ABSTRACT

HAIGHT, LORI POVEROMO. A Case Study of Undergraduate Women in a Leadership Development Program at a Coeducational Institution. (Under the direction of Audrey Jaeger, Ph.D. and Tuere Bowles, Ph.D.)

The purpose of this interpretive case study was to explore the collegiate experiences of undergraduate women participating in a cohort women’s-only leadership development program at a coeducational institution. Using a framework based on Kurt Lewin’s psycho-social model of behavior being the function of a person interacting with the environment (b=f(pxe)), the following research questions were asked: 1) What are the collegiate experiences of undergraduate women at a coeducational institution? 2) How are undergraduate women in a coeducational institution shaped by their environment? and 3) What are the behavioral outcomes of undergraduate women participating in a leadership program at a coeducational institution? The Baldwin Scholar Program at Duke University was chosen as the case to depict single-sex leadership development within a coeducational institution. Data in the form of in-depth semi-structured interviews, observations, and documents were collected and analyzed using the constant comparative method. Nineteen Baldwin Scholars participated in the study, representing a range of demographics including race, academic areas, and co-curricular interests. The women’s undergraduate experience included self-discovery, academic enrichment, and building community within both the Duke University and the Baldwin Scholars Program environment. The undergraduate experiences of the women in this study were impacted by their Baldwin community and the relationships this community afforded them. This cohort single-sex model created a community that offered a level of support to its participants, and this support in turn offered them the resources to deal with the challenges of their undergraduate experience. In a competitive
coeducational environment, a single-sex leadership development program offers women undergraduates the level of support necessary to meet institutional challenges. The Baldwin Scholars program is an example of a leadership development program created for a specific segment of the population. This study shows how single-sex environments at coeducational institutions can enhance the collegiate experience of women undergraduates. More research is needed to continue to explore how this type of environment impacts women undergraduate students.
DEDICATION

This research study is dedicated to my son Ben and my daughter Ryan, for their steadfast belief in me while I completed my doctoral degree. I hope you see my experience as an inspiration to you in making your dreams come true. I love you.
BIOGRAPHY

Lori Poveromo Haight was born in Pensacola, Florida in 1969 while her father was completing flight school in the United States Marine Corps. Her father’s position led to family moves to Alabama, North Carolina, California, Pennsylvania, Virginia, and Connecticut before she was in middle school, until the family arrived in Maryland in 1980. Lori graduated from Westhampton College, University of Richmond in 1991 with a B.A. in English and a minor in History. During her senior year, Lori interned with the Assistant Dean of Westhampton College and decided to start a career in Student Affairs. After a one-year appointment as a Leadership Consultant for her sorority, Pi Beta Phi, she completed a master’s in Higher Education and Student Affairs from Ohio State University in 1994.

For over a decade, Lori worked as a college administrator in Student Affairs roles, including orientation, student activities, career services, and leadership development at several institutions. In 2005, Lori began her full time doctoral work at North Carolina State University and began as Director of the National Initiative for Leadership and Institutional Effectiveness (NILIE). Lori recently served as President for the North Carolina College Personnel Association (NCCPA) and spent five years as Chair of the Alumnae Advisory Committee for the new chapter of Pi Beta Phi at North Carolina State University. She is currently searching for a student-centered administrative position in the Triangle.

Lori’s research interest in women-only leadership development stems from her personal experience in an all-girls high school and in the women’s college of a coordinate university system. Lori lives in Youngsville, North Carolina with her husband Will, son Ben, and daughter Ryan.
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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES........................................................................................................x
LIST OF FIGURES......................................................................................................xi

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION......................................................................................1
- Statement of the Problem................................................................. 9
- Statement of Purpose.......................................................................... 9
- Research Questions.............................................................................. 10
- Significance of the Study................................................................. 11
- Overview of the Dissertation......................................................... 11

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW...................................................................... 13
- Women and Gender........................................................................... 13
  - Research on Women and Gender.................................................. 15
  - Single-sex Education................................................................. 16
  - Gendered Organizations............................................................ 19
  - “Doing Gender”............................................................................. 20
- Women and Leadership................................................................. 21
  - Exercise of Leadership............................................................... 22
  - Biases Against Women Leaders.................................................. 25
- Women in Higher Education......................................................... 27
  - History of Women in Higher Education...................................... 27
  - Current Trends............................................................................... 29
- Women Undergraduate Student Leaders............................................. 30
  - Student Development Theories................................................... 30
  - Women in the Classroom............................................................ 34
- Collegiate Leadership Development.................................................. 37
  - History of collegiate leadership development............................. 37
  - Postindustrial paradigm shift........................................................ 37
  - Current theories............................................................................... 39
- Lewinian Model of Behavior.............................................................. 40
- Bronfenbrenner’s Human Ecology Model............................................ 42
- Women’s-Only Environments............................................................. 43
- Role of Relationships......................................................................... 45

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY................................................................................. 48
- Design of the Study............................................................................ 48
- Case Study Design............................................................................. 50
- Sample Selection............................................................................... 50
  - Site selection.................................................................................. 51
  - Participant selection....................................................................... 51
- Data Collection................................................................................... 53
  - Interviews......................................................................................... 53
| Documents                                      | 55 |
| Observations                                  | 55 |
| Data Analysis                                 | 57 |
| Trustworthiness                               | 58 |
| Researcher Bias and Assumptions               | 59 |
| Limitations                                   | 59 |

**CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS**

- **Case Description: Baldwin Scholars Program**
  - Historical Underpinnings
  - Founding of the Baldwin Scholars Program
  - The Design and Structure of the Baldwin Scholars Program

- **The Participants**
  - **Overview of the Participants**
  - **Participant Profiles**
    - Adele
    - AJ
    - Alison
    - Ashley
    - Carla
    - Carolyn
    - Crystal
    - Ellie
    - Emma
    - Jane
    - Julia
    - Kasey
    - Kristen
    - Megan
    - Nancy
    - Sarah
    - Short Stuff
    - Stella
    - Zee

- **Findings**
  - **Collegiate Experiences**
    - Journey of Self-Discovery
    - Strong family support
    - Developing self-knowledge
    - Strengthening self-confidence
    - Journey of Academic Enrichment
    - Importance of academics
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Learning for learning’s sake</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creating College Connections</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engaging with faculty</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finding campus involvements</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environmental Influences</td>
<td>102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Duke University: Inside the Duke Bubble</td>
<td>102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peer pressure to perform</td>
<td>104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The expectation of “effortless perfection”</td>
<td>112</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Baldwin Scholars Program: Creating an Alternative</td>
<td>116</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building community in a “safe space”</td>
<td>116</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Becoming a Baldwin: “taking up space” on campus</td>
<td>123</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behavioral Outcomes</td>
<td>127</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environmental Impact: Redefining Leadership</td>
<td>128</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Committing campus resources</td>
<td>128</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developing a gendered perspective</td>
<td>130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Student Impact: What it Means to Be a Baldwin</td>
<td>133</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motivator to other Baldwins</td>
<td>133</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change agent on campus</td>
<td>134</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leader at the institution</td>
<td>136</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION........................................................................141
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sub-section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lewinian Model of Behavior</td>
<td>141</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Person</td>
<td>142</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Discovery</td>
<td>148</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic Enrichment</td>
<td>151</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creating Connections</td>
<td>155</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environment</td>
<td>159</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bronfenbrenner’s Human Ecology Model</td>
<td>159</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inside the Duke Bubble</td>
<td>164</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baldwin Scholars Environment</td>
<td>168</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behaviors</td>
<td>176</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environmental Impact</td>
<td>177</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students Impacting the Environment</td>
<td>179</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter Summary</td>
<td>181</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS........................................183
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sub-section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Implications for Theory</td>
<td>191</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implications for Practice</td>
<td>194</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implications for Research</td>
<td>195</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

REFERENCES......................................................................................198

APPENDICES....................................................................................211

APPENDIX A – Email Letter to Baldwin Scholars Program..................212
LIST OF TABLES

Table 4.1: Participants Demographics......................................................... 69
Table 4.2: Participants Involvements..............................................................71
Table 4.3: Data Display Summary of Findings............................................. 82
LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 5.1: Bronfenbrenner’s four systems……………………………………….…….162
Figure 5.2: Bronfenbrenner’s four systems for this study………………………………164
When Marie Wilson spearheaded The White House Project in 1998, her goal was to advance women’s leadership across all communities and sectors, including the U.S. presidency, by “filling the leadership pipeline with a richly diverse, critical mass of women” (http://www.thewhitehouseproject.org/). In 2003, Deborah Rhode continued this pipeline analogy. She maintained that the problem was not necessarily a lack of qualified women in the pipeline, but that “the pipeline leaks” (Rhode, 2003, p. 7), and at the current rate of change, it would take hundreds of years for women to achieve equal representation in American business, law, and government sectors (Kellerman, 2001; Rhode, 2003; Thomas & Wilcox, 2005).

Rhode’s analysis was based on current statistics of women in leadership positions. Women hold about half of the managerial and professional positions in the United States but only represent 12% of corporate officers and 1% of the Fortune 500 CEOs. Although 30% of American lawyers are women, they represent only 5% of managing partners at major law firms. Women represent more than half of American voters but hold less than a quarter of the total number of positions in the senior executive branch and the state legislatures (Rhode, 2003).

This is not a uniquely American problem: only 9 out of 191 nations in the world have ever elected a woman as head of state (Norris and Inglehart, 2005), and the six developed nations worldwide do not have gender parity. Yet there are several reasons for developed nations to achieve parity. From a purely economical standpoint, the underrepresentation of
women in top leadership positions represents an ineffective use of the pool of potential leaders in a capitalist society. Companies, judicial systems, and government structures are not using their resources fully when they systematically underrepresent women. Countries in which women add their voices to politics and fill government roles tend to show higher levels of economic development and more egalitarian attitudes toward women (Inglehart and Norris, 2003; Thomas & Wilcox, 2005).

More significantly, gender parity coincides with our American principles of equality and fairness. During the last century, Americans have strived to provide equal opportunity for citizens regardless of race and gender. As a democratic society, we have an obligation to provide an equal opportunity for all citizens to become decision makers and leaders. American women continue to be underrepresented in positions of authority partly because covert sexism continues to exist in our country, even as overt sexism has ceased to be tolerated (Acker, 2006; Chlinwiak, 1997; Fausto-Sterling, 1997; Heilman, 2001; Valian, 1998).

Gender schemas, or subconscious hypotheses about sex differences (Valian, 1998), affect our expectations and evaluations of men and women. Studies have shown that both men and women treat women candidates differently than men (Rhode, 2003; Thomas & Wilcox, 2005), and that very small differences in how men and women are treated over time can accumulate into gender “advantages” or inequalities in the workforce (Valian, 1998, p. 3). Research has also shown that women may then internalize these unconscious negative biases (Rhode, 2003). As one study puts it, “Where traditional values prevail, women are not
just limited by society in terms of the opportunities they seek; they also choose to limit themselves” (Norris & Inglehart, 2005, p. 251).

A major opportunity that women have to combat these subtle stigmas is to participate in higher education. At the undergraduate level, the experience of college itself changes students (Astin, 1993; Kuh, 1992), particularly in their self-acknowledgement as leaders (Sax, 2008). In addition, colleges and universities often provide intentional experiences for leadership development (Komives, 1998; Tidball, et al., 1999). Higher education also strives to reduce negative stereotypes by illuminating, through research, our commonalities as well as our differences, and by creating diverse educational communities where students have daily encounters with others who are different from themselves.

The American higher education system began in 1636 when Harvard opened its doors to white young boys to train them to be functioning members of society. Since then, colleges and universities have evolved to include both men and women of all ethnicities and socioeconomic classes (Cohen, 1998; Rudolph, 1962). Women have been involved in higher education since they were first admitted as students to Oberlin College in 1833 (Holmes, 1939) and now constitute the majority of undergraduates on college campuses (http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2006/). Current women undergraduates are more likely than their male peers to have educational aspirations and attain degrees, and women will be awarded 59.2% of all college degrees by 2011 (http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2001/).

Researchers have tried to determine which opportunities are most likely to help students succeed in college (Astin, 1993; Kuh, 1992; Pascarella & Terenzeni, 1991), and
involvement in leadership development activities consistently ranks at the top of their list. Practitioners and researchers in higher education note the importance of preparing students to be effective leaders—both on campus and in future society (Cherrey & Isgar, 1998; King, 1997; Komives, 1998). Patricia King saw that “helping students develop the integrity and strength of character that prepare them for leadership may be one of the most challenging—and important—goals of higher education” (1997, p. 87).

Colleges have consistently offered leadership development opportunities to undergraduate students as part of a general aim to further their personal development (Astin & Leland, 1991; Astin, 1993). Current literature on leadership acknowledges that there has been a postindustrial paradigm shift (Dugan, 2006; Kezar & Moriarty, 2000) in which society recognizes that not only personal traits and environment, but also the development of personal relationships, contribute to leadership development. The power arrangement between those leading and those following has become less hierarchical (Komives, Lucas & McMahon, 1998; Outcalt, Faris & McMahon, 2001), and this style of leadership allows for more interaction between those who make decisions and their constituents (Rhode, 2003). The majority of leadership development programs in colleges strive to be “gender-neutral” (Komives, 1998) so that both male and female undergraduates may participate.

However, higher education itself is a gendered institution that does not fully use the talent and expertise of women administrators and faculty (Ropers-Huilman, 1998). Chliwniak (1997) reported that in college and university administration, only 16 % of presidents, 13 % of senior business officers, and 25 % of senior academic officers are women. The American
Association of University Professors reports that there are still significantly fewer female full professors than male, and most of them are concentrated in the humanities and social sciences. Currently, women make up only 27 percent of tenured faculty at four-year colleges and universities (http://www.aauw.org). This underrepresentation of women among administrators and faculty in turn affects how women undergraduates experience college.

Over twenty years ago, Evans (1985) edited a New Directions for Student Services monograph that explored gender differences in student development programming. Several studies (Chodorow, 1978; Gilligan, 1982; Komarovsky, 1985) released at the same time documented women’s development and how it differed from men’s development. Evans noted that leadership roles were a source of experiential learning for students, and that a system needed to be in place for developing women leaders (Evans, 1985). Sagaria (1988) added that women needed not only more leadership-development opportunities but also a supportive environment to encourage their participation.

Almost a decade later, Astin (1993) reported that female students continued to be underrepresented in positions of leadership on coeducational campuses (Astin, 1993). Although women may be well-suited for our increasingly democratic approach to leadership (Eagly & Johnson, 1990; Helgesen, 1990), they are not expressing aspirations for leadership often enough (Boatwright, Egidio, et al., 2003).

Even so, since the mid-1990s (Komives, 1994), there has been little higher education research to update the status of undergraduate women student leaders. Hart (2005) believed that this resulted from the lack of research on women and feminism in higher education.
scholarship in the late 1990s and early 2000s. In 2006, researchers began promoting a new journal sponsored by the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA) that would focus exclusively on women and gender issues in higher education (S.M. Marshall personal communication, March, 2006). This would be the first of its kind since the 1999 closing of the National Association for Women in Education (NAWE) and its journal, *Initiatives*. The inaugural issue of the new NASPA journal was published in March, 2008.

This renewed emphasis on gender issues in higher education has provided a springboard for scholars to study the conditional effects of the undergraduate experience for women (Sax, 2008). Most of this research (Astin, 1993; Kuh, 2005; Sax, 2008) has concentrated on both men and women at coeducational institutions and explores intentional programming, especially leadership development programming, as a way for college educators to create a supportive collegiate environment (Kinzie, et al., 2007).

Researchers have also explored the success of women undergraduates at all-women colleges (Smith, 1995; Wolf-Wendel, 2000; Whitt, 1994). Scholars have attempted to find out why women succeed more often in these all-women environments. They have found that the supportive environment typical of women’s colleges contributes significantly to the women’s success (Smith, 1995; Wolf-Wendel, 2000). Women’s colleges tend to have long histories of creating supportive campus environments that promote positive self-conceptions for women students; as alumnae, these women tend to consider themselves leaders in their communities (Kinzie, et al., 2007; Tidball, et al., 1999).
Research on all-women colleges shows that their female students have a unique opportunity to fully engage in the educational process (Langdon, 2001; Smith, 1994; Women’s College Coalition, 2007), including full access to campus leadership positions (Wolfe-Wendel, 2000). Whitt (1994) looked at student leaders in all-women colleges and found that they attributed their overall success in their student leadership positions to the supportive campus environment. Overall, women’s colleges are seen as “models of what institutions dedicated to women” can do for the success of female undergraduate student leaders (Tidball, 1999, p. 50).

These researchers acknowledge that women’s colleges may attract undergraduates predisposed to be more self-confident, motivated, and willing to lead (Strong, 2001; Whitt, 1994). Therefore, more recent studies have focused on comparing undergraduate women leaders from different institution types (Brown, 2002; Lynch, 2003). In studies that included both all-women and coeducational institutions, women at coeducational institutions were less positive in describing their leadership experiences on campus. Lynch’s 2003 study in particular found that most participants felt that their leadership was not enhanced by their collegiate experiences.

