprocal Partnership



Implications

The institution's reciprocal partnership with their privately-owned sorority and fraternity housing facilities can serve as a prototype for higher education institutions seeking to increase oversight and management of these facilities. The elements of this partnership, including recognition status, the Graduate Assistant program, and the Greek Release process, also provide benefits to both the institution and the sorority or fraternity organization. Through this partnership, the institution receives adherence to policies, support from the organization, and the hiring of their live-in staff in the facilities. The organization receives recognition status, institutional support and resources, and Greek Releases. Without one another neither entity in the partnership could remain successful. By implementing the recommendations of this study, institutional Sorority and Fraternity Life staff could increase their partnership with their sorority and fraternity organizations and promote overall student safety and support. The implications of this study suggest that other institutions could increase the oversight of their own private sorority and fraternity facilities by implementing these elements.

Future Research

This study sparks the need for subsequent research. First, further research could incorporate a mixed-methods design into this study. A future extension of this study could include the quantitative data on risk management incidents at sorority and fraternity organizations at the institution, although rights to private organizations' conduct data may be challenging to obtain. In a mixed methods study, quantitative data generated from the annual *Clery Act* statistics could be used to compare and contrast with the qualitative descriptions, particularly those on risk management.

This research primarily focused on the implementation of risk management policies that prevent substance abuse and sexual assault. This focus was determined by the case context, as the institution's sorority and fraternity organizations do not have a particularly negative history with hazing. Because of this, many of the participants did not discuss hazing in their interviews, and the Policies and Procedures Handbook lacks specific guidance related to hazing, except that the institution has a no-tolerance policy (Sorority and Fraternity Life, 2022, p. 10). A future study could expand on the specific impact of the reciprocal partnership on hazing reduction. Likewise, a future study could also expand on the potential for the reciprocal partnership to respond to hate crimes or bias incidents.

Future research could also further explore the Greek Release program. A mixed-methods study design could be utilized to compare this study's qualitative data with quantitative data on retention and persistence of students who receive Greek Release. Specifically, the institution could use this research to justify any future decisions on releasing first-year students into sorority and fraternity housing as well as second-year students, which organizational representatives have been requesting. Financial impact of Greek Releases for the student could also be explored in this future research. Although this study could inspire several future research ideas, the qualitative data presented thoroughly covers the scope of the study.

Conclusion

This study serves as a prototype of a reciprocal partnership model between an institution and its privately-owned sorority and fraternity housing. Through qualitative data collected through interviews and documents, a narrative of this partnership was presented. Notably, the benefits of the Graduate Assistant program, particularly in areas of role modeling, risk management, and student success, were highlighted. Likewise, the Greek Release program was also emphasized, with its financial implications, impact on student success, and the degree to which sorority and fraternity organizations rely on this exchange. The uniqueness of these two elements and the effective implementation of the reciprocal partnership allows the institution to serve as a model for institutions seeking productive partnerships with their sorority and fraternity organizations. With the increased risk of privately-owned sorority and fraternity housing on a college campus, it is imperative that institutions are proactive in their approach to ensure the safety of their students.

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APPENDIX A

IRB Approval

Date: December 14, 2023

University of South Dakota
414 E. Clark Street
Vermillion, SD 57069

PI: Jesse Sealey Karen Card

Student Investigator(s): Kelli Susemihl

Re: Initial - IRB-23-248 *Case Study of Sorority and Fraternity Housing at the University of South Dakota*

The University of South Dakota Institutional Review Board has rendered the decision below for this study. Because this study is exempt, its approval does not expire. Please submit a closure form to the IRB when this study is complete.

Decision: Exempt

Category: Category 2.(ii). Research that only includes interactions involving educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures, or observation of public behavior (including visual or auditory recording) if at least one of the following criteria is met:

Any disclosure of the human subjects' responses outside the research would not reasonably place the subjects at risk of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to the subjects' financial standing, employability, educational advancement, or reputation; or

Research Notes: Interview methodology; recruitment email; date-stamped consent; no signature on consent.

Dear Jesse Sealey,

The proposal referenced above has received an exempt review and is approved according to the procedures of the University of South Dakota Institutional Review Board.

