

THE NARRATIVE EXPERIENCES OF BLACK AND BROWN FIRST-GENERATION FRATERNITY MEN IN
HISTORICALLY WHITE FRATERNITIES

by
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Summary

- Part of the higher education structure is the co-curricular experience, which is a way for students to develop a sense of belonging on campus.
- A student's academic experience is only a piece of the overall college student experience. Student interaction, both in and out of class with their peers, faculty members, and administrators, is essential to developing a sense of belonging on campus.
- Because sense of belonging leads to student success, an institution's ability to assist students with developing a sense of belonging directly relates to successful persistence and graduation.

The research questions (and summarized responses) were as follows:

- **RQ1. How do first-generation male college students describe their experiences in fraternities?**
The participants talked candidly about their respective fraternity involvement, showing appreciation for their opportunities as first-generation fraternity men.
- **RQ2. How does fraternity membership influence first-generation male college students' sense of belonging on campus?**
Each participant spoke candidly about moments of belonging and not feeling a sense of belonging.
- **RQ3. How does fraternity membership influence the retention of first-generation male college students?**
Each participant talked about the importance of scholarship as an obligation and commitment to his respective chapter. Each participant also acknowledged the challenge and support the chapter showed pursuant to their grades. Participants discussed factors that have contributed to students' commitment to their achievement, connections, and, ultimately, retention. One of the participants shared that if it were not for one of his minoritized identities as a black man, his chapter would not have had such an eye opening, provoking and educational chapter meeting post the death of George Floyd. He was able to talk about his lived experiences on this earth as someone which identifies a black, queer man raised in the south.