These studies support additional research on how different types of institutions shape students differently (Smith, 1995; Sax, 2008) and how women at different institutions feel differently about their leadership development experiences. When Romano (1996) looked at women leaders on coeducational campuses, she saw that “women student leaders struggled with not being taken seriously, worked harder than men to gain respect, were intimidated by
male competitiveness, and feared the loss of approval if they asserted themselves” (p. 676). If women perceive their coeducational campus environment to be less supportive of their needs, their learning and personal development is adversely affected (Drew & Work, 1998; Pascarella et al., 1997).

How the collegiate environment shapes students’ experiences is an important variable considered by research on women’s colleges specifically and women’s education in general (Tidball, et al., 1999). One long-term consequence of women not feeling supported by their institutional environment is that they may stop aspiring to campus leadership positions (Boatwright, Egidio, et al., 2003). A successful undergraduate experience includes multiple leadership opportunities, and when women do not seek these leadership opportunities “they are short-changing themselves from a full holistic undergraduate experience” (Guido-DiBrito & Batchelor, 1988).

Women now constitute the majority of all college undergraduates, and over 96% of women students attend coeducational institutions (http://www.aauw.org/). Leadership development opportunities are widely recognized as a way to develop future leaders and contribute to students’ overall success. Currently, college educators are creating “gender-neutral” leadership development programs (Kezar & Moriarty, 2000; Komives, 1998), but these may not be fully benefiting undergraduate women. All types of leadership development can benefit women (Outcalt, et al., 2001), and they can benefit even those women who are not in positional roles or who feel left out of decision-making roles because of their gender (Rhode, 2003). By creating more women-only leadership development programs on
coeducational campuses, college educators may help women students have a better undergraduate experience. There is very little research on women-only leadership development programs at coeducational institutions; especially scarce are studies using qualitative research focusing on the experiences of the participants in their natural setting.

Statement of the Problem

The gender disparity among leaders has not decreased significantly in the last thirty years (Rhode, 2003) and in fact has started to “plateau” (Thomas and Wilcox, 2005). The need for higher education institutions to develop leaders, especially women leaders, is greater than ever (Astin, 1993; Kezar & Moriarty, 2000). We have seen data on women’s-only leadership programs for administrators, but there is little research on women’s-only leadership development programs for undergraduates on coeducational campuses. With what we know about self-conception and environment shaping women’s leadership experiences (Sax, 2008), the lack of research on how gender-specific leadership development programs, specifically at coeducational institutions, shape undergraduate women’s collegiate experiences is surprising.

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this interpretive case study is to explore the collegiate leadership experiences of women participating in a cohort women’s-only leadership development program at a coeducational institution. Using Lewin’s (1951) field theory model of how people interact with their environment, I will examine how women’s collegiate experiences were shaped by their environment.
Lewin’s (1936, 1951) model of how students’ behavior is a function of the interaction between themselves and their environment serves as a theoretical framework for this study. At the person level, this research will explore the women participants’ self-discovery and academic enrichment, including those factors that are self-identified as facilitating and hindering their student success (Komives, 1998). At the environment level, this research will explore how women students are shaped by their campus and leadership development program environment. Earlier research (Romano, 1996; Sagaria, 1988; Whitt, 1994) shows how a student’s perception of her environment supports or hinders her development and plays an important role in whether or not she continues to seek formal leadership opportunities. As Tidball (1999) noticed, “individuals, institution and environment are thoroughly interwoven in a fabric of recognized strength and value” (Tidball, 1999, p. xx) and so the nested environments of the university and the leadership development program will need to be explored.

Lewin’s model identifies that the interaction between the person and the environment leads to behaviors. In this study, the behavior I am exploring is leadership development. Therefore, the research questions that will guide this study are as follows:

1. What are the collegiate experiences of undergraduate women at a coeducational institution?

2. How are undergraduate women in a coeducational institution shaped by their environment?

3. What are the behavioral outcomes of undergraduate women participating in a
leadership program at a coeducational institution?

Significance of the Study

Research (Astin, 1993; Tidball, 1991; Whitt, 1994) on all-women academic settings has shown that environment does affect women’s campus leadership aspirations. This study expands the literature to show that environment matters to women in a coeducational setting, and that the same environment can affect different students differently (Sax, 2008).

This research also integrates a person-environment paradigm with relational cultural theory (Jordan, 1991). In examining the interaction between the personal characteristics of women undergraduates and their relationships in the environment, I found in this study that the environment shapes students, and students in turn shape their environment.

These findings contribute to the limited literature on women undergraduate student leaders by focusing on the environment of a single-sex leadership development program at a coeducational institution. An examination of women-only leadership development models on coeducational campuses is important to determining whether the gender-equity gap in student leadership positions is closing. For college administrators who design and implement leadership development programs, it is important to intentionally create supportive communities for women undergraduates where they can build meaningful connections with their peers, faculty, and college administrators.

Overview of the Dissertation

As the number of women students in higher education increases, their participation in
undergraduate leadership development experiences may also increase. There is a need to explore how these experiences shape their undergraduate years, what interest they have in participating in formal and informal leadership positions, and what factors, including the college environment, lead to that interest.

This dissertation is organized into six chapters. Chapter 2 presents a review of the literature of women and leadership, undergraduate women, and leadership development. Chapter 3 outlines the methodology, including the process of data collection and analysis. In Chapter 4, the findings are organized around the case study of the Baldwin Scholars Program at Duke University. Chapter 5 discusses the data as they relate to the current literature. In Chapter 6, I summarize the findings and state implications for theory, practice, and future research.
CHAPTER 2

The purpose of this interpretive case study was to explore the collegiate experiences of women participating in a women’s-only leadership development program at a coeducational institution. By using Lewin’s (1951) field theory model of how people interact with their environment, I studied how women’s self-conception and environment shape their collegiate experiences. In this section, I examine the literature on the intersection of women and leadership, the history of women in higher education, and the growth of collegiate leadership development to explore the situation of women undergraduate student leaders on coeducational campuses.

As a social constructivist, I believe that meaning is socially constructed (Merriam, 1998); as individuals interact with their world, they make meaning. I believe that both gender and leadership are examples of social constructs that help organize our thoughts. In the concept of women and leadership, then, two social constructs intersect. Complicating this is the fact that there is still no consensus in the literature about how to define women leaders. In addition, this section will explore existing research on how women leaders are influenced by their environment.

Women and Gender

Gender is a social construct based on the ideology that in our patriarchal society men and women have different roles and have learned the appropriate prescribed behaviors attached to these roles (Jamieson, 1995; Norris and Inglehart, 2005; Valian, 1998). Men and women adhere to these prescribed behaviors in their everyday interactions because of societal
expectations of how they should act in different environments. A woman who finds herself in a male-dominated settings faces a “double bind” (Jamieson, 1995) of being expected to both thrive and fail in that environment. If she does well, others may perceive all other women as being able to succeed also and thus decide that societal norms do not need adjustment. If she does poorly, her individual characteristics will be scrutinized before societal norms are evaluated. Either way, she loses.

Gender roles normalize the secondary status of women in our westernized, capitalist society. Researchers note that our “gender structure, unlike the economic or political structure, seems so ‘natural’, and is so accepted that we seldom even see it” (Risman, 1998, p.3). Beryl Lieff Benderly (1987) spoke to the myth of there being, physiologically, “two minds,” one for men, and one for women, and how the research did not support the myth: “We have no convincing evidence that sex differences in these traits arise from physiology. Until the biological determinists can account for them as elegantly, rigorously, and persuasively as the cultural argument does—we’re fools to discard half our pool of talent” (Benderly, 1987, p. 284).

Valian (1998) talks about gender schemas, which are slightly different from gender stereotypes. Schemas are unconscious hypotheses about how sex differences play a central role in shaping men’s and women’s professional lives. Valian states that using the word “stereotypes” to describe these conceptions is misleading because “stereotype” has a negative connotation: Schemas, on the other hand, describe positive, negative, and neutral characteristics. The goal is not to eliminate gender schemas but rather to recognize them in
terms of the cumulative advantage they offer to men, and the cumulative disadvantage they offer to women.

*Research on Women and Gender*

While the impetus thirty years ago was to deny any fundamental differences between men and women, and thus eliminate stereotypes about the appropriate roles for each gender, current research has recognized some cognitive and social differences between the sexes.

Leonard Sax’s (2007) work points out that there are indeed very real differences between the female and male brain, specifically in the areas devoted to hearing, seeing, and geometry. He also disagrees with the notion that environment plays a strong role in these differences by using research that looked at how babies and toddlers choose their toys. In the study, baby girls look at a human face more often than boys on the day they are born, while boys prefer a moving mobile. In addition, toddler girls prefer to play with trucks more often than toddler boys choose to play with dolls. But Sax’s analysis of the invalidity of providing a gender-neutral childhood ignores the possibility that society denotes what activities are acceptable for one sex (sports, playing with vehicles) and what activities are not (playing “house”). While there are proven biological differences between men and women, there are also values associated with those characteristics, including the value of “male” leadership. Girls may show a greater tendency to choose gender-neutral toys or to give the opposite of their expected gender-related response because society accepts those choices, while it does not encourage boys to play with toys typically associated with little girls.

Sax does admit that early genetic research made assumptions that presumed
conditions favoring males were “neutral” (Sax, 2005); for instance, when researchers found that male brains are larger than female brains, they concluded that females were therefore not as intelligent as men, before they checked to see whether brain function differed between the sexes. It was not until years later that the research confirmed that brain size does not necessarily correspond to intellectual capacity. Continuing to think about the gender order as “natural” allows for men and women to be seen as inherently different, with a hierarchy that places men above women. During the last decade, sociologists have begun critically examining these societal perceptions (Acker, 2006, Fausto-Sterling, 1997) and provide additional analysis.

Until recently, many of the socio-biological arguments about the physical differences between men and women were perpetuated without sharp analysis (Fausto-Sterling, 1997). Researchers have now critically deconstructed genetic research by questioning the masculinity paradigm used to create a forced dichotomy between male/female, right/wrong, strong/weak, etc. This view of a forced dichotomy favoring men is reinforced in the literature (Kellerman, 2001; Klenke, 1996; Rhodes, 2003; Valian, 1998) and shows that while some gender differences are real, a great many more are not real but perceived to be so.

Single-sex Education

The forced dichotomy seen in early gender studies is still fueling research on the nature of single-sex versus coeducational education. Sax, in his current role as the executive director of the National Association for Single Sex Public Education (NASSPE), oversees an annual conference on the research comparing single-sex and coed education in elementary
settings. How boys and girls learn shapes the praxis of how educators teach boys and girls. If single-sex education produces more effective learning, creating this single-sex environment should be an important goal for educators.

Riordan (1990) continues this argument by comparing short- and long-term outcomes of graduates from single-sex Catholic schools and graduates from coeducational Catholic schools in the United States. In this research, girls from single-sex environments consistently outperformed girls at coeducational schools. In June 2005, Cambridge University issued results from their four-year study of gender differences in education. The data from this report showed that the single-sex classroom format for elementary students was effective in boosting boys’ performance in English and foreign language and girls’ performance in math and science. Several public school systems in the United States are now attempting to separate genders in elementary school to create more conducive learning environments.

This research on single-sex education at the elementary school level has contributed to an “either/ or” scenario that turns gender differences into a zero-sum game; what one group setting has, the other clearly cannot offer. When researchers evaluate educational settings, they have a natural propensity to create a hierarchy of value, with one type of educational setting seen as “better.” A more productive exercise for researchers would be to understand what aspects of that setting helped students to learn, and how those aspects could be replicated in other settings.

Some feminists feel the acknowledgement of difference contributes to the gender schema about the role of women in society. They are opposed to single-sex education and
programming because of the perceived reinforcement of women and men as different and therefore unequal. But research has shown that women who are able to develop in single-sex settings make real progress. The strongest research is among women’s-college scholars (Whitt, 1994; Strong, 2001; Lynch, 2003) who have compared the collegiate experiences of women in different environments. Women undergraduates who attended women’s colleges have a more positive outlook about their collegiate experience and their future career goals than women who attended coeducational institutions (Tidball, et al., 1999).

Women’s colleges do something similar to those elementary school settings separated by gender: they create an environment where women students can focus on their personal development without being bombarded by the societal impact of gender schemas. Tidball’s research in the early 1970s on the success of women’s college graduates spurred a debate that continues today on the advantages for women attending a women’s college. Tidball found consistent patterns showing that a high proportion of accomplished women have undertaken their collegiate education at women’s colleges. When questioned about their successes, many alumnae of women’s colleges credited their supportive collegiate environment (Tidball, et al., 1999).

Critics protested Tidball’s findings as describing only those who attended elite women’s colleges and depending too much on preexisting characteristics that include socioeconomic status, academic achievement, and personal motivation. Tidball revised her method and returned to women’s colleges, including non-elite ones, and found similar findings in her later research (Tidball, et al., 1999).
Gendered Organizations

Acker (1999) describes how organizations can also replicate gender schemas. Historically, social institutions, including institutions of higher education, were created by men and for men and most still have men in the majority of leadership positions. This creates symbolic language that perpetuates the institutions’ gendered-ness as ideal. This can be seen in the American higher education system, which was originally created for young, elite white males in the 1600s (Rudolph, 1962). According to Acker (1990):

To say that an organization, or any other analytic unit, is gendered means that advantage and disadvantage, exploitation and control, action and emotion, meaning and identity, are patterned through and in terms of a distinction between males and females, masculine and feminine. (p. 167)

In addition to the absence of women in early-American higher education, the institutions themselves were formed according to a very traditional hierarchical model.

Birnbaum (1988) reports how the organizational structure of higher education administrations favors a traditional, hierarchical model for reporting, budgeting, and communication. The faculty of colleges and universities have a very independent model of governance and a special communication style, with the academic departments and faculty senate operating parallel (and sometimes at cross purposes) to the general administration. Neither the administrative nor the faculty model has seen women in proportionate numbers in the academy. Currently, women make up only 27 percent of tenured faculty at colleges and universities that grant four-year degrees (http://www.aauw.org/).
In addition to the low numbers of women in faculty and administrative roles, a study by Smith, Morrison, and Wolf (1994) showed that, in coeducational institutions across the country, the undergraduate college experience is gendered in terms of the self-reported ratings, views, and goals of men and women. This research showed that men and women answered questions about their experiences differently based on their gender. These different interpretations may be based on perceptions, but even perceived gender differences are worth exploring.

The gendered institutions of higher education play a role in how students interpret their experiences. The decisions students make about what organizations to become involved with are influenced by how well they fit within that group. The “groups we join each take on a unique character or personality” (Komives, 1998, p. 165) and ideally match the values of the individual. Students naturally “select themselves into and out of settings” (Schneider, 1987, p. 439) that fit their current interests and needs. In addition, the idea that men and women are “doing gender,” or actively living out their socially-perceived gender roles and in the process reinforcing gender schemas while in college, can also play a role in how students respond to their college environment.

“Doing Gender”

While sex relates to the physical characteristics of an individual, gender is something “constructed through psychological, cultural, and social means” (West & Zimmerman, 1987, p. 125). West and Zimmerman’s “doing gender” argument (1987) describes the perpetuation of the gender order and shows how this fundamental division of our society gets legitimized.
Sociologists of gender have defined “doing gender” (West & Zimmerman, 1987) as the process of incorporating the “contextual variations and overlaps in the behavior and attitudes [that] refer to the ways people act based on their position within the gender structure and their interaction, rather than as a result of hormonal input or brain organization” (Kenney, Merz, & Lorber, 2000, p. 599). This reproducing of the practices and beliefs that allow the gender order to continue is acted out both by individuals and by social institutions acting along gendered patterns.

These attitudes shape students long before they begin their college experience. Sociologist Barrie Thorne (1993) coined the term “girl stain” when studying children at play. Girls, regardless of social rank, can contaminate any boy. A boy will be “stained” and moved to the bottom of social status. Girls, on the other hand, may gain status by choosing boys’ games, clothes, or toys. Psychologist Helen Haste (1994) later strengthened this observation. She stated that the “hierarchical model defines the masculine pole as the epitome of the human and the feminine pole as antithesis or deficit: girl things must be marked – girl stain or ‘pollution’ are to be avoided [while] boys things are unmarked. [M]ankind includes women but womankind is too polluting to include men” (as quoted in Belenky, et al., 1999, p. 22).

Women and Leadership

The exploration of leadership and its link to gender has a long history throughout the twentieth century to the present (Jamieson, 1995). There are hundreds of articles trying to connect these two socially constructed phenomena.
Those who first studied leadership concentrated on the characteristics and behaviors of individual leaders (Komives, 1998). With Burns’s (1978) work, the paradigm shifted to focus on the process of leadership instead of the players. One result of the new studies was that the shared power model came to be seen as beneficial to organizations. Today, most scholars define leadership as a relational process in which people work together (Komives, 1998) and all individuals have the ability to become a leader. The relational and connected nature of leadership is an important component of this study’s concept of women and leadership.

*Exercise of Leadership*

Most research on leadership is divided into two threads of understanding: the exercise of leadership, and the subtle biases confronting women in leadership positions (Rhode, 2003). The exercise of leadership includes the examination of gender similarities and differences in leadership style, effectiveness, and priorities (Rhode, 2003).