Annual continuing review is not required for this exempt study. However, two years after this approval is issued, on about December 13, 2025, we will contact you to request an update on the status of this study.

When the study is complete, you must submit a closure form to the IRB. You may close your study when you are finished collecting data, no longer have contact with the subjects, and the data have been de-identified. You may continue to analyze the existing data on the closed project.

Please promptly report to the IRB any proposed changes or additions (e.g., protocol amendments/revised informed consents. site changes, etc.) in previously approved human subjects research activities BEFORE you put those changes into place.

Any modifications to the approved study must be submitted for review through Cayuse IRB. All approval letters and study documents are located within the study details in Cayuse IRB.

If you have any questions, please contact: irb@usd.edu or (605) 658-3743.

Sincerely,

University of South Dakota Institutional Review Board

Marc Guilford, J.D.
Director, Office of Human Subjects
University of South Dakota
(605) 658-3767

APPENDIX B

Participant Consent Form

CONSENT FORM TO PARTICIPATE IN A RESEARCH STUDY

The University of South Dakota

TITLE: Case Study of Sorority and Fraternity Housing at the University of South Dakota

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: *Jesse Sealey*
jesse.sealey@usd.edu

Department: *Educational Leadership*

Invitation to be Part of a Research Study

You are invited to participate in a research study. You can participate if you are:

- Identified as serving in a role deemed relevant to the reciprocal relationship between privately-owned Greek housing and the University of South Dakota
 - Including: Institutional staff, law enforcement, graduate assistant/student worker, House Corporation Board member, president, or Headquarters staff

Please take time to read this entire form and ask questions before deciding whether to take part in this research project.

What is this study about and why are we doing it?

We are doing this study to describe how the University of South Dakota and its affiliated sororities and fraternities have developed a reciprocal relationship to oversee privately-owned chapter housing. About 16 people will take part in this research.

What will happen if you take part in this study?

If you agree to take part in this study, you will be asked to participate in a 30-minute Zoom interview regarding your role in this relationship. You may be sent the questions beforehand.

Your Participation in this Study is Voluntary

It is up to you to decide whether to be in this research study. Your choice to participate or not will not affect your relationship with USD, your employment, or anything else. Even if you decide to be part of the study now, you may change your mind and stop at any time. You do not have to answer any questions you do not want to answer. If you decide to withdraw before this study is completed, your interview data will be destroyed. There will be no penalty to student workers or students who choose not to participate in the study.

What risks might result from being in this study?

There are no risks in participating in this research beyond those experienced in everyday life. Interview questions inquire about the nature of your role with either the institution or the Greek organization and do not explore personal emotions.

What are the potential benefits from this study?

You might benefit from being in this study by having a clearer understanding of your role and purpose in the relationship between the University of South Dakota and its affiliated sororities and fraternities. Others will benefit from this study by having a prototype on increased oversight into privately-owned sorority and fraternity chapter houses, which can lead to increased risk management and safety procedures.

How will we protect your information?

The records of this study will be kept confidential to the extent permitted by law. Any report published with the results of this study will not include any information that could identify you. We will protect the confidentiality of the research data by focusing interview questions on the relationship between the privately-owned house and the University of South Dakota, rather than situations with individual members. Examples may be given if they do not violate the privacy of the Greek organization or individual students by revealing identifying or sensitive information. Interviews will share the position title of the individual, but not their name. Likewise, data shared from reports by the Office of Sorority and Fraternity Life will not include the names of individual organizations or students.

Zoom interview rooms will be password protected to ensure privacy between the participant and the interviewer. The researcher will record the interview on either a cell phone recording device or Zoom, then transcribe the recording within 48 hours of the interview. The transcription will be verified with the interviewee to ensure accuracy and then will be stored on a secure hard drive. The name of the participant will be removed from the transcript, and the files will be coded according to their position title (ex. FraternityPresident_1, CHCMember_2, etc.). Other identifiers, such as the name of the specific sorority and fraternity chapter, will be replaced with “CHAPTER” throughout the transcript.

It is possible that our study data will need to be reviewed by people at the University of South Dakota and other agencies as required by law or allowed by federal regulations.