The concept of leadership in general and women’s leadership in particular has been the subject of research for close to a century (Klenke, 1996). The first models of leadership were based on male characteristics (Klenke, 1996). While initially the impetus of research and analytic thought was to point out how women could be more like men in their leadership development, the 1970s saw the pendulum swing to show that women did indeed have their own styles of effective leadership. Researchers (Helgesen, 1990; Rosner, 1990) responded in the early 1990s with findings to support women’s ways of leadership as fundamentally better than men’s. But again researchers set up an “either/or” dichotomy between male and female
leaders. This forced dichotomy between the leadership styles of men and women sets up a zero-sum game that implies that if one side is effective, the other is not.

In reality, the leadership styles of both men and women are necessary for our country to be successful (Klenke, 1996). Additional research showed that there were no absolutes when it comes to leadership by gender; some women have “masculine” leadership styles and some men have “feminine” leadership styles. It became more important in the area of leadership development to categorize what was effective leadership rather than which gender was inherently better at it.

Corporate organizational research in the 1990s (Eagly & Johnson, 1990; Rosner, 1990) has compared and contrasted the leadership styles of men and women. As more women have assumed leadership roles in the business world, two prototypes of women leaders have emerged. The first type sought to be absorbed into the mainstream and found a way to do this through emulating male leaders in terms of dress, style, and relationship building. This replication of the male model of public leadership was only somewhat effective because it forced women to “act male” in order to be recognized, as opposed to bringing out their true leadership characteristics. Women of the second type recognized the importance of being true to their own skill sets and behaviors and adapted their leadership styles to reflect themselves more accurately as women.

Eagly and Johnson (1990) compared the leadership behaviors and styles of men and women in the workplace. Their meta-analysis of 162 studies found that women leaders were slightly more interpersonally-oriented than male leaders and more likely to use a democratic
style. This became their strongest sex difference in defining leadership style. Eagly and
Johnson summarized that women’s known social skills probably facilitated a managerial
style that was more democratic and participatory in nature. Continued studies (Eagly & Carli,
2003) showed that the difference between men and women leaders was indeed quite small.
Men and women could be equally effective at leading groups of people in work and
community settings.

Rosner’s (1990) research found two main differences in how men and women
described their leadership styles. Women described themselves as “transformational” (getting
subordinates to transform their own self-interest into the interest of the group through
concern for a broader goal) while the men self-identified as “transactional.” In addition,
women reported that they attributed their power in an organization to their personal
characteristics (such as charisma, interpersonal skills, and hard work) instead of the
organizational structure. Rosner (1990) concluded that “female leadership can be
characterized by attempts to encourage participation, share power, energize, enhance self-
worth of others”—all of which can be seen as characteristics of transformational leadership.
Recent research has started to move away from looking at specific skills or characteristics of
men and women as leaders, and instead look at the impact of how men and women are
viewed as leaders within their organizations. Effective leadership requires balancing
seemingly contradictory capabilities—“decisiveness and reflectiveness, broad vision and
attention to detail, bold moves and incremental adjustment, and a performance as well as a
people orientation” (Klenke, 1996, p. 152).
Rosner (1990) found that even though women in her study now had authority and control over resources, they still saw their limited leadership as an asset rather than a liability. Their style of leadership was seen as interactive. Research also shows that women have adopted a more democratic style of leadership (Klenke, 1996). Because women tend to have a different communication style than men and tend to be more interpersonally-oriented than task-oriented, they still encounter bias against their suitability as leaders (Eagly, et al., 2003). A more democratic style of leadership, with a nonhierarchical emphasis, would allow women to be viewed as both socio-emotional and task-oriented leaders (Eagly, et al., 2003) and help them to escape the double bind of being both female and leaders.

**Biases Against Women Leaders**

Carli and Eagly (2003) captured the cultural bias that our society has on women as leaders. The way society perceives women leaders becomes the women’s internal perception of themselves as leaders. Other researchers (Kellerman, 2003) showed how men and women perceived the same abilities differently when looking at resumés with gender-neutral names. Not only were the same abilities evaluated differently based on gender, but both men and women evaluated the resumés for women as indicating less competence than those for men. With empirical evidence that there is a natural bias in the workplace (Rhode, 2003), organizations have voiced their intent to move to a more neutral evaluation of the leadership abilities of their employees instead of trying to link leadership attributes to gender.

Eagly, et al. noted that “[r]esearch provides ample demonstration of bias against women as leaders, despite the failure of some reviewers to recognize important moderators of
these effects” (Eagly, et al., 2003, p. 822). There are several ways subtle biases can affect women’s perception of leadership. One of the largest is the perception that there is no longer a problem of gender disparity in leadership positions (Duerst-Lahti, 2005; Kellerman, 2003; Thomas & Wilcox, 2005). In addition, gender schemas and stereotypes about women in the leadership roles persist, as do the tendency of gendered institutions to erect subtle barriers to women’s participation in leadership opportunities.

Research has shown a “negative preconception” (Northouse, 2004, p. 270) of women as leaders by both their evaluators and their subordinates. Men are more likely to emerge as leaders because their interactions fit the stereotypes of what it means to be a “leader.” In studies where participants are shown a video of men and women in identical roles as managers, the participants view the men as more natural in their leadership roles (Eagly, et al., 2003). This is also true when male supervisors are evaluating the same position: the women they evaluated were consistently ranked lower than men.

A woman’s identity as a woman carries more weight in the workplace than her previous experience and skill set. Thomas and Wilcox (2005) relayed the systemic reasons for women paying a higher price for success: “Those structures and behaviors that conform to the gendered expectations [the male norm] of the institution are rewarded” (Thomas and Wilcox, 2005, p. 22). Both the 2000 and 2002 state legislative election cycles produced fewer women officials than previous years, and the 2002 congressional elections resulted in no increase from the 107th Congress. Some researchers proposed that the cost of being a woman leader was too great. Thomas and Wilcox (2005) reported the “disproportionate cost of
success required of women candidates is likely to have a deep and enduring effect on women’s desire to serve in elective office” (p. 23). While some, such as Wilson of The White House Project, believe that a critical mass of women is necessary to “fill the pipeline” with leaders, others (Boatwright, Egidio, et al., 2003) caution against simply adding more women to an environment that may be detrimental to their overall leadership development.

Women in Higher Education

History of Women in Higher Education

Women were not allowed to enter institutions of higher education as students until the 1800s, and even then they had limited access to both the number and the type of institutions that accepted them (Solomon, 1985). It was not until the late 1800s that the “Seven Sisters” (Mount Holyoke, Vassar, Wellesley, Smith, Radcliffe, Bryn Mawr, and Barnard) were founded because a strong-willed benefactor believed in women’s-only education. At the turn of the 19th century, educating women became linked to educating the future mothers of America’s next generation of leaders (Palmieri, 1997). The implication was that women should be educated enough to teach until they were married and then impart their democratic ideals to their children. Private secondary schools for women, or seminaries, were the forerunner of women’s colleges.

Women’s colleges have been a part of the American higher education system since the late 1800s. The Age of Enlightenment ushered in the formation of women’s colleges in the United States, as male and female benefactors saw a need for providing advanced learning to women. Early women students were eager and excited to continue their lifelong
learning, and women’s colleges mushroomed through the beginning of the 20th century (Horowitz, 1993; Solomon, 1985). Many of these first women students became the first generation of women faculty and chose to pursue career interests instead of a family life. Forty years later, there was another surge of women deciding to attend college; these women were interested in studying a wide variety of subjects, and generally were not willing to replace family life with a career.

Women’s colleges were created to offer women an option at a time when they were not allowed into most American colleges and universities. With the creation of land-grant institutions, more options became available to women, but they were still strictly prohibited from attending many of the nation’s elite institutions. This swell of women in higher education started to make male college presidents and administrators nervous, and quotas were instituted to restrict the numbers of women entering higher education institutions (Palmieri, 1997). The quotas were relaxed by the middle of the 20th century (Solomon, 1985) and women were able to attend more coeducational institutions. Tidball, et al.’s (1999) research indicates, however, that there are distinct benefits for women learning in a women’s-only environment.

In the 1960s, many traditionally all-male institutions changed their policies to include women students, and women then had an even wider array of options for their undergraduate experience. With access to more institutions, women had more choices for where to attend college (Solomon, 1985). Women’s colleges were no longer the only option for female undergraduates, and to recruit perspective students, these institutions made a concentrated
effort to research the benefits of a single-sex environment.

**Current Trends**

Women graduates from land-grant institutions became many of the first female faculty, and the numbers of women attending college steadily increased through the 20th century. (Solomon, 1985). Many colleges and universities have made a concerted effort to increase the number of women faculty in higher education (Tierney & Rhoades, 1993), but there are still significantly fewer women in full professorships and significantly more in non-tenure track positions than men (AAUP, 2006). In the United States in 2007, the faculty of medical schools were 20% male full professors but only 4% female full professors (http://www.ama-assn.org/ama/pub/about-ama). While at one point in time this might have been explained as a result of there being fewer women coming through the pipeline to become faculty, that explanation fails now that there are more female students than male students in institutions of higher education (http://www.aauw.org/).

Administrators at women’s colleges have also progressed in type and style throughout their development. Initially, the practice of having a male president and a “Lady Principal” (as, for example, at Vassar and Smith) allowed the college to be managed by a man while preserving a female’s touch in the upper administration to maintain the students’ “femininity” (Solomon, 1985). Alice Palmer at the University of Chicago became the first dean of women in 1892, and many of her colleagues began the precursor work that would later become student affairs (Schwarz, 1997).

As more institutions began to offer women admission, coeducational institutions
became a more popular choice than women’s-only colleges for women students. Since the
1940s, enrollment trends have shown that women prefer a coeducational learning
environment (Solomon, 1985) for their undergraduate experience. Women undergraduates
now constitute the majority of students in American higher education institutions. In 2006,
57% of those in colleges and universities were women (http://www.aauw.org/). Most of the
women enrolled in degree-granting institutions are in coeducational settings. While
historically women’s colleges played a significant role in producing the majority of women
graduates, this is no longer the case. In 2006, less than 10% of women graduates overall
graduated from women’s colleges (http://nces.edu).

Women Undergraduate Student Leaders

Student Development Theories

As the faculty of early-American institutions of higher education became more
involved in research, professional staff members were hired to watch over the male
undergraduate students. These staff members by the 1930s had decided that educating the
“whole person” should be the foundation of their work as student personnel (Arnold & King,
1997). By the 1960s, these higher education professionals wanted to develop theories that
would help them understand how different factors in the college environment facilitate or
inhibit growth (Knefelkamp et al., 1978). Their research led to student development theories.
“Student development theories provide maps or guides by which to understand the ways
individuals and groups experience higher education and the factors that interact with their
satisfaction, achievement, and persistence” (Arnold & King, 1997, p. viii).
The first generation of college student development theories were psychological stage theories. One of the first psychosocial theories was Chickering’s Seven Vectors. These seven stages of development began with developing competence—intellectual, physical, manual, and interpersonal skills. After developing competence, young adults needed to learn how to manage their emotions, then move through autonomy toward interdependence and the development of mature interpersonal relations. These stages helped to establish the student’s identity, and from there he or she could develop purpose and integrity. Within twenty years of using this developmental theory in college environments, evidence came forward that developmental changes relate strongly to individual experience (Flavel, 1970), and so there needed to be a variation of the model to account for different genders, races, and classes. This allowed future student development theories to include a sociological as well as psychological dimension.

Carol Gilligan’s *In a Different Voice* (1982) continued this theme of recognizing the difference between genders in human development and reported women’s psychosocial development as different from that of men. Kohlberg (1975) had consistently characterized women as “deviant” from the norm, and Gilligan was one of the first researchers to challenge this assumption, which was based on the masculine paradigm.

The process of determining whether women develop differently from men began when Gilligan (1982) first noticed that adolescent girls have an urge to be part of a caring community. Gilligan’s insights influenced the work of Belenky et al. (1992) and their *Women’s Ways of Knowing*. In this work, the authors offered empirical data to support their
breakthrough insight that “women don’t just learn in classrooms; they learn in relationships, by juggling life demands, by dealing with crisis in families and communities” (Belenky, et al., 1992, p. x). Women’s learning beyond the college classroom was seen as different from men’s. This would later influence college educators charged with the development of the whole person (Kuh, 1992); thus, gender started to become a factor in creating and implementing the work of student affairs practitioners.

However, Gilligan’s work was also criticized by two large groups of researchers. First were the critics who believed she was overemphasizing societal forces (Sax, 2005; Riordan, 1990) and ignoring some basic biological differences between the sexes. Then, ardent feminists took issue with Gilligan’s assertion that women need special attention to their voice; they saw potential backlash from traditionalists who might hold up Gilligan’s work as reinforcing stereotypical beliefs that women are inferior to men. Theorists who are diametrically opposed on the issue of gender found common ground in not agreeing with Gilligan’s seminal work.

Women students bring to college a wide range of preexisting characteristics that influence their collegiate experience (Astin, 1993). Sax’s (2008) latest quantitative research on women undergraduates highlights general student characteristics for women in higher education (Sax, 2008). Her findings include data from two Cooperative Institutional Research Program (CIRP) databases. One database includes students who participated in the Freshmen Survey between 1996 and 2006 from over one thousand baccalaureate institutions across the country. The second data set includes students who entered college in 1994 and
took the College Student Survey (CSS) in 1998.

Sax’s (2008) research shows that women attending college today represent many ethnicities and socio-economic groups (Sax, 2008). Men and women already differ when they arrive at college (Sax, 2008). In most conditional indicators, the gap between men and women widen while they are in college. In several ways, Sax’s (2008) look at this gender gap in college points out how the college environment and range of experiences differently affect college men and women. Her research shows that women gain more from being able to physically leave home and join the campus community; benefits of this for women include an increase in their academic confidence, greater emotional well-being, and a greater gain in leadership skills. Although women use technology to stay in more frequent contact with their parents than men do, research is still needed to explore this interaction in terms of the personal, academic, and social gain for women students. For first-year female students, living off campus can also negatively impact their self-perceived leadership abilities (Sax, 2008).

Men and women are both encouraged through college mission statements to participate in leadership opportunities on campus. Sax’s (2008) analysis focused on three areas that together compose a leadership personality: leadership ability, public-speaking ability, and social self-confidence. She found that men enter college with greater confidence in their leadership skills, and this increases during their undergraduate experience. Both genders were influenced by the amount of opportunities the college setting provides for leadership development. Those who participated in co-curricular activities showed a stronger profile of the leader personality (Sax, 2008). Both genders showed a decrease in leadership
confidence from participation in isolationist activities such as watching television.

Women gained leadership confidence in direct proportion to the distance they were from their families. This may present a challenge to women who are close to their families and want to stay near home while in college. The choice of major also related to women’s leadership confidence: women business majors gained more than expected, and women biological science majors lost more (Sax, 2008).

The concept of “mattering” was also introduced into the student development literature to explain how some students wanted to feel connected to others at their institution. Rosenberg and McCollough (1981) define mattering as “the feeling that others depend upon us, are interested in us, are concerned with our fate, or experience us as an ego-extension” (p. 165). Marshall (2001) found that although mattering was seen as important in general, females believed they mattered more to their friends and to their parents than did males.

Rodgers (1990) focused on how to integrate student development theories with the person-environment theories of human ecology when evaluating programs and services on campus. He warned college administrators away from focusing narrowly on either student development or person-environment theories. Theories describing both the student development and the campus environment are necessary for successful programming.

Women in the Classroom

Hall and Sandler’s (1982) seminal work reported how the classroom environment was seen as less supportive of women. This paved the way for research over the next twenty years that focused on classroom conditions (Crawford & MacLeod, 1990; Drew & Work, 1998) so
as to replicate the findings and find ways to improve classroom conditions for women undergraduates. In Hall and Sandler’s research, data showed how female students participated less often, and less assertively, than male students in college classrooms, and that some of this was influenced by their teachers’ behaviors. In a later study, Crawford & MacLeod (1990) noted fewer reports of a chilly climate for females in the classroom. This could have resulted from intentional measures to lessen the chilly academic climate, or it could have been that women undergraduates no longer perceived this inequity in the classroom.

Later studies could not confirm Hall and Sandler’s findings. Yeager, Terenzini, Pascarella, and Nova (1995) found that women students who perceived a chilly campus climate had education-related aspirations that were significantly higher (statistically) than those of their counterparts who did not perceive such a climate; the researchers concluded that “even if a chilly climate does exist, it may have only a small, trivial impact on women’s cognitive development in college” (p. 123). Drew and Work (1998) offered that the classroom climate was no longer chilly at all, and indeed more women than men reported interacting with faculty and participating in class; women also reported making the same or greater gains as men in personal and intellectual development.

In 2005, Sax, Bryant and Harper looked at men and women undergraduates separately and confirmed the benefits of a strong student-faculty connection. Most students report a positive interaction with faculty members in college. Female students did note, however, that they interacted informally with faculty after class less often than men did, and that they had
fewer interactions with faculty on research projects than men did.

The late 1990s also initiated a “boy turn” (Weaver-Hightower, 2003) in research that examined how schools were shortchanging boys. Christina Hoff Sommers’ work *The War Against Boys* (2000) focused on how boys are being systematically disadvantaged in schools and have scored lower than girls when measured for literacy, school engagement, and college enrollment. Sommers continued that more boys become troubled students who get suspended and/or expelled, drop out, or get diagnosed with attention deficit disorder.