How will my information be used after the study?

Per federal law and South Dakota Board of Regents policy, I will keep a copy of de-identified data for seven years on a personal hard drive. Your de-identified data will NOT include your name or other personal information that could directly identify you.

Contact Information for the Study Team and Questions about the Research

The researchers conducting this study are Jesse Sealey and Kelli Susemihl from the Division of Educational Leadership. You may ask any questions you have now. If you later have questions, concerns, or complaints about the research please contact Jesse Sealey at jesse.sealey@usd.edu or Kelli Susemihl at kelli.susemihl@usd.edu.

If you have problems, complaints, or concerns about the research, questions regarding your rights as a research subject, or if you want to talk with someone independent of the research team, you may contact The University of South Dakota Office of Human Subjects Protection at irb@usd.edu or (605) 658-3743.

Your Consent

Before agreeing to be part of the research, please be sure that you understand what the study is about. You should keep a copy of this document for your records. If you have any questions about the study later, you can contact the study team using the information provided above.

I understand that by verbally agreeing to the interviewer, I volunteer to participate in this research. I understand that I am not waiving any legal rights. I have been provided with a copy of this consent form.

APPENDIX C

Interview Questions

All Participants:

1. What is your role in the relationship between the University of South Dakota and its privately-owned sorority and fraternity houses?
2. From your perspective, What role does the live-in institutional/private staff play in your private fraternity or sorority facility?
3. From your perspective, what are ways this reciprocal relationship has benefitted the institution/the private Greek organization?
4. What impact have the initiatives in the reciprocal relationship had on risk management and reduction?
5. What impact have the initiatives in the reciprocal relationship had on student success and development?
6. From your perspective, is there pushback from Greek organizations on institutional oversight of their facilities?

Additional questions for General Counsel:

1. Can you describe liability between an institution and a private Greek organization in terms of a risk management concern or injury?
2. What legal jurisdiction does USD have over its private sorority and fraternity housing?
3. What responsibilities does each entity have to one another?

APPENDIX D

Fraternity Graduate Assistant Contract

SORORITY/FRATERNITY LIFE GRADUATE ASSISTANT AGREEMENT

I _____ agree to live in _____ (Sorority/Fraternity Chapter) by the following standards of conduct and to fulfill the duties outlined below:

1. I will work as a Graduate Assistant for the Office of Student Life from August 9, 2023 through May 4, 2024.

2. Job Responsibilities

· I will work 10 hours each week with my chapter.

I. I will assist the chapter executive officers in educating the members on the USD Student Code of Conduct and risk reduction policies.

II. I will help chapter leadership to respond to emergency and crisis situations as they arise and contact appropriate personnel.

III. I will meet regularly with chapter officers to ensure the programming of scholarship, community service, leadership, risk management, and alcohol and drug awareness.

IV. I will report inappropriate and illegal behavior of chapter members and their guests to chapter leadership and if no resolution is reached I will report incidents to the Office of Sorority/Fraternity Life.

V. I will stay at the chapter house for the following weekends and understand that additional weekends may be added: Recruitment, Dakota Days, Strollers, and some social events.

VI. I will complete my monthly and year-end reports in a timely manner.

VII. I will plan regular programming to benefit the chapter.

- I will work 9 hours each week in the Office of Sorority/Fraternity Life.
 - I. I will have assigned duties within the Office of Sorority/Fraternity Life and Leadership and serve as an organizational consultant to our chapters.
 - II. I will participate in an On-Call rotation for the Sorority/Fraternity Life Community
- I will attend all required meetings.
 - I. I will meet on a weekly basis with the campus Sorority/Fraternity Life advisors.
 - II. I will attend the Sorority/Fraternity Life GA bi-weekly meetings.
 - III. I will attend all training and in-service sessions.

3. Graduate Assistant Professional Conduct

- I will be professional in all my interactions with the chapter members.
 - I. I will provide a mature and trustworthy influence within the chapter house.
 - II. I will not date members from the chapter I am advising, or other for which I hold a supervisory role for and will follow SDBOR Policy 1:23.
 - III. I will not participate in violations of alcohol law (contributing to delinquency of a minor, DUI, etc) and I understand if this occurs that I will be dealt with through disciplinary action.
 - IV. I will follow all university, IFC, and NPC policies, and state and federal laws.
 - V. I will work in conjunction with the USD Sorority/Fraternity Life Advisor and fellow GA's to ensure a safe, effective and productive live-in GA experience.