The American Association of University Women (http://www.aauw.org/) recently released a report called *Where the Girls Are: The Facts About Gender Equity in Education* (May, 2008) that countered this notion that boys are being discriminated against in the classroom. Their research supports the claim that both boys and girls do better in single-sex environments, and the claim that income level and the constructs of race and ethnicity tend to be better indicators of significant achievement gaps for students (http://www.aauw.org/research/WhereGirlsAre.cfm). In a November, 2008 seminar hosted by Pennsylvania State University, AAUW researchers again emphasized that gender equity is not a zero-sum game; better conditions for girls very often mean better conditions for boys as well. This debate about learning preferences in the classroom is only half of the issue, however; male and female college students also develop outside of the classroom (Evans, Forney, & Guido-DiBrito, 1999).
Collegiate Leadership Development

History of collegiate leadership development.

Clement and Rickard (1992), Rhatigan (2000), and others mark the introduction of The Student Personnel Point of View (American Council on Education, 1937) as a pivotal event in the development of the field of student affairs. Lloyd-Jones and Smith (1954) elaborated this viewpoint by proposing four philosophical beliefs for “those who profess themselves as student personnel workers” (p. 5). The essence of their work highlighted a belief in the worth of the individual; a belief in the equal dignity of thinking and feeling and working; a belief that the world has a place for everybody; and the belief that what an individual gathers from his experiences continues on in time (Lloyd-Jones & Smith, 1954).

Research on the college student leader includes multiple subtopics ranging from demographic differences and their impact on student leaders (e.g. Adams & Keim, 2000; Kezar & Moriarty, 2000; Komives, 1994; Komives, Lucas, & McMahon, 1998; Romano, 1996, Whitt, 1994); to aspirations for leadership (Boatwright, Egidio, & Associates, 2003); and key student leader characteristics (Lynch, 2003). The Leadership Practices Inventory developed by Kouzes and Posner (1987) was adapted by Posner and Brodsky in 1992 to use with college students. This inventory first assessed the effectiveness of fraternity and sorority presidents and found that the gender of Greek leaders did not affect their practices as effective leaders (Posner, 2004).

Postindustrial paradigm shift.

The principles involved in postindustrial leadership support a values-centered
approach to leadership (Kouzes & Posner, 2003). Burns (1978) is credited with turning the tide on the study of leadership to include not only how the environment shapes individuals but also the relationship between the two. Transformational leadership (Burns, 1978) gives attention to the relationship between leaders and followers. This attention leads to relational leadership (Eagly, 2007), which has been connected to feminist leadership practices (Rosener, 1995; Fredericks, 2009). The process of leading became an important consideration, and student development literature now emphasizes that the “journey through the leadership process” (Komives, 1998, p. 4) makes a difference in one’s collegiate experience.

This journey is influenced by how intentional the collegiate environment is in creating leadership opportunities. Zimmerman-Oster and Burkhardt (1999) have identified four specific hallmarks of effective leadership development programs (forging educational partnerships, creating inclusive learning communities, systematically evaluating student performance and systematically evaluating institutional performance). According to Komives’s (1998) definition of leadership, “Leadership…can be understood by how it is seen, heard, thought, and felt. Leadership is, therefore, a socially constructed phenomenon, and it is very real” (p. 16). The relational leadership model (Komives, Lucas, & McMahon, 1998) includes elements of inclusiveness, empowerment, ethics, purposefulness, and process orientation, and it defines leadership as a “relational process of people together attempting to accomplish change or make a difference to benefit the common good” (p. 21).

Komives (1998) discusses how the development of community is integral to the
leadership development of students. She references Peck’s (1987) four stages of community development. Moving from a pseudo-community, through chaos, then emptiness, and finally authentic community, Peck’s community-building stages show a range of interaction between the participants of the community and the community itself. The college campus itself can be seen as its own community (Komives, 1998).

Current Theories.

The Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education’s (CAS) Standards and Guidelines for Student Leadership Programs states its mission as follows:

Student leadership development should be an integral part of the institution’s educational mission…The student leadership program should include a commitment to student involvement in the institution’s governance activities. Student leadership programs should seek an institution-wide commitment that transcends the boundaries of the units specifically charged with program delivery (https://www.cas.edu/index.html).

Each institution of higher education adapts leadership development programming in different ways to its student population.

Komives (1998) and colleagues used Astin’s Social Change Model of leadership development to create in 2006 a multi-institutional study of colleges that used Social Change Model for their leadership development programming and a second study began in 2009. Many institutions today use the Social Change Model as the basis for their leadership programming on campus. Komives et al. (2005) further researched the processes that a
student experiences in creating his or her leadership identity. The development of a leadership identity includes the four properties of adult influences, peer influences, meaningful involvement, and reflective learning (Komives et al., 2005).

Even as more research emerges on gender differences in learning, student leadership programs in higher education are still being developed using a “gender-neutral” framework. Some researchers (Adams & Keim, 2000) have recommended that men and women student leaders might benefit from different leadership training. This parallels what researchers on women’s colleges have reported. If same-gender leadership development can improve the results within both groups, there will be less of a stigma connected to this separation of gender.

Lewinian Model of Behavior

Kurt Lewin’s work established a field theory centered on his belief that neither personal characteristics nor situational constraints completely determine behavior; instead, behavior is an interaction between the two (Kristof, 1996; McKenzie, 1992). As a founding father in the field of social psychology, Lewin (1947) saw the importance of social influences on determining how an individual viewed himself and his reality.

The Gestalt psychologists in the early 1920s had already begun to view perceptual responses as distributions of energy in which similar field principles were operating. Lewin broadened this concept. His field theory included all psychological activity in which the person is confronted with psychological motion toward goals within a defined region that he termed “life space.” The visual representation of his model of behavior is $B=f(pxe)$, where $B$
represents behavior, f represents ‘a function of,’ p represents person, e represents the environment, and x represents how the person interacts with his environment.

Lewin argued that much of psychology was stuck in an Aristotelian frame where distinct categories are arrived at by their essence. He advocated for scientists to move to a Galilean perspective, which would require them to abandon distinct categories of “instinct,” “type,” and “average” and instead focus on understanding complex, dynamic forces acting upon an individual (Sheehy, 2004). He conceptualized the idea of “field” as a phenomenon created through the action of opposing forces. The totality of psychological factors acting at any particular moment would lead to determining a person’s behavior. The field or life space encompassed two factors: a person’s goals, and his perceived paths to achieve those goals. Lewin was primarily concerned with men’s daily lives and how they interacted with one another. He was one of the few psychologists who could transpose a life problem into a controllable experimental form (Marrow, 1969). The Research Center for Group Dynamics, which he founded at MIT, later moved to the University of Michigan (Marrow, 1969).

Most attributed his theory of behavior to the idea of person-environment congruence and the interactionist theory of behavior (Pervin, 1968). This behavior’s ideal entails a “fit” between the characteristics of the individual and the characteristics of the environment, and the basis of a “good fit” is the “mutually offsetting pattern of relevant characteristics between the person and the environment” (Muchinsky & Monahan, 1987, p. 272). His perspective of the person-environment “fit” was used by Holland in the career development research on college administration.
Lewin’s work was cut short by his early death in 1947 from a heart attack, but many social scientists continued his work (Pervin, 1968; Muchinsky & Monahan, 1987). Many of the concepts attributed to his work have become synonymous with modern-day science: some examples include “group dynamics,” “action research,” “field theory,” and “sensitivity training” (Marrow, 1969).

**Bronfenbrenner’s Human Ecology Model**

Urie Bronfenbrenner used a human ecology model to expand Lewin’s person-environment interaction model of behavior. In Bronfenbrenner’s definition of human development, personal development is situated in a sociological context, and this allows two things to happen.

The first modification is to substitute the concept of development for the original concept of behavior. Lewin’s model dealt with the immediacy of the everyday, but the element of time was not factored into his equation. By adding the concept of time, Bronfenbrenner can address the development of individuals over time.

Development from Bronfenbrenner’s human ecology model can be defined as a systematic study of the processes through which the person and the environment mutually interact. These interactions then change both the individual and the environment, and it can seen as continuously impacting each element in an endless loop (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

The second change Bronfenbrenner makes to the Lewinian model of behavior is to create a series of nested environments, as opposed to Lewin’s “life space” or oval that represents all internal and external influences. There is a system of nested, interdependent,
dynamic structures ranging from proximal (face-to-face) to broader social contexts. The four systems of interaction are a) the microsystem, b) the exosystem, c) the macrosystem, and d) the chronosystem (see Figure 5.1). Bronfenbrenner incorporated both biological and psychological attributes of the person into his human ecology model; he also recognized the complex factors that contribute to the way people act in specific environments.

Rodgers’s (1990) research builds on this theory by illuminating how three areas, including how “[t]he student, the environment, and their interaction are involved in these differential outcomes, not just the student or the environment” (p. 31). Based on their varied backgrounds and developmental stages, students can experience the same environment differently. In addition, changes in the environment may lead to changes in development for different students (Rodgers, 1990).

Rodgers offered a more complex Lewinian equation to factor in the developmental level of the person and the environment, using the criteria for the developmental areas being considered. For instance, Chickering & Reiser’s vectors would be the student development theory that characterizes the developmental level of the individual (psychosocial theory) and the environment. Rodgers (1990) envisioned Lewin’s person-environment model to be integrated with developmental theories into the paradigm. This analysis guided me in exploring the degree of congruence or incongruence (Rodgers, 1990) in the interaction between the students and their nested environments.

Women’s-Only Environments

There is a reciprocal relationship between college students and their institutions. The
institution affects students (Pascarella & Terenzini, 1998), and to a lesser degree, students impact the institution. These conditional effects may be dissimilar for different study groups, and they have been difficult to separate out from the preexisting characteristics of individual students. There has not been a definitive study to assess how, and to what degree, college affects students (Pascarella & Terenzini, 1998).

Although the majority of women undergraduates do not attend women’s colleges, research on women’s colleges can still provide insight into women’s experience in college. The research of Tidball, Smith, Tidball, and Wolf-Wendel (1999) documented the way women’s colleges provide a qualitatively superior learning environment for their students. Additional research shows how women at women’s colleges show more evidence for noncognitive outcome gains such as leadership development (Astin, 1993; Astin & Leland, 1991; Whitt, 1994). Subsequent studies (Wolf-Wendell, Baker, & Morphew, 2000) controlling for socioeconomic backgrounds and institutional selectivity, confirmed the findings that women’s colleges contribute disproportionately to the success of women students both during college and afterward. When compared to coeducational colleges, women’s colleges both encourage students to interact with people of different economic, racial, and social backgrounds and provide more opportunities for them to do so (Kinzie, et al., 2007).

Tidball’s research was originally criticized because the number of participants from women’s colleges seemed disproportionate, and those women’s colleges were selected from higher education’s elite institutions, without accommodating for preexisting characteristics
such as socioeconomic status and academic achievement. When this research was updated in 1999 with three other researchers, the participants were equally distributed between coeducational and women’s colleges, and the results remained the same (Tidball, et al., 1999). Tidball called the advantage “the wholeness of the environment: the whole package, including the mission, the role models, and the merits of a women’s community” (p. xx).

Whitt (1994) and Wolf-Wendel (2000) have tried to explain what makes women’s colleges a model for supporting women students and also to duplicate this modeling in coeducational institutions. More research is needed for women—especially at coeducational institutions where most women undergraduates persist—to improve their overall experience through the known benefits of a women’s-only collegiate environment.

Role of Relationships

The relationship between women and others has been seen in both student development theories (Belenky, et al., 1986; Gilligan, 1982) and current higher education research (Sax, 2008). In addition, this study also examined the relational perspective rooted in the field of psychology known as the Relational Cultural Theory (RCT). RCT was developed through a collection of writings from Jordan, Kaplan, Miller, Stiver, and Surrey (1991), who created the self-in-relation model for defining relationships. Characteristics of the self-in-relation model include empathy, mutuality, empowerment, self-esteem, and influence. These characteristics collect into themes of the relational self, connectedness, interdependence, moral development, responsibility, and caretaking. Both women and men develop their sense of self in relationships.
The concept of RCT helps describe what Miller (1991) refers to as the two ways to refer to the self. The first way is through the historical man-made self-construct which emphasizes differentiation. The second is based on the concept of RCT and includes a connected self that grows in relation to another. At its core, this notion of connection, or self-in-relation, recognizes the collective experience of women as relational beings.

The central theme of RCT is that the “self is organized and developed in the context of important relationships” (Surrey, 1991, p. 52) as opposed to separation. The mutuality of these relationships can personally transform both parties as they affect and are affected by each other. This connectedness leads to increased self-esteem through shared understanding and regard (Jordan, 1991). The development of empathy increases the flexibility of boundaries between others and allows one person to be aware of another’s verbal and nonverbal affective cues (Jordan, 1991). A sense of empowerment is felt from the power of connection and relation (Surrey, 1991), and this connection is seen as the core of human growth and development.

Jordan interpreted the existing structures of psychology, which were characterized by a separate-self model of development, as destructive to women and to the fabric of community for all people. Through her and her colleagues’ development of RCT, Jordan strove to create new models of human development which might transform some of the current distorting impact of competition, hyper-individualism, and sexism (Jordan, 1991).

Women undergraduates are now the majority on college campuses (Pearson, et al., 1989). As college educators continue to be charged with creating intentional leadership
development opportunities for women, they should consider women-only programs. The research from women’s colleges indicates that the environment plays a substantial role in how women perceive both their own leadership potential and their decision to participate. This becomes even more important on coeducational campuses, where societal biases toward women as leaders may persist.

The conceptual framework for this research is rooted in the two socially constructed concepts of gender and leadership. After reviewing empirical differences and societal biases between men and women in terms of leadership, I was interested in how single-sex learning environments could be helpful in developing women undergraduate leaders. With most collegiate leadership development programming being ‘gender-neutral’, I wanted to consider the impact of single-sex leadership development programming for women in a coeducational environment. The methodology for my interpretive case study research will be detailed in the following chapter.
CHAPTER 3

This study explored the experiences of undergraduate women participating in a women’s-only leadership development program in a coeducational setting. While college educators in higher education institutions are charged with creating these intentional leadership development opportunities, there is little research in the higher education literature detailing how this type of experience shapes women undergraduates, or how their behavior may be impacted by this environment. Using a conceptual framework based on Kurt Lewin’s psychosocial model of behavior as the function of a person interacting with the environment \( b=f(pxe) \), I explored the following research questions:

1. What are the collegiate experiences of undergraduate women at a coeducational institution?
2. How are undergraduate women in a coeducational institution shaped by their environment?
3. What are the behavioral outcomes of undergraduate women participating in a leadership program at a coeducational institution?

This chapter addresses research design, including my sample selection, my data collection and analysis, my efforts to produce a trustworthy study, and the personal biases and assumptions I brought to the study.

Design of the Study

My decision to research this topic qualitatively stemmed from my understanding that meaning is socially constructed (Merriam, 1998); as individuals interact with their world,
they make meaning. Since this study explores the experiences of undergraduate women, it is appropriate to use qualitative research methods that search for the meanings they give to, and their understanding of, a particular phenomenon (Merriam, 1998)—specifically, their leadership development experiences. Qualitative research has a long and rich tradition (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992) in the fields of anthropology, sociology, and psychology, and it recently has been used in educational research (Patton, 2002).

Qualitative research is naturalistic, descriptive, and grounded in the experience of the participants (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992). It is concerned with the process of a particular phenomenon. Qualitative researchers focus on understanding the situation without imposing preexisting expectations on the research setting. By researching an individual’s ability to give meaning to and respond to situations, researchers take into account the participant’s actions and interactions (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). In this way, the researcher’s understandings emerge from the analysis of the cases under study. By studying these women qualitatively, I was able to focus on the setting and context of the research (Creswell, 1998) and how this shapes what meaning is being made by the women in this study. This allowed the participants to tell me their stories in a natural setting (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). Patton (2002) details how to find out what something means to the participants, including how it affects them, how they think about it, and what they do about it: “you need to ask them questions, find out their experiences, and hear their stories” (p. 13). In this way, my research explored both the process and the outcomes of women undergraduate student leaders.
Case Study Design

The strategy I used for this study is an interpretive case study methodology. Merriam (2002) defines interpretive qualitative research as a design that investigates the meaning of something for those involved. The goal of interpretive design is to interpret the meanings people make of a subject in their particular context. Yin (1989) defines case study as an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon in a real-life context in which multiple sources of data are used. Interpretive design uses interviews, document analysis, and observations for data collection.

Case study methodology is an in-depth exploration of a bounded system based on extensive data collection (Creswell, 1998). The term bounded means that there are clear boundaries to the research in terms of time, place, or physical boundaries. In my study of women undergraduate student leaders, the case is bounded first by undergraduate women in a leadership program, and then by the coeducational institution. By studying the women involved in one leadership development program, this study provided insight on how undergraduate women experience their leadership opportunities.

Sample Selection

After deciding that individual women undergraduates were the units of analysis for this study, I chose a purposeful sampling strategy for the research (Patton, 2002). Purposeful sampling allowed me to select a specific institution with a specific leadership development program to understand the experiences of those participating in a women’s-only leadership development program in a coeducational setting.
Site selection

The site for this study was purposefully chosen to allow me to learn something about a single-sex leadership development program in a coeducational institution of higher education. In the fall of 2004, Duke University welcomed its first cohort of students into the Baldwin Scholars Program. This four-year program consists of structured seminars for first- and senior-year students, a residential living-in component for sophomores, and a required internship usually completed during the junior year. In addition, the program strongly encourages the women to attend weekly Saturday afternoon discussion groups, as well as campus lectures and events scheduled periodically throughout the year.