My signature below indicates that I:

1. Accept the appointment as a Sorority/Fraternity Life Graduate Assistant.
2. Have read and understand the Sorority/Fraternity Life Graduate Assistant job description.
3. Agree to satisfactorily fulfill the responsibilities outlined in the GA job description.
4. Will comply with all departmental and University expectations, policies and regulations.
5. Will maintain good standing with the Graduate School in order to remain a Graduate Assistant.
6. Understand that not adhering to the requirements listed herein may result in termination of my position.
7. Will receive a chapter assignment, a tuition reduction (Not applicable to Law School students), a \$4,067 per semester stipend, and a meal plan through my chapter that includes \$1,000/semester in either coyote cash or check. The chapter may also choose to provide additional meals as necessary.

Signatures:

Graduate Assistant _____ Date: _____

Sorority/Fraternity Life Advisor --- _____ Date: _____

Chapter Advisory Board _____ Date: _____

Chapter President _____ Date: _____

APPENDIX E

Fraternity Resident Assistant Contract

SORORITY/FRATERNITY LIFE RESIDENT ASSISTANT AGREEMENT

I _____ agree to live by the following standards of conduct and to fulfill the duties outlined below:

1. I will work as a Resident Assistant for the Office of Sorority & Fraternity Life from August 9, 2023 through May 4, 2024.

2. Job Responsibilities

· I will work 5 hours each week with my chapter.

I. I will assist the chapter executive officers in educating the members on the USD Student Code of Conduct and risk reduction policies.

II. I will work with chapter leadership to respond to emergency and crisis situations as they arise and contact appropriate personnel.

III. I will meet regularly with chapter officers to ensure the programming of scholarship, community service, leadership, risk management, and alcohol and drug awareness.

IV. I will report inappropriate and illegal behavior of chapter members and their guests to chapter leadership and if no resolution is reached, I will report incidents to the Office of Sorority/Fraternity Life.

V. I will stay at the chapter house for the following weekends and understand that additional weekends may be added: Recruitment, Dakota Days, and Strollers.

VI. I will complete my monthly and year-end reports in a timely manner.

VII. I will plan regular programming to benefit the chapter.

- I will work between 5-10 hours each week in the Office of Sorority/Fraternity Life.
 - I. I will have assigned duties within the Office of Sorority/Fraternity Life
 - II. I will participate in an On-Call rotation for the Sorority/Fraternity Life Community
- I will attend all required meetings.
 - I. I will meet on a weekly basis with the campus Sorority/Fraternity Life advisor.
 - II. I will attend the Sorority/Fraternity Life GA weekly meetings.
 - III. I will attend all training and in-service sessions.

3. Resident Assistant Professional Conduct

- I will be professional in all my interactions with the chapter members.
 - I. I will provide a mature and trustworthy influence within the chapter house.
 - II. I will not date members from the chapter I am advising, or other for which I hold a supervisory role for and will follow SDBOR Policy 1:23.
 - III. I will not participate in violations of alcohol law (contributing to delinquency of a minor, DUI, etc) and I understand if this occurs that I will be dealt with through disciplinary action.
 - IV. I will follow all university and IFC policies, and state and federal laws.
 - V. I will work in conjunction with the USD Sorority/Fraternity Life Advisor and fellow GA's to ensure a safe, effective and productive live-in GA experience.

My signature below indicates that I:

1. Accept the appointment as a Sorority/Fraternity Life Resident Assistant.
2. Have read and understand the Sorority/Fraternity Life Resident Assistant job description.
3. Agree to satisfactorily fulfill the responsibilities outlined in the RA job description.
4. Will comply with all departmental and University expectations, policies and regulations.
5. Will maintain good standing with the college in order to remain a Resident Assistant.
6. Understand that not adhering to the requirements listed herein may result in termination of my position.
7. Will receive a chapter assignment, a \$2,640 per semester stipend, and a meal plan through my chapter that includes \$2,000/year in either coyote cash or check (distribution amount, per semester, up to the chapter). The chapter may also choose to provide additional meals as necessary.

Signatures:

Resident Assistant _____ Date: _____

Sorority/Fraternity Life Advisor --- _____ Date: _____

Chapter President _____ Date: _____

APPENDIX F

Fraternity Graduate Assistant Job Description

Live-In Fraternity Graduate Assistantship

Job Description

Position Description: The Division of Student Services invites applications for a 10-month, 20 hour per week, Live-In Fraternity/Sorority Graduate Assistantship. A Fraternity Graduate Assistant for the University of South Dakota Office of Sorority/Fraternity Life reports to Assistant Director for Sorority and Fraternity Life and works with colleagues and campus stakeholders in the enhancement of co-curricular life at the University of South Dakota. Fraternity Graduate Assistants are responsible for supporting and enhancing the leadership and sorority/fraternity community and other Student Services initiatives.

Responsibilities to The Office of Sorority/Fraternity Life:

- Assist Assistant Director with development and management of programs and initiatives that provide comprehensive learning and leadership opportunities for the Sorority/Fraternity Community.
- Serve as an organizational consultant to our chapters and a liaison between the chapter and the Office of Sorority/Fraternity Life.
- Serve as an organizational advisor to councils/projects and students under the supervision of the Office of Sorority/Fraternity Life.
- Complete monthly and year-end reports in a timely manner.
- Complete other duties and projects as assigned by the Assistant Director for Sorority and Fraternity Life.

Responsibilities to the Fraternity Chapter

- Assist the chapter executive officers in educating the members on the USD Student Code of Conduct and risk reduction policies.
- Work with chapter leadership to respond to emergency and crisis situations as they arise and contact appropriate personnel.
- Work with the chapter house corporation board to ensure the health and safety of the facility.
- Meet regularly with chapter officers to ensure the programming of scholarship, community service, leadership, risk management, and alcohol and drug awareness.

- Report inappropriate and illegal behavior of chapter members and their guests to chapter leadership and if no resolution is reached report incidents to the Office of Sorority/Fraternity Life.
- Stay at the chapter house for the following weekends and understand that additional weekends may be added if necessary: Recruitment, Dakota Days, Socials.

Meetings/Office Hours Responsibilities

- Complete ten (10) hours of programming/networking/work within the chapter weekly
- Complete eight (8) office hours weekly in the Sorority/Fraternity Life Office
- Attend bi-weekly Sorority/Fraternity Life GA staff meetings
- Meet weekly with the Chapter President
- Attend bi-weekly meeting with the campus Sorority/Fraternity Life Advisor
- Attend all trainings and in-service sessions.

Terms of Employment

A. Employment is a condition for receipt of a *room, board, 2/3 tuition reduction* and a *stipend*. Private fraternity/sorority graduate assistant rooms are valued at \$400/month and include cable, internet, and utilities. Meal plans are provided by chapters and may vary by chapter. Stipends are valued at \$4,027/semester. ** Rates are based on the current fiscal year and are subject to change pending annual review. **

B. Term dates are August 2024 to May 2025. Rooms will be available for occupancy for the entirety of this term. Winter break is recognized leave time for this position.

C. No sick leave, annual leave or other University employee benefits are included.

D. Employment may be renewed through an annual reapplication process.

Qualifications and Conditions of Employment

A. Preference will be given to those with interest perusing a career in student affairs and/or counseling.

B. Must be regularly admitted in good academic standing in your degree program and the Graduate School.

C. Must maintain active status and be registered for at least nine (9) graduate credit hours for the fall and spring semester.

D. Must pass a background check

Other Considerations: Must be an experienced and energetic individual with a demonstrated understanding of student development theory and the issues facing students today. Must be an innovative thinker with a vision for providing high-quality services that educate and empower students. Candidates who support these values are encouraged to apply.

Contact Information:

- Kelli Susemihl-Assistant Director for Sorority & Fraternity Life
 - o Kelli.Susemihl@usd.edu