Duke University, created in 1924, is located in Durham, North Carolina. There are approximately 6,400 undergraduate students on campus, and annual tuition, room/board, and fees averages over $50,000. Since 1972, when the Woman’s College merged with Duke University, the campus has operated as a coeducational institution.

Participant selection

In establishing the criteria for the participants in this study, I focused on theoretical sampling (Strauss & Corbin, 1998) to find participants who experienced the phenomenon under study—namely, those who were part of the Baldwin Scholars Program at Duke University. In addition, I wanted to achieve maximum variation (Patton, 2002) among the respondents to collect the widest range of data for analysis.

Criterion samples (Miles & Huberman, 1994) were identified and distributed via email to the Assistant Director of the Baldwin Scholars Program. All of the participants
needed to be students at Duke University and members of the Baldwin Scholars Program to fit the general criteria of this study. In addition, there were specific criteria to meet.

The first specific criterion was the absence of first-year students from the potential participant pool. Because the recruiting process happens during the fall of the students’ first year on campus, first-year students had been in the leadership development program less than one semester. They would not yet have completed their first cohort academic seminar or lived together as sophomores. For these reasons, I chose not to include first-year students as participants in this study.

The second criterion was that the student demonstrate interest in completing the participant questionnaire and sending it back to me electronically. From the completed questionnaire, I could determine the student’s year in school, academic and co-curricular interests and leadership experience in college (see Appendix C). These completed questionnaires allowed me to track the interested participants and allow for a wide deviation of majors, interests, and experiences.

The original intent of this study was to interview five sophomores, five juniors, and five seniors. As the Baldwin Scholars started to express interest, I decided to interview women until I met my quota for each class year. With this strategy, I was able to interview eight seniors and six juniors by the time the fifth sophomore had arranged her interview session. While my original intention was to interview students from three different years in college to analyze Baldwin Scholars in each class, I did not find any major differences between the sophomores, juniors, and seniors in this study.
Participants were chosen for this study because they were 1) not first-year students, 2) had expressed interest in being part of this study, 3) completed the participant questionnaire, and 4) found time in their schedules to arrange an interview. There was not any consideration for choosing women with specific race or ethnicity characteristics because of the wide range of diversity among the participants.

Data Collection

The focus of my study was on collegiate leadership experiences of women undergraduates in the Baldwin Scholar Program at Duke University. Case study methodology requires multiple forms of data collection. Through interviews, document analysis, and observations (Patton, 2002; Yin, 1989), I collected data that allowed me to develop a deeper understanding of the women who participate in a women’s-only leadership development program on a coeducational campus. In addition to these forms of data collection, I also had my research journal and field notes to refer to when compiling my data.

Interviews

I conducted semi-structured interviews (see Appendix E) based on Gubrium and Holsten’s (2000) concept of allowing people the opportunity to describe their experiences using their own words: “This asset is particularly important for the study of women because this way of learning from women is an antidote to centuries of ignoring women’s ideas altogether or having men speak for women” (Reinharz 1992, as quoted in Gubrium and Holsten, 2000, p. 222). Lynch saw in her study that “listening to what women say about themselves and their experiences is the first step toward understanding women’s leadership
development” (Lynch, 2003, p.24). I wanted to hear female voices describe their development (Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger, and Tarule, 1997) as voice can be a metaphor for intellectual and ethical growth.

I also purposefully structured my interview questions to be open-ended (Patton, 2002) to make sure that I captured the women undergraduates’ point of view, what they consider important, and their perceptions of their leadership development experience. These interviews allowed me as the researcher to interact with the participants as they created meaning from their experiences. It also allowed me to hold meaningful conversations with the undergraduate women about their collegiate experiences.

Heilbrun’s (1988) idea of creating a space where women who have been silenced or written about for so long feel comfortable sharing their experiences was important to this study. First, it was necessary to convey my interest in hearing their stories in order to gather the richest data about their leadership development. Before I could analyze these experiences, I had to create a place where women felt comfortable sharing them. It was also important for this study to focus on the stories of the undergraduate women and what they were willing to share about their collegiate experiences. Women sometimes see their experiences as common to everyone and “[t]hus interpreting women’s words and stories requires a delicate and reflexive balancing act” (Gubrium and Holsten, 2000, p. 234).

All of the interviews took place in the Baldwin Scholars Program office suite in the Old East building on East Campus at Duke University between February and May, 2009. The women were all familiar with this location, and they chose this site when given several
alternatives. The interviews were scheduled over email, so the first meeting between the researcher and the participant happened at the beginning of the interview. The average length of the 19 interviews was 50 minutes, with the range being 35 minutes to 75 minutes long. The participants chose pseudonyms to protect their identities at the beginning of their interview session.

I recorded each interview by electronic device with the permission of the participant. This strategy allowed me to transcribe fully the interview conversation after the session. In addition to the verbal responses, I also noted any non-verbal characteristics of the participants, including their body language during the interview session.

**Documents**

Document analysis is also an important component to data collection in an interpretive case study. For this study, I collected a variety of documents on Duke University (2003 Women’s Initiative Study report, campus newspapers, graduation bulletins), the Baldwin Scholars Program (annual report, statistical data, mission statement) and the Baldwin Scholars themselves (resumés, participant questionnaires) to provide specific details that would corroborate information from other sources (Yin, 1989). Using a document analysis guide (see Appendix F) to review, I analyzed these documents to verify information reported during the interview sessions and to offer “clues worthy of further investigation” (Yin, 1989, p.87).

**Observations**

I also observed the Baldwin Scholars as a collective, formally and informally, during
data collection. I observed one campus speaker event hosted by the Baldwin Scholars Program, and the program’s 2009 commencement ceremony. The campus event was hosted in a university auditorium, and Baldwin Scholars were acting as ushers for the general campus and community attendants. Several of the women I had privately interviewed acknowledged me that evening as I took my seat in the auditorium. The group appeared cohesive and connected to each other and to the rest of the Duke community.

The second formal observation was attending the special Baldwin Scholars commencement ceremony for the Class of 2009. This ceremony was thoughtfully designed to give friends and family of senior Baldwin Scholars an overview of their undergraduate accomplishments, as well as provide closure for the seniors’ Duke undergraduate experience. After a brief overview of the senior cohort by the Co-Director of the Program, the women were called to the stage individually. Each Baldwin Scholar received flowers and a gift, and the audience listened as one of the three campus administrators for the program summarized the accomplishments of their undergraduate experience and their goals for the future. The event ended with a slide show of scenes from the seniors’ four years at Duke. The slide show included a narrative voice-over by members of the senior class, who reflected on others in their cohort and shared their positive attributes.

Both of these events ended with a reception. The campus speaker event reception was closed to only Baldwin Scholars, and I did not attend. The commencement event held its reception in the Baldwin Scholars seminar room, and I was invited and did attend. In addition to these formal observations, I also informally observed the daily exchanges of Baldwin
Scholars with each other and between themselves and the campus administrators for the program. These observations provided data on components of the leadership development program, gave insight into how the women interact as a group, and provided thick, rich description (Geertz, 1963) of how the women undergraduates’ leadership program shapes the participants’ environment.

Data Analysis

A constant comparative method was used to analyze the data. The constant comparative method was developed by Glaser and Straus (1967) as a way of creating grounded theory and has been modified by qualitative researchers reporting descriptive studies. The method consists of a constant comparison of interview responses with others (Merriman, 1998). These categories are then compared again to each other and other groups that exist in the data. Charmaz (2000) identifies five ways data can be compared using this analysis: comparing different people; comparing data from the same individuals with themselves at different points in time; comparing incidents; comparing data with a category; and comparing a category with other categories (p. 515).

Strauss and Corbin’s (1998) method of open coding requires careful analysis of the data by separating the data into in vivo codes and then grouping these data into categories. Strauss & Corbin (1998) define open coding as “the analytic process through which concepts are identified and their properties and dimensions are discovered in data” (p. 101). While there are several ways to begin open coding analysis, for this study I went line-by-line through the transcribed interviews. The interview transcripts were read and organized into
categories based on similarities. After transcribing all of the data, a coding scheme was developed in order to track the categories.

After open coding, I then grouped categories into “higher order categories” (Jones, Torres, & Arminio, 2006) to create key categories. During this process, the data were reviewed for interrelationships among the categories (Corbin & Strauss, 1990). As categories were revealed, a range of properties along a continuum emerged that depicted specific characteristics (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). The analysis of the 19 participant interviews generated categories and properties that corresponded to the three research questions for this study.

Trustworthiness

In a constructivist interpretive paradigm, trustworthiness and authenticity (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000) are an important aspect to the research study. Trustworthiness suggests that both the inquiry and the results are reliable. This reliability can be measured by a triangulation of data sources and researcher analysis to ensure validity.

The triangulated data sources informing this study were interviews, document analysis, and observations. In addition, the analysis of the researcher was also triangulated by offering members the opportunity to check their interview responses and having the transcripts peer-reviewed by a colleague (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992).

These measures of reliability ensure both internal and external validity. In terms of internal validity, the research findings match the reality of the experience and are credible (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). In terms of external validity, the findings of this study could be
applied to another situation, are transferable (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000), and are presented through thick, rich description (Merriman, 1998). Credibility can be looked at in four different ways (Marshall & Rossman, 2006): prolonged engagement, triangulation, peer debriefing, and member checks. This study employed all four of these techniques. The credibility of both the process and the findings refers to the accuracy of the researcher’s interpretation of the participants’ perspectives and the rigor of the study.

Researcher Bias and Assumptions

Qualitative researchers must reveal their biases (Arminio & Hultgren, 2002). My interest in exploring women undergraduates’ leadership development patterns stems from my own experience as an undergraduate student leader, and I have a personal bias in favor of the benefits of women’s-only programming for young adult women. I also assume that college administrators strive to improve quality intentional programming for all of their students.

Qualitative study is based upon the researcher’s ability to become an interpretive inquirer (Merriam, 1998) of the phenomenon being investigated. During this study, I became immersed in the lives of my participants, and I needed to maintain a balance between the insider and outsider perspective (Merriam, 1998). I was an outsider in relation to the participants because I was not directly connected to Duke or the Baldwin Scholars Program. However, my background as a higher education administrator and my connections to Duke administrators made me also feel like an insider at times.

Limitations

All research methods have limitations (Marshall & Rossman, 1999). This study had
the usual limitations of qualitative research, which include the risk of making broad
generalizations from the findings of an interpretive study and becoming too invested in the
lives of the participants. This research also focused exclusively on women students, so that
direct comparisons about optimal environments compared to men cannot be made with the
data.

Glesne & Reshkin (1992) discuss how conducting all the research at one institution
may have drawbacks to the findings, but that was not the case in this study. One limitation to
this study is the absence of any Latina or Hispanic participants from this study. Future
studies on women undergraduate leadership need to include this ethnicity to analyze if their
leadership process is different than other ethnicities. Another was that the women had
recently been interviewed for feedback in the program’s five-year review and thus had
already thought through some of their responses in terms of the benefits and drawbacks of
the program. These prepared responses may have been more positive toward the program in
an attempt by the participants to encourage the Duke University administration to continue
the leadership development program.

The research on women undergraduates has focused on their preexisting
characteristics (Strong, 2001; Lynch, 2003) or future success (Brown, 2002). I was interested
in the daily interaction between their personal characteristics and their institutional
environment and how this shapes their leadership opportunities as a student. By hearing from
participants about their experiences, I gained a sense of how they perceive their roles as
women undergraduate student leaders.
CHAPTER 4

This qualitative study captured the experiences of nineteen undergraduate women at Duke University who were in the Baldwin Scholars Program. The purpose of this interpretive case study was to explore the leadership experiences of women undergraduates participating in a women’s-only leadership development program at a coeducational institution. Using the theoretical framework of Kurt Lewin’s psychosocial model of behavior as being the function of a person interacting with the environment \((b=f(pxe))\), I investigated the following research questions:

1. What are the collegiate experiences of undergraduate women at a coeducational institution?

2. How are undergraduate women in a coeducational institution shaped by their environment?

3. What are the behavioral outcomes of undergraduate women participating in a leadership program at a coeducational institution?

This chapter is organized into three areas to fully describe the case study: the historical background of the Baldwin Scholar Program, profiles of the participants, and the findings of this study. The first area describes the Baldwin Scholar Program at Duke University. To fully describe the context of this study, I begin with a case description of the Baldwin Scholars Program based on data gathered in the field from archival artifacts and documents (e.g., program annual reports, student resumés, student questionnaires), observations, and aligning field notes. Next, I present individual profiles, arranged
alphabetically, of each participant. Pseudonyms were selected by study participants in order to protect their identity and confidentiality. The profiles highlight the interests and motivations of eight seniors, six juniors, and five sophomores in the Baldwin Scholars Program. In the last section, I present the research findings based on the Lewinian model of collegiate experiences, environmental influences, and behavioral outcomes.

Case Description: Baldwin Scholars Program

The concept of women undergraduate leadership development has been part of the Duke University experience since Alice Baldwin began her tenure there in 1923. After a brief overview of the historical background of undergraduate women leadership development at Duke University, I explain the university’s decision to begin the Baldwin Scholars Program in 2004, and the design and structure of the program for current women undergraduates at Duke University.

Historical Underpinnings

When Alice M. Baldwin was hired to be the first Dean of Women at Trinity College, the administration was in the process of establishing the Woman’s College. This all-female undergraduate institution would function as part of a coordinate system at Duke University. Coordinate systems were not fully coeducational institutions, but shared resources, including faculty and facilities, with the parallel all-male institution.

When the coordinate college system for Duke University opened in 1930, Baldwin was named Dean of the Woman’s College. Baldwin’s background as a scientist from the University of Chicago led her to be supportive of women’s equal participation in the
university setting, and she helped the new, southern institution to value women students. Under her leadership, students in the Woman’s College created their own student government and were encouraged to self-govern their academic and social environments (http://library.duke.edu/uarchives/history/histnotes/a_baldwin.html).

In addition to being a strong advocate for women’s equality in higher education, Baldwin was instrumental in providing women students with a role model of female scholarship. She was the first tenured female professor at Duke University, and she helped bring many other qualified women faculty to Duke University during her tenure (http://library.duke.edu/uarchives/history/histnotes/a_baldwin.html). In her role as Dean, Baldwin maintained a high standard of excellence in both admissions and academics in the Woman’s College at Duke, and she was respected among her faculty and administrator colleagues for creating an environment where women students could have a positive, formative collegiate experience.

The all-female setting of the Woman’s College provided many leadership opportunities for women students, including roles in student government, the student newspaper, and literary magazines. When the Woman’s College and Trinity College merged into the coeducational Trinity College of Arts and Sciences after forty-two years as a coordinate system, some wondered if women would retain their leadership positions across campus. Many student organizations merged to eliminate duplication, including duplication in student government. The role of women undergraduates at Duke University began to change, though there was little formal study on how and to what extent.
Founding of the Baldwin Scholars Program

With the start of a coeducational institution in 1972, Duke University had fewer campus leadership positions for more students. As Duke’s resources and reputation grew, women students adjusted to the coeducational environment and competed with men for leadership positions on campus. Little research had been done on the differences between the Woman’s College students and the women undergraduates in the coeducational institution today (Mallory, 1990) until the Women’s Initiative committee was formed.

This Women’s Initiative Steering Committee was commissioned by Nan Keohane, the first female president of Duke, in 2003 to study gender relations among undergraduates, graduate students, faculty, and staff at Duke. The Committee reported many insights about social and academic trends at Duke University. One was the gradual diminishing of women undergraduates in leadership positions. In addition, undergraduates reported their self-confidence dropping from self-reported pre-college levels over the course of their undergraduate experience (http://web.duke.edu/womens_initiative/report_report.htm#undergrad).

The Women’s Initiative report found that in addition to less campus participation and lower self-confidence among women, many undergraduate Duke women felt that they were expected to be beautiful, brilliant, and socially connected across campus. Women commented that “everyone” was expected to achieve these ideals, but without appearing to work to obtain them. Women could not appear to be trying to be beautiful, or smart, or socially connected, yet these attributes were considered necessary to be successful on campus. The
committee named this concept “effortless perfection.” They defined effortless perfection as “the expectation that one would be smart, accomplished, fit, beautiful, and popular, and that all this would happen without visible effort (http://web.duke.edu/womens_initiative/report_report.htm#undergrad).

When the Women’s Initiative report was released in 2003, Duke undergraduate women across campus quickly identified with the findings and confirmed how widespread the notion of effortless perfection was among female undergraduates. One recommendation from the report was to create a sustained leadership development program for women that would model the benefits of a single-sex environment within their coeducation campus. This program was developed to provide women undergraduates with a safe space on campus in which to foster their academic and personal development.

The model used for the Baldwin Scholars program was based on current research (http://baldwinscholars.duke.edu/program) of the overall benefits of women’s colleges. The program was developed to include two academic components, a living learning component and experiential experience. Two critical goals for the program were to help women undergraduates think critically on gender issues and to raise their self-confidence levels. This growth in self-confidence would, in theory, lead to their willingness to participate in more leadership opportunities at Duke University.

The Design and Structure of the Baldwin Scholars Program

The Baldwin Scholars program was created as a four-year, cohort leadership development program. The application process begins every summer when all first-year
women receive information about the program before matriculating. They are invited to participate in informational sessions to learn about the Baldwin Scholars Program, with applications due in October. These applications include essays that are read by staff members of the Baldwin Scholars Program. In November, 36 women are interviewed by administrators involved with the program, and 18 women are selected as the current cohort. Once selected for the program, the Baldwin Scholars participate in a variety of activities.

In developing the program, Duke University modeled elements of the Women in Living and Learning (WILL) program at the University of Richmond (see Appendix H). The first group activity is an overnight retreat, which the first-year women experience before the end of their first semester in college. After this overnight retreat, the first-year women participate in a seminar throughout the spring semester. For their sophomore year, the women live together in Duke residential housing, which is the only selective living group at Duke University that is all female. They are encouraged to room with other Baldwin Scholars, but can also invite women not involved in the program to live there as well. All Baldwin Scholars complete an internship, usually during their junior year, and finally they participate as a cohort in a seminar during the fall semester of their senior year. In addition to these group activities, each Baldwin is matched up with a mentor from the class ahead of her, with the intention that this older Baldwin will help the new Baldwin student throughout her undergraduate experience.

Since this program is an initiative of the Women’s Initiative Committee report, it receives full fiscal support from the Duke administration. There are financial resources in
place to support the coordination that Baldwin Scholars Program administrators make for periodic lectures, meetings, and receptions with nationally known speakers. Several times a year, the program hosts private receptions for Baldwin Scholars and Duke guests, funds travel opportunities for Baldwin Scholars both across the country and internationally, and sustains program components such as overnight retreats and weekly refreshments for the Saturday afternoon meetings. During these Saturday afternoon meetings, the group of seventy-two Baldwins discusses which speakers and events to support on campus, as well as campus issues that they would like to explore as a group.

In 2004, the first year of the program saw 78 women apply to be part of the initial cohort, and only 18 were selected (http://baldwinscholars.duke.edu/program). For the fall of 2008, the most recent fall where figures are available, the program received over 100 applications for the 18 available slots in the Class of 2012.

The Participants

In order to understand the women involved in the Baldwin Scholars program, I interviewed 19 current Baldwin Scholars: eight seniors, six juniors, and five sophomores.

Overview of the Participants

The women I interviewed in the Baldwin Scholars program were very diverse in a variety of ways. Eleven were Caucasian, four were Asian-American, two were African-American, one was an international student, and one was Native American. Their hometowns ranged from 200 miles away in the Mid Atlantic region, to 2000 miles away in the Rocky Mountains. The participants in this study represented various colleges across Duke’s campus,
such as Trinity College of Arts and Sciences, Pratt College of Engineering, and Sanford College of Public Policy. Their academic disciplines ranged from art history, to mechanical engineering to women’s studies, with 12 different disciplines represented among the 19 participants.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pseudonym</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Major</th>
<th>Race/Ethnicity</th>
<th>Hometown</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>22</td>
<td>Public Policy</td>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>Midwest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Biology/Psychology</td>
<td>Caucasian</td>
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<td>Asian-American</td>
<td>Mid Atlantic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Junior</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>Political Science Theory</td>
<td>International</td>
<td>Mid Atlantic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Sophomore</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>Philosophy</td>
<td>Asian-American</td>
<td>Midwest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>20</td>
<td>Art History</td>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>Northeast</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Senior</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>International Comparative Studies</td>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>Southwest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emma</td>
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<td>22</td>
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<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>South</td>
</tr>
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<td>Jane</td>
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<td>19</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Asian-American</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Julia</td>
<td>Junior</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>Political Science/International Comparative Studies</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Southwest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>20</td>
<td>Art History</td>
<td>Caucasian</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kristen</td>
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<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>West</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Senior</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>Economics</td>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>South</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nancy</td>
<td>Junior</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>Political Science</td>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>South</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sarah</td>
<td>Junior</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>International comparative /Pre-Med</td>
<td>Asian-American</td>
<td>Southwest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Short Stuff</td>
<td>Junior</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Cultural Anthropology</td>
<td>African-American</td>
<td>Mid Atlantic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stella</td>
<td>Sophomore</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>Evolutionary Anthropology</td>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>Mid Atlantic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zee</td>
<td>Sophomore</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>Women's Studies</td>
<td>African-American</td>
<td>Midwest</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In researching 19 Baldwin Scholars, I documented their involvement in over 20
different organizations at Duke, including Duke Student Government, the student newspaper,
musical groups, and international travel groups. Nine were involved in Greek life at Duke
University. Several worked on campus during the academic year in either research labs,
campus offices, or both. Eleven had been involved in international travel through Duke.
Table 4.2
Participants’ Involvements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pseudonym</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Two or more leadership roles on campus</th>
<th>Founder/President/Vice-president?</th>
<th>International Travel during college</th>
<th>Sorority Member</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adele</td>
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<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Brazil, Kenya, Ghana</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AJ</td>
<td>Senior</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Duke in Rome, Yes, for 2 years</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alison</td>
<td>Senior</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Amsterdam</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ashley</td>
<td>Senior</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carla</td>
<td>Junior</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carolyn</td>
<td>Sophomore</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>India, Greece, Oxford</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crystal</td>
<td>Junior.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Denmark, Dubai, Yes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ellie</td>
<td>Senior</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
<td>NYU in Paris, Kenya, Yes, for 3 years</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emma</td>
<td>Senior</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jane</td>
<td>Sophomore</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Julia</td>
<td>Junior</td>
<td></td>
<td>Eight countries</td>
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<td>Kasey</td>
<td>Sophomore</td>
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<td>Yes</td>
<td>Netherlands, Kenya, Yes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kristen</td>
<td>Senior</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Florence, HK, Tanzania, Yes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Megan</td>
<td>Senior</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Kenya, Netherlands, Yes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nancy</td>
<td>Junior</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sarah</td>
<td>Junior</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
<td>India, Yes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Short Stuff</td>
<td>Junior</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stella</td>
<td>Sophomore</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zee</td>
<td>Sophomore</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Participant Profiles

I present the 19 participants here listed alphabetically in order to provide a cursory glimpse of their backgrounds, ideas, and beliefs about undergraduate women leaders at Duke University.

Adele. A senior from Missouri, Adele was a small-framed, reserved 22-year-old studying public policy. Committed to social justice issues, she engaged on campus as a writer for student publications, a volunteer in a student-led service learning organization, and co-president of a campus group dedicated to creating and distributing documentaries on social injustices.

Outside of her academic pursuits, Adele was happiest writing or filming “behind the scenes,” and this was reflected in her leadership style. She described her leadership philosophy as one that focuses on facilitating rather than “being in charge.” Reflecting on her leadership style, she commented: “[e]ncouraging that self-reflection, and encouraging that change for the future is the way that I see my personal leadership strategy.” She herself was deeply reflective and had at the time of the interview applied for a Fulbright Scholarship, which she was later awarded.

AJ. Studying biology and psychology with hopes of attending medical school, AJ is a 22-year-old senior from Indiana. Her co-curricular interests paralleled her academic pursuits: she was co-president of an organization focused on exposing middle-school girls to the sciences, and she volunteered at the Duke Hospital during the summer.

Given her strong science background, AJ firmly believed that there was not a causal
relationship between her Baldwin Scholars participation and her successful undergraduate experience. She did acknowledge, however, that her definition of leadership expanded during her tenure at Duke. While she self-described her leadership skills serving as co-president of an organization as simply being “in charge” of certain events, AJ also noticed that her experience with the Baldwin Scholars Program was seen in more general terms, those of simply “being a leader.”

Alison. A senior studying mechanical engineering, Alison was a 21-year-old from the Mid-Atlantic states. Although her mother attended a women’s college, Alison did not anticipate how much she would enjoy her time in the Baldwin Scholars Program, where—in contrast to her classes—she was surrounded by women. Her interests varied, and she pursued many of them, including receiving a minor in musical performance and pursuing hobbies such as cooking and ice-skating.

Alison had several leadership positions on campus and was one of the few women in this study who held a student leadership position in the Baldwin Scholars Program. She enjoyed being “in charge,” and being held personally responsible for completing her leadership tasks. She felt committed to the success of the Baldwin Scholars Program, and she eagerly anticipated the benefits of being connected to this group as an alumna in the future. She had accepted a consulting position following graduation.

Ashley. A senior from the Mid-Atlantic states, Ashley was a 22-year-old studying economics and philosophy. Energetic and outgoing, Ashley held leadership roles in all of her diverse co-curricular interests, including being a founding member of an investment group on
campus, vice-president in her sorority, and member of an a cappella musical group. She was frequently included in information sessions hosted by the program to recruit additional students.

Ashley’s leadership style focused on her engaging personality and her charisma. She was unafraid to meet anyone, especially with her popular social standing. Yet she also valued honest communication and incorporated this aspect into her leadership style as well. She expressed annoyance when others labeled her “the investment girl” without taking the time to learn more about her. Although very independent, Ashley came to appreciate the role of “adults” in her collegiate experience, and how this was visibly absent from her sorority experience. She had been offered a full-time position after graduation.

Carla. A 22 -year-old who grew up overseas, Carla was a junior studying political science. Carla was involved in a wide variety of Duke activities, including Duke Student Government, the Black Student Alliance, and the honorary Duke and Duchesses recruiting group. She noticed how in many of her involvements, she represented the “token” woman, or Baldwin Scholar.

Carla had an amenable personality, which blended well with her ability to process new information quickly. An outstanding strength she possessed was the ability to assemble and engage diverse students into a cohesive group to achieve their intended goals. These natural strengths still needed some polish, however. At a recent Baldwin Scholars workshop on public speaking, she successfully completed a speech extemporaneously but was then asked by the facilitator to repeat her first sentence. She immediately realized that being quick
on her feet was not a substitute for being prepared.

_Carolyn_. A quiet, 19-year-old sophomore from the midwest, Carolyn was using her Duke experience to reevaluate both her academic and co-curricular interests. After taking a few courses as an engineering major, she recently changed her academic college and became a philosophy major. Carolyn had been renowned at the state level for musical performance in high school, and she was now considering pursuing a minor in music at Duke but had decided not to perform.

Carolyn was also reflective about her leadership identity. Her definition of a leader included someone who could empower others to make changes. In deciding how to best develop herself as an empowering leader, Carolyn was still considering where she could make the largest impact on campus. She was considering medical school in the future.

_Crystal_. A vibrant and forthcoming junior from New York, Crystal was a 20-year-old studying art history. Crystal was a leader in her sorority and currently held the title of vice-president. Prominent in the social scene at Duke, Crystal shared several examples of how she felt comfortable using her status to point out subtle forms of gender discrimination on campus.

Crystal believed that effective leaders had the vision to move their group toward their goals in addition to completing the daily tasks necessary. She welcomed the opportunity in the Baldwin Scholars Program to look at feminist issues in the work world and on campus.

_Ellie_. A 21-year-old senior in the International Comparative Studies program with a Global Health certificate, Ellie grew up in New Mexico. While at Duke, she became involved
with several campus organizations including a student activist group and a women-in-science mentoring group. Ellie also had the opportunity to teach an undergraduate course at Duke.

In describing her definition of leadership, Ellie envisioned someone who led with integrity as well as the earned respect of others. Ellie shared her internal struggle of wanting to be both true to her values and a vital part of the campus social scene. This struggle led her to resign from her sorority her senior year and reassess her social behaviors.

*Emma.* A senior majoring in psychology with a minor in English, Emma was a 22-year-old from the East Coast. Emma’s involvements matched her academic interests, and she volunteered at both research and clinical labs in the area. She shared how in high school she recognized a social problem among adolescent girls and spent two years creating a community program to combat it.

Although displaying many leadership characteristics, Emma did not feel like a “good Baldwin” because she was not interested in being as fully engaged in the program components as others in her cohort. Yet she also shared that among her peer group she was often referred to as a “poster child for Baldwin” because of her understanding of the gendered campus environment. Emma wrestled with balancing these two sides of her personality and was looking forward to graduate school in psychology in the future.

*Jane.* A 19-year-old self-described “military brat,” Jane was a sophomore studying English. She was involved in student government and worked on campus for a student advocacy group. Jane’s direct personality matched her proactive leadership style to “fix” any problems she noticed in her environment.
Jane shared an example of her leadership personality when the Duke Student Government elections surfaced during our conversation. While Jane respected the Baldwin Scholar candidate, she also worked directly with the other woman candidate and felt she would be equally effective. Deciding which woman candidate should win her vote was important for Jane because she took her role in student government seriously.

*Julia.* A 21-year-old from New Mexico, Julia was studying psychology and international comparative studies with a focus on global health. She strongly believed that involvement was based on finding interests you were passionate about, and she focused her leadership development energies on activities that mattered to her on campus.

During her Duke tenure, she had taught an undergraduate course, served as a Resident Advisor on East campus to first-year students, and traveled extensively. Julia had been involved in a high school leadership development program that was also all-female, and she appreciated the sense of community that the Baldwin Scholars Program had given her at Duke.

*Kasey.* A 20-year-old sophomore majoring in art history with a minor in visual studies, Kasey had grown up in Massachusetts, and while away at her high school boarding school she had started a local business to support those less fortunate.

Kasey continued her motivation to help others at Duke through campus involvement, work, and travel. She joined a sorority at Duke, participated in alternative spring break experiences, and worked directly with faculty as a research assistant. While she appeared to be fully acclimated to the Duke environment, she admitted that she probably would have
transferred after her first year at Duke “if I wasn't a Baldwin."

Kristen. Majoring in public policy with a minor in visual arts, Kristen was a 22-year-old senior from the Rocky Mountain region. While she started at Duke as a campus athlete, an injury her sophomore year sidelined her ability to stay on the ski team.

Kristen was involved on campus as a Big Sister to a local elementary school girl, and she participated in several community service organizations on campus. She had also traveled internationally while at Duke, including a semester abroad in Italy. As a leader in her sorority, Kristen had arranged time to speak to younger members about “how it really was” at Duke, to help them be aware of campus pressures that she had experienced.

Megan. A 22-year-old senior majoring in economics, with minors in both biology and chemistry, Megan came to Duke from Tennessee as a student athlete seriously considering medical school. Megan joined a sorority, was involved in student government and a campus mentoring program, and spent a semester abroad during her junior year.

As a sophomore, Megan stopped her participation in school sports and changed her major out of the sciences. She has since held several formal and informal leadership positions in her sorority and the Baldwin Scholars Program, and is still considering medical school in the future.

Nancy. A junior from Kentucky, Nancy is a 22-year-old majoring in political science and minoring in economics with an Ethics certificate. Nancy grew up on a farm in the midwest and spent a “gap year” in Europe before attending Duke. Nancy was very active on campus, including writing for the school newspaper, participating in student government, and
co-founding a women’s mentoring group on campus.

Nancy’s slow but thoughtful responses were very insightful, and it was not surprising to find that she was asked to join several institutional committees during her tenure at Duke. Several other participants mentioned Nancy as their strongest Baldwin friend and specifically mentioned her quiet leadership style as a model for developing their leadership behavior.

Sarah. An international comparative studies major with a minor in chemistry, 20-year-old Sarah grew up in New Mexico. Sarah’s involvement outside of the classroom centered on her service-oriented interests, and she worked in a campus organization office as a work-study student.

Sarah reflected on how her sense of urgency had shifted after experiencing a family crisis during her first year at Duke. She did not feel rushed to compete for the “empty A” in her coursework and instead carefully chose classes that mattered to her.

Short Stuff. Growing up on the east coast in a single-parent household, the 20-year-old junior worked three jobs while at Duke. Short Stuff was studying cultural anthropology and minoring in education with the intent to teach in the future.

Short Stuff was involved in the Black Student Alliance and had joined a sorority on campus. She was one of the few women in this study who had not traveled internationally while at Duke. She planned to focus her Baldwin internship on expanding her off-campus position of teaching dance to children into a summer experience for young girls.

Stella. A 19-year-old sophomore evolutionary anthropology major with a psychology minor, Stella grew up on the east coast. She was eager to share with everyone how she was
first waitlisted at Duke before being accepted, and this factored into her decision to get involved in the prospective student visiting program hosted through the Admissions Office.

Stella had also been involved in a high school program for females, and she recognized the support system the Baldwin Scholars Program offered to women undergraduates. Through Baldwin, she was able to participate in CAPE, an organization usually reserved for Duke Athletes. Stella planned to be a Resident Assistant for her junior year on campus.

Zee. A sophomore from the midwest, Zee was a 19-year-old women’s studies major. She was actively involved on campus through her job in a campus organization office, her teaching of an undergraduate course, and her participation in the Black Student Alliance. She felt the Greek system was responsible for much of the social problems at Duke, and was annoyed at administrators who did not take more initiative to change the system.

Zee was looking for Baldwin to offer her another outlet for intellectual discussions on gender relations, and at first she was disappointed that you could not “tell a Baldwin by looking at them.” After taking the time to meet her cohort individually, she learned a lesson in not prejudging her fellow Baldwins and came to appreciate that everyone selected to be a Baldwin Scholar has something to offer to her undergraduate experience.

Findings

In this section, I present the data from my collection of interview responses, observations, and documents for the Baldwin Scholars at Duke University. For each element of the Lewinian formula (i.e. collegiate experiences, environmental influences, and
behavioral outcomes), I will address the characteristics that emerged from the research. Each characteristic has properties which help further describe its nature. Table 4.3 details the findings for the three research questions in this study.
Table 4.3

*Data Display Summary of Findings*

**Research Question #1: Collegiate Experiences**

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<tr>
<th>Categories</th>
<th>Properties</th>
</tr>
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<td>Journey of Self-Discovery</td>
<td>Strong family support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Developing self-knowledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Strengthening self-confidence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Journey of Academic Enrichment</td>
<td>Importance of academics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Learning for learning’s sake</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creating College Connections</td>
<td>Engaging with faculty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Finding campus involvements</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Research Question #2: Environmental Influences**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Categories</th>
<th>Properties</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Duke University: Inside the Duke Bubble</td>
<td>Peer pressure to perform</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The expectation of effortless perfection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Baldwin Scholars Program: Creating an Alternative</td>
<td>Building community in a “safe space”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Becoming a Baldwin: “taking up space”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Research Question #3: Behavioral Outcomes**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Categories</th>
<th>Properties</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Environmental Impact: Redefining Leadership</td>
<td>Committing campus resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Developing a gendered perspective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Impact: What it means to be a Baldwin</td>
<td>Motivator to other Baldwins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Change agent on campus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Leader at the institution</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Collegiate Experiences

Through interviews with the 19 Baldwin Scholars in this study, document analysis, and observations, I found three categories to describe the participants’ undergraduate experience. The women experienced a journey of self-discovery, a journey of academic enrichment, and the creation of college connections during their collegiate experience at Duke University. Each of these categories is explored in detail.

Journey of Self Discovery

The participants in this study were cognizant of their undergraduate experience as a journey toward adulthood. In fact, in almost every interview, the Baldwin Scholars would distinguish between their peers and the “adults” on campus. These adults—faculty, staff, or administrators—were different than their student peers. Many Baldwin Scholars spoke of their collegiate experience as a time to move from being a student to becoming their own person. The journey of self-discovery for women undergraduates at Duke University had three properties. The women shared strong family support, a development of self-knowledge, and a strengthening of their self-confidence. These three properties of their journey of self-discovery could be heard through their voices as they shared their undergraduate experiences.

Strong family support. The first property of the Journey of Self-Discovery category is the strong family support that every Baldwin Scholar in this study had. Strong family support entailed the close contact the women had with their immediate family, especially their mothers, and the level of influence family members had on their choices during their undergraduate experiences. This support was both spoken and unspoken and helped the
participants feel grounded as they moved through their undergraduate education.

The unspoken support that participants received from their families came in the form of the silent expectations of collegiate success that they felt throughout their undergraduate experience. Ashley, a senior, could not remember a specific occasion when her parents told her to be a leader. Instead, she reflected on how it was “always kind of expected I would be a leader.” Crystal, a junior, shared how her parents “were always the ones who supported me most.” Part of her desire to succeed was based on watching her mother’s success in her many roles. Crystal affirmed: “My mother throughout her entire life took on leadership roles that I not only wanted to meet her expectations but exceed them myself.” Baldwin Scholars saw their families—including their parents, aunts, uncles, grandparents, and older siblings—as role models for how to fully develop into competent adults.

In addition to receiving support and encouragement from their families, the women also shared a pattern among family backgrounds of female empowerment. Ashley, Julia, Alison, Emma, Crystal, and Carolyn all had mothers who were either the main breadwinner in their family or were in high-ranking professional positions. Emma and Nancy both had mothers who were co-owners of their family business, and both Carolyn and Zee had mothers who traveled from other countries with young children to live in America. Carla had an aunt who finished college in her fifties and was now a doctor, and Nancy had an aunt who had been one of the first female lawyers in Kentucky. Both Sarah and Carla reflected positively on how their mothers moved past the traditional boundaries for women in their native cultures and either furthered their education or had lifestyles that were very different
from other women from similar cultures.

The participants in this study were particularly close to their mothers. When asked to rank people who would support them throughout their undergraduate experience, more than half of the Baldwin Scholars listed their mothers. Some shared how they spoke to their mothers daily, while others explained how integrally involved their mothers were in their daily activities. Ellie, a senior, unabashedly reported that she was “literally on the phone with (her mother) every day – she’s my rock.”

Vocalized support was another shared pattern among participants. Strong family support also included vocalized comments from parents and siblings. For instance, Adele commented that her parents did not want her to apply to the Baldwin Scholar Program initially because they were hesitant of any co-curricular activities that may have distracted her from her academic studies. Ashley and Emma, two other seniors, found support from their mothers as they each navigated difficult roommate issues. Ashley had a roommate struggling with an eating disorder, and Emma had a roommate who disapproved of her relationship with her boyfriend. Both of them shared their stories with me and explained that their mothers agreed with the way they were handling the situation. This reassurance from their mothers helped them handle their roommate relationships. Ashley later recounted how hard it was to be mad at her roommate because “she knows my darkest secrets that literally nobody else knows, or only my mom knows.” To her, it seemed obvious that your mother would be aware of your darkest secrets even when you were months shy of graduating college. Mothers of Baldwin Scholars were not only in constant contact with their daughters
but also fully involved in their daily activities. This involvement included listening to their daughters’ stories and sharing their personal insights on ways to make their undergraduate experience more meaningful.

Women in this study had strong family connections that encouraged them to become involved in their undergraduate education at Duke, including joining the Baldwin Scholars Program. This supportive family background allowed them to feel comfortable in their self-discovery of their adult identity, academic abilities, and leadership experiences. The consistent communication with their parents, especially their mothers, offered a resource for the participants that they seemed to draw on almost daily in navigating their collegiate experience.

Developing self-knowledge. The second property of the Journey to Self-Discovery category is developing self-knowledge. On the journey to self-discovery, finding out about yourself forms a base for other experiences to build on in reaching adulthood. This self-knowledge includes an understanding of your background and the effect that that background has on further self-discovery. It also includes an appreciation for your strengths and a recognition of areas that need improvement. These insights allow you to be open to structured and informal opportunities to improve your understanding and thought process. This developmental step is important in the overall goal of self-discovery.

The women in this study understood the benefits of self-reflection, and they shared insights about how this reflection enhanced their undergraduate experience. Carolyn, a sophomore, reflected on the task of choosing a major at Duke University. As a first step in
deciding on a career path, choosing a major was of course an important part of the Duke undergraduate experience. Carolyn noticed that many Duke students were choosing their major based on the availability and salary of positions associated with that major instead of on the fit between the personality of the student and the career industry. Carolyn noticed how many business students were choosing their major based on the lucrative nature of the industry rather than on personality fit. Her annoyance with students not taking the time to reflect on their choice in college major showed through her description of the annual business major fair at Duke:

I think everyone is going into those fields (of business) not really knowing what they are getting themselves into, just because it's the “in thing” to do because it's lucrative and it's prestigious, but nobody really—I feel like a lot of the people interviewing for those positions are not really asking themselves like why is this a good career for them?

Carolyn realized that it was somewhat easier to follow your peers than to spend time reflecting on what may be the best career choice for your personality and academic strengths. She further alluded to how she found herself having similar thoughts: “So I...I mean I kinda get sucked into that too—"Oh, that sounds like a really cool job, maybe I should be interviewing for that, too"—and I haven't completely written it off.” The difference between Carolyn and other students participating in this event was the additional thought she had put into this decision. Although Carolyn decided not to participate in this event, she concluded that she would think before deciding “to try or interview for those things. I have to think
about what it means to me and why I want to do it." This pausing to reflect on the personal connection between values and actions was seen routinely as an intentional part of Baldwin Scholars programming.

In addition to self-reflection, the participants in this study engaged in intentional shared experiences that led to developing their self-knowledge. Some of these shared college experiences derived from participating in the Baldwin Scholars Program. Ashley, a senior, explained that the program administrators “do a lot of work trying to build trust within the group, and try to build it on very meaningful—if not shared—experiences, shared stories even.” Ashley volunteered the reason why trust was so important to creating the Baldwin Scholars program: “They want us to know about each other and they want us to understand each other and learn from each other.” By being asked to intentionally share their background, as well as engage in individual self-reflection, the Baldwin Scholars were contributing to the development of their self-knowledge.

*Strengthening self-confidence.* In addition to having strong family support and developing self-knowledge, the women in this study were also able to strengthen their self-confidence during their undergraduate experience. The students believed that high self-confidence was necessary in order to be successful in college. This self-confidence was evident in both academic settings and co-curricular activities.

As a junior, Crystal’s self confidence was bolstered by her ability to speak up in her classes. She described herself as “pretty confident,” and therefore, “in every class I have been in, I have not been too intimidated to speak up.” This included participating in class
discussions as well as asking faculty for clarification on assignments. Ellie, a senior, radiated
certainty when she described her high school experience of starting a new program to
combat girl bullies. She was proud of her ability to create and implement a volunteer
program focused on developing peer mentors to combat bullying behaviors. She described
having this self-confidence for most of her life. She explained, “I’ve always been like, ‘I can
make this happen—I can do this.’ When I set my mind to it, I can make it happen.”

As Crystal had done, other Baldwin Scholars gave multiple examples of feeling
empowered to speak up in the classroom and actively engage in their academic enrichment.
Kristen observed how “in my classes, too, I've become much more of a leader just (be)cause
being older, I'm more comfortable speaking and being close to the teachers, and I've been
instructing some of the classes, and I feel like I've grown a lot from freshman year to senior
year." Crystal also expressed her ability to speak with faculty in and outside of class to
confirm class assignments. Women in this study who spent time with faculty overseas also
reported how much time they spoke with faculty outside of the class time.

Megan expounded on her pattern of connecting her values to actions in and out of the
classroom, including not being afraid to speak up. When asked to describe her strengths, she
quickly responded, "I'm principled. Most of the time, and I try to have what I say and do
reflect what I believe." This was especially poignant as she explained her sorority’s battle to
stay open on campus despite shrinking membership numbers. While her role within the
organization was to improve morale, she also had to be direct and honest about the future of
the organization.
Other participants in this study showed how they were unafraid to voice their opinions on sensitive topics. Crystal recounted an experience she had when applying for the Baldwin Scholars Program. She was visiting male friends on campus and noticed that they were “reporting” a ranking of new undergraduate women at Duke on a shared website. The men had not met these women, but they planned to share the rankings with others. Crystal decided to voice her disapproval of their actions. In retelling the story, she shared:

I mean, I can understand where they feed off each other and it becomes an expected norm, but it's not. It shouldn't be accepted, and you don't know these women, and it shouldn't be going out to 120 guys.

Her decision to voice her disapproval supported her decision to join the Baldwin community: “And it was really that day that I decided I want to be in a community that knows it's not ok, says it's not ok, and then shows it to other people outside this bubble of Baldwin.”

In addition to their strong level of family support, these women brought with them a high level of self-confidence to Duke University. Their high school resumes showed involvement in many activities that required initiative to begin and dedication to continue. While their strong family support could contribute to feeling confident to begin these high school activities, their own internal self-confidence was necessary for them to continue.

Based upon secondary data from field notes, all of the women in this study had excellent communication skills, including direct eye contact and firm handshakes, during the interview process. In addition, I was able to observe the special commencement ceremony for the 2009 Class of Baldwin Scholars and saw many posing for photographs. The women
appeared to radiate confidence in this ceremonial event and were proud of their undergraduate experience.

Women in this study exhibited signs of strong self-confidence before joining the Baldwin Scholars Program, and the continued support of their families and increased selfknowledge contributed to an increased level of confidence throughout their undergraduate experience. Their increased self-confidence allowed participants to examine their strengths and abilities clearly, and focus on developing their adult identity. This development of their identity and abilities contributed to their progress on their journey of self discovery.

*Journey of Academic Enrichment*

The second finding of this study for their collegiate experiences is their Journey to Academic Enrichment. The 19 women in this study were serious about their studies and took advantage of the academic resources available to Duke University students. This category of journeying to academic enrichment is further described through the properties of the importance of academics and learning for learning’s sake.

*Importance of academics.* The first property of the Journey to Academic Enrichment is the important role of academics for the participants. When asked to describe themselves as a student, most reported their successes as competent students at Duke University. All participants were eager to discuss their academic discipline and their ability to do well in their coursework. Academics was an important part of their undergraduate experience.

All spoke about their future career plans, with many of them planning further academic work through graduate and professional school. Emma was incredulous in
describing the decision of her roommate to not participate along with other seniors in making career plans. Shrugging, she quizzically asked, “Who does that?” and could not think of another senior woman at Duke who had decided not to use her education towards either a paid position or graduate work.

In asking participants to describe what type of students they were, four out of the 19 women identified themselves as perfectionists or Type A students who wanted to get all of their school work done on time and in an orderly fashion. As an example, one Baldwin Scholar participant in this study had the highest-ranking GPA in her class. Though this was listed on her resumé, she made a point to mention her notable honor again during our interview in describing her academic performance. She was very proud of this achievement and wanted to continue this level of performance throughout her academic career. Even the participants who were not ranked as top academic achievers mentioned how the academic environment at Duke propelled them into reaching high academic goals.

Considered among the top students in her high school, Ellie was no longer ranked at Duke. But she focused on how the drive and motivation she noticed in other students propelled her to strive for her academic best. She reflected:

In my small town, I was the “top of the top” of students, and it's been one of the most rewarding things in being at Duke is being among students who are all very smart, so you're not necessarily the best but you're always pushing each other to get better.

Short Stuff, a junior, and Jane, a sophomore, reported how their respective high school curriculums were not strong. In starting at Duke, both had to navigate how to be
successful at coursework that was much more challenging in terms of reading and writing assignments than high school. There was a period of adjustment when they began at Duke. Jane explained:

I came from a really not so good public school and it was just very hard to make the transition. Instead of breezing through all my classes, you actually had to pay attention, you had to meet with professors which is kind of scary because they're so respected in their fields.

Both Short Stuff and Jane acclimated to the increased academic rigor by improving their study skills and reaching out to faculty mentors. Several women found that having a relationship with a faculty member helped them decide on their thesis topic or pointed them in the direction of more coursework relating to their interests. More description of these academic connections are noted further in the *Creating College Connections* section in this chapter.

*Learning for learning’s sake.* Baldwin Scholars in this study wanted to do well academically at Duke, but they also shared how they valued the actual learning that was taking place in the classroom. This second property in the category of Journeying to Academic Enrichment is learning for learning’s sake and describes the academic engagement these participants experienced in their undergraduate classes. This includes how the women searched out courses that were meaningful to them because it was as important for them to develop intellectually as it was for them to succeed academically.

Sarah, a junior, unfortunately experienced a death in her family during her first year
at Duke University, which caused her to reevaluate what she was really learning in these courses. Besides deciding to take only classes that “spoke” to her, Sarah also reasoned that it was more important for her to develop as a person through the coursework she chose, instead of simply checking off requirements for her major. Sarah focused on the meaning-making aspect of her coursework as opposed to the goal of achieving high marks.

Nancy, a junior, also wanted to have a meaningful intellectual experience at Duke. She attributed this to recognizing that not everyone had the opportunity for a college education, and she should be as fully engaged in her experience as possible. She pointed out that “[n]either of my parents graduated from university, and I feel like this is my ‘one shot’ to be as intellectually engaged as I’ll probably ever be.” Nancy recently decided to reduce the amount of co-curricular involvement she participated in on campus to find more time for her intellectual pursuits.

While Sarah and Nancy explained why they chose to be fully engaged in their academic studies, AJ illustrated the feeling of an “aha” moment in class when she realized she was learning something new:

I just had a moment where I felt like I was learning so much and even though I was a psychology major, I still didn’t know these things, and it was just great to learn them, and I had one of those moments where I was like “I love my major” and I felt like I was learning a lot and definitely wanted to go into these fields and it just felt right.

The experience AJ shared is what Carolyn was referring to in terms of reflecting on one’s choice of major, and by extension one’s choice of career. It was important to the
women in this study to be fully engaged in their academic pursuits.

*Creating College Connections*

In exploring the undergraduate experience of Baldwin Scholars at Duke University, this study made a third finding. As the participants were journeying toward self-discovery and academic enrichment, they were searching for connections throughout their collegiate experience. They mentioned two areas, or properties, where they found this connection. They connected through their academics by engaging with faculty, and they connected through their co-curricular experiences by finding campus involvements.

*Engaging with faculty.* The first property of the College Connections finding is engaging with faculty across campus. Several participants noticed how their status as a Baldwin Scholar helped them with faculty connections in and out of the classroom. Adele, a senior, remembered how professors’ ears “perked up” when she mentioned that she was a Baldwin; and Zee commented on how faculty members “will take extra time out of their day to talk to a Baldwin.” Emma, a senior, attributed this to professors being intrigued about why you were selected to be in the program: "[Professors] want to figure out why you were selected to be a Baldwin.” Jane agreed with this, and felt professors “kind of look at you differently” when they found out someone was a Baldwin Scholar. This extra attention stemmed from the success of the (young) Baldwin Scholars Program. “Almost like how Duke is this name, Baldwin is this name at Duke and, I mean, actually among the adults at Duke—faculty, admin, the ‘power people’ if you will—they know Baldwin Scholars,” explained Short Stuff.
Participants revealed further examples of how faculty connected to Baldwin Scholars. Two seniors observed how being in the Baldwin Scholars program affected their academic progress at Duke. Emma described how she met her academic mentor:

My advisor used to be Dean of Trinity, and I don't think that opportunity would have happened if I wasn't a Baldwin, and now he's my friend way more because of “me” than because I'm a Baldwin, but that's how I was initially able to connect with him, and I'm forever grateful for that because career wise and mentoring, he's just amazing.

Ellie, another senior, declared her desire to be part of an international travel expedition to Kenya. She expressed her persistence in asking the faculty member responsible for choosing the team:

I kept bugging [the faculty member] and bugging her “please, let me come to Kenya with you” — and finally she said ok, and I don't know if that would have happened if she hadn't had trust in the program, and had two Baldwins who had worked with her before.

Faculty who had intentionally connected to Baldwin Scholars before seemed willing to do so again. As Ellie noticed, this was due not only to the reputation of the program across campus, but also to the individual women who made up the program participants. Faculty also seemed to gravitate to Baldwin scholars who taught Duke House courses. This willingness of faculty to connect with Baldwin Scholars was also seen among women who taught Duke House Courses. Approved and sponsored by an academic department in the Trinity College of Arts & Sciences, these half-credit, pass/fail courses can be taught by current Duke undergraduates.
under faculty supervision in the residence halls (http://trinity.duke.edu/house-courses). It is seen as an academic achievement on campus to be selected to teach a House Course, and three of the women I interviewed had done so. One was asked by another Baldwin Scholar who was already selected to teach and needed a co-facilitator. All three enjoyed this additional academic connection to the university.

Finding campus involvements. The second property of the College Connections finding describes the co-curricular involvements that the Baldwin Scholars in this study had and the connections these involvements afforded the students. With a large portion of the undergraduate experience happening outside of the classroom, the women in this study reported on which Duke organizations and activities they devoted their energies.

Sarah mentioned that when she was first learning about the Baldwin Scholars Program during the information sessions on campus, the administrators described the program as an “AND Program” which Sarah explained as, “You can be a Baldwin Scholar AND be…other things” on campus. In reviewing the resumes, participant selection questionnaire, and the Baldwin Scholar Program annual reports, I found many examples of students being involved in a wide variety of clubs and organizations across campus.

It was not surprising to find these Duke students connected to many co-curricular involvements in college and in the community. These activities ranged from athletics, sororities, student government, musical assembles, and community service organizations. Most had been involved in athletics, school clubs, and activities in high school.

Some participants chose to continue their areas of involvement from high school,
while quite a few wanted a “clean break” in college. AJ chose to have her academic and co-curricular interests align, which meant that all of her co-curricular involvements revolved around her academic focus of science. But others, like Alison, deliberately chose to find co-curricular interests that were not extensions of their academic work. As an engineering major, Alison chose to focus her co-curricular involvements on music and travel.

Travel was a popular choice of co-curricular involvement among the Baldwin Scholars in this study. Eleven out of the 19 participants had international travel experiences during their time at Duke. These travels ranged in length from summer programs, to full-semester study-abroad experiences overseas. Some were administered by Duke University (e.g. Duke in Rome), while others were hosted by other American universities (e.g. NYU in Paris). These travel destinations included Kenya, other African countries, Europe, and South America. Megan, a senior, studied in Amsterdam without any other Duke students, and enjoyed the connections she made with undergraduate students from other universities.

The study abroad experience was a popular co-curricular experience for students at Duke, with over 70% participating while undergraduates. Students could choose from traditional study abroad models, where they studied from Duke and international faculty in the classroom, to hands-on experiences. These hands-on experiences ranged from conducting research to providing targeted international communities with services. Of the 11 participants who had international travel experiences, all of them described how life-altering the experience had been. From Carla’s discussion of how it was the first time she felt comfortable discussing politics with Duke faculty outside of the classroom, to Julia’s
experience teaching African women how to provide nutritious meals for their families, the Baldwin Scholars felt these international experiences were important to their overall collegiate experience.

Other co-curricular activities suited individual characteristics. A few Baldwin Scholars, such as Short Stuff and Julia, chose activities that matched their personal identity. Groups such as the Black Student Alliance and the Native American Student Alliance offered Baldwin Scholars an opportunity to connect with culturally similar students across campus. Jane worked in the LGTB (Lesbian, Gay, Transgendered and Bisexual) office on campus, and volunteered that this group also offered a way for students to get connected with others with similar interests on campus.

Throughout these varied co-curricular involvements, the women in this study were forming connections across campus. Connections were made among other Baldwin Scholars, other undergraduates across campus, and campus staff and administrators. Connections between other Baldwin Scholars were made in their weekly Saturday afternoon meetings when participants shared what activities they were involved with on campus. Connections with other undergraduates developed informally when Baldwins participated in campus organizations. Connections with campus staff and administrators evolved from their exposure across campus. Short Stuff mused over being hand picked by the Department of Student Life for a skydiving experience her sophomore year. She happened to be in the office while staff were searching for good representatives of the student body for this event. She recognized that she was invited because she was seen as a “well-rounded example” of a Duke student,
and because she was a highly visible student in that office. She thoroughly enjoyed her experience and hoped there would be other “right place at the right time” moments at Duke.

The women in this study were not only involved in co-curricular experiences at Duke but also leading those experiences. For the eight seniors in this study, there were multiple examples of this campus and community leadership. The eight seniors were involved in an average of three recognized organizations on campus and led at least one of them. Alison appeared most involved by being active in four major organizations on campus and chairing two of them. AJ co-chaired the major recruiting event for her organization dedicated to helping girls become interested in the sciences, while Adele was the chair of the organization that she formed as an undergraduate. Megan was an officer in her sorority and involved in Duke Student Government. Ashley and Kristen were both officers in the same sorority. In fact, five of the eight seniors had been members of sororities on campus, but two had recently resigned. Other participants were leaders in academic programs. Ellie and Emma’s leadership had been primarily in the academic realm, with Ellie teaching a House Course and Emma being involved in multiple research projects in her academic department.

The six juniors in this study were also strong leaders on campus. As previously mentioned, Short Stuff and Julia were part of the Black Student Alliance and the Native American Student Alliance respectfully, and both had served as officers in those organizations. Carla was also involved in the Black Student Alliance, and both Carla and Nancy held leadership positions in Duke Student Government. Carla and Crystal were members of the Duke and Duchesses of Duke, an honorary organization that recruits well-
rounded students for the President to call on for public relation events. Crystal and Nancy were also in sororities. Sarah was involved in the American Red Cross chapter on campus, as well as Relay for Life and Nourish International. Additionally, she served as chair for committee positions in the American Red Cross and Nourish International.

In three semesters, all five sophomores in this study held several leadership positions. One of the sophomores held the highest academic rank for her class. Another had co-founded a new organization dedicated to offering opportunities to talk about social responsibility for corporations. Another sophomore had joined the Duke Student Government and planned to continue in the organization in increasingly challenging roles. One of the sophomores I interviewed was responsible for organizing prospective students’ schedules at the Blue Devil Days recruiting event at Duke, where prospective students visit the campus for several days. One had already been on an international-alternative spring break trip, and all planned to continue their level of involvement on the Duke campus and in the Durham community.

Though the range of leadership experiences varied, all of the Baldwin Scholars I interviewed for this study were eager to be involved in leadership roles. Several expressed interest in making sure their leadership experiences made a difference to others. Participants in this study looked disfavorably upon peers who “packed their resumé” with activities and leadership experiences for the sake of having a full resumé. Several participants agreed that the quality, rather than the number, of experiences was most important in defining the undergraduate experience. These quality connections in and out of the classroom offered support through their personal and academic journeys.
In summary, the participants in this study were journeying toward self-discovery, academic enrichment, and college connections. These three findings showed women who had the support of their family, self-confidently searched for academic enrichment, and increased their college connections. In looking for a community connection, these Duke University women chose to join the Baldwin Scholar Program. In the next section, I will discuss the nested environment the women experienced during this undergraduate journey.

*Environmental Influences*

In exploring the environmental influences on the 19 Baldwin Scholars, I found two categories. The first finding is their perception of Duke University as a “bubble” because of the way students felt cocooned from the world outside Duke once they were on campus. Inside the Duke “bubble,” participants found competitive pressure from their peers both academically and socially, and a still-lingering expectation of “Effortless Perfection.” The second finding highlights the Baldwin Scholars Program and the alternative social environment it offered to these women. It created this alternative environment by first building a “safe space” for the participants to continue their journeys of self-discovery, academic enrichment, and college connections, and then supporting the students as they became passionate leaders on campus.

*Duke University: Inside the Duke Bubble*

During the collection of data, several participants shared their thoughts on the metaphor of Duke University as a “bubble.” This description captured their feelings about the separation between Duke and the real, or outside, world. Sarah, a junior, provided an
We get really caught up in our own world here, and it’s sometimes really easy to forget that there’s a whole other world out there that, you know, that exists. You’re surrounded by faculty and your peers—which is great—but most of my life revolves right around here… I eat here, live here, sleep here, study here… so Duke can be a bubble.

This “bubble” analogy is typical at highly residential institutions where the campus environment blocks out real-world distractions.

In 2006, an incident involving the men’s lacrosse team at Duke provided the world with a view into the Duke University environment. This incident involved the men’s lacrosse team hiring exotic dancers for an off-campus party. Although the indictments of three members of the Duke men’s lacrosse team were later dropped, there were many campus demonstrations by students and faculty during the spring semester of 2006. Most of these demonstrations centered on the social scene at Duke, including what behavior was appropriate for male student athletes.

The six juniors in this study began their college careers at Duke University the following August. Two of the participants, Carla and Nancy, described their hesitancy to matriculate at Duke University after hearing about this incident. Nancy had graduated from high school and was working in Europe for a year before beginning her postsecondary education. She clearly remembered weighing her decision to attend Duke University after the incident received national and then world-wide attention. After much thought, she decided to
continue with her plans to attend Duke in the fall of 2006. Carla commented on how the
campus felt touched by this incident when she arrived in the fall of 2006. Carla reflected on
how this “post-lacrosse” time influenced her new peers on campus:

A lot of us were unsure of what was happening to the school, but we heard a lot in
terms of [a] campus culture [that] was generally anti-women and misogynistic. As
freshmen, we had no idea what was going on, but there was definitely that feeling of
“oh, god, the campus hates women.”

As the Class of 2010 adjusted to life inside the Duke “bubble,” other characteristics of the
campus environment became apparent.

This “post-lacrosse” reputation layered onto an already competitive undergraduate
environment. The competition among highly selective research institutions is not new and
stems from talented, driven individuals being in close proximity. Sarah noted this as she
described being in the “bubble” of Duke:

So you’re constantly surrounded by your academic influences and you hear about all
these kids that are doing amazing things. You know, doing cancer research, and
solving this problem, and doing that.

In addition to talent and drive, resources are also readily available. This combination
provides an environment where students quickly turn competitive to reach their academic and
professional goals.

*Peer pressure to perform.* The first property in the category of the Duke environment
is the pressure students feel from their peers to academically and socially perform in
prescribed ways. Inside the Duke “bubble,” peer influence becomes magnified without outside perspective. From staying academically competitive in the classroom to being socially competitive at campus parties, the participants recognized pressure to maintain their standing.

In terms of academics, several participants shared frustration at the constant comparison other students made to delineate who had the best academic record. Stella, a sophomore, stated how in class there is a constant “how did you do, how did you do?” mentality. Megan, a senior, talked about students constantly asking, “what’s your MCAT score? What’s your GPA? What’s your major GPA?” Nancy, a junior, observed how this obsession with academic performance translated into how “people are incredibly geared toward their careers.”

Megan and Carolyn, who changed their majors from pre-med to economics and philosophy, respectively, saw this peer pressure towards high academic achievement to be more than negative chatter. Megan noticed the “tunnel vision that everyone seems to be living with” in terms of choosing majors and careers. Carolyn warned future women leaders at Duke to not feel “boxed in by what others tell you you should do or have to do.” Megan and Carolyn both had been confronted by peers questioning their decisions to change their majors away from the science field, and both felt those peers were too afraid to really think about other academic choices.

In addition to academic pressure from peers, many participants in this study believed that peers encouraged strong socialization. In describing their social lives as undergraduates,
the participants saw Greek life, especially fraternities, as being the dominate social scene at Duke University. Fraternities held the prime residential locations on West campus, as opposed to sororities, which had no on-campus housing, and therefore hosted on-campus parties throughout the year. Over a third of Duke undergraduates were Greek, and within the Greek system itself there was competition among peers to belong to the “top tier” Greek chapters for the better social life. Ashley, a senior, explained, “I didn't want to be in a sorority, but then when I got here I realized ‘oh, if you want to go out on the weekends and do certain things, then you have to be in one’.” Kasey, a sophomore in a different sorority, joined one because she felt like she “had to” in order to have a social life at Duke. She sounded disappointed when she noted, “There is not, in my opinion, a very visible alternative to the dominant social culture, which is Greek.” The social life at Duke revolved around the Greek community, particularly the fraternities who were able to host parties.

The Greek life-dominated social scene at Duke encouraged a homogenous environment where, as Crystal disclosed, “the students are generally VERY similar. [It’s] easy to fall into niches of people who are like you, and look like you.” This situation created more peer pressure for the participants. The friendships Ellie formed in the Greek community were linked to an excessive partying style. When Ellie decided to resign from her sorority as a junior, her socializing pattern changed. She avoided going out because of the likelihood that she would interact with peers she knew through her affiliation with her sorority. Ellie illustrated how her new peer group influenced her social behavior:

Sometimes the decision to go out is more if you want to deal with this group of
people or not—especially this year [after resigning from her sorority] because that
group of people did have a large influence over me in the past in terms of binge
drinking and bad behaviors like that—this year I've chosen not to go out as much. It's
been sad because I've lost some of my really good friends, but it was with this other
group of people that I don't really care for. So because I've chosen to stop those
behaviors, I've seen those friends a lot less.

The friendships Ellie formed in the Greek community were linked to the excessive
partying style seen through binge drinking and other (as Ellie expressed) “bad behaviors.”

While there were other social avenues at Duke, they did not have the same impact on
the campus as the Greek system did. The incoming president of the Duke Student
Government described how because the on-campus parties are hosted by men, the social
scene at Duke is controlled by males. She saw Duke Student Government as an extension of
that social scene, which made it even more surprising that a “black independent woman
Baldwin” won the election instead of “a fraternity guy.” Carla, a junior, noted that this
“dominant male social scene was not conductive to females getting ahead, or female
leadership, or pushing females to better themselves.”

This dominance of fraternities, and by extension males, at Duke University included
dating relationships. Participants candidly described the “hook-up culture” at Duke, which
represented the intimate interactions between men and women. Although not a phenomenon
specific to Duke, it had become the campus norm as the competitive nature of students
spilled over into their dating relationships. The traditional definition of “dating” is the
opposite of “hooking up,” which is defined as two people meeting, usually after drinking alcohol, quickly engage in physical intimacy, and then afterwards deciding if they will begin a relationship.

This “hook-up culture” creates an atmosphere in which both men and women compete for each other’s attention in social settings. It extends the concept of “work hard/play hard” to include physical conquests as the reward for an evening of partying. Julia mused over how unusual her decision to actually date someone first before “hooking up” seemed to her peers. Most of her peers had no experience with dating in college.

Several Baldwin Scholars noted that this competition to attract men for potential “hook-ups” led women to act differently when male students were present. Alison, a senior, noted, “I think there's a lot of girls here who try to 'dumb themselves down' so they can be more attractive to guys.” By toning down their intellectual characteristics, women appeared less intimidating to men, yet were perhaps less valued. Zee, a sophomore, noted that when she came to Duke as a freshman, she “was seeing a lot of women not necessarily holding themselves in high esteem” with the male students on campus.

One Baldwin Scholar, Emma, took this perception a step further and decided to confront a classmate [not a Baldwin] about this type of behavior. She described how the conversation transpired:

I have a class with this girl who I think is wonderful—she's sweet, and pretty, and nice, and a great writer, and I'll see her out, and she 'dumbs' herself down…and this girl's a close friend of mine, and other day, after dumbing herself down, I said to her
‘This is such a bad way of acting. I feel like you're really nice and smart.’ and she said 'It's way easier to be like this.’

Although Emma respected the classmate’s honesty, it was difficult for her to understand how this behavior was more beneficial for the friend. Emma was also in a monogamous relationship, and therefore was not participating in the hook-up culture.

Peers also influenced the daytime activities of Baldwin Scholars. When asked what constituted a typical day at Duke, several Baldwin Scholars discussed their crammed schedules, including classes, work, activities and meetings, and how hard it was to make time to simply “hang out” with friends. Many reflected on participating in daily exercise to help reduce stress and improve their overall personal health. Some chose running, either with a friend or alone, or swimming, and many mentioned going to the gym for their workouts. Alison, a senior, pointed out how the campus gym was also a competitive environment:

The pressure to go to the gym every day —that’s a healthy thing to do. But if you’re at the gym, you can’t help but look around and see everyone. There’s a lot of pressure to look good here.

This pressure to look good sometimes crossed the line of reasonable health and weight expectations. Participants asserted how this pressure to look good led to eating disorders, including anorexia and bulimia. Ellie, a senior, observed that “so many girls struggle with [eating disorders] here,” and was glad to see one woman’s letter to the editor in the daily Duke newspaper, The Chronicle. This letter detailed her struggle with eating disorders and told how even her closest friends on campus did not know about these problems. Instead of
signing “Anonymous” to this letter, the woman had decided to bravely sign her full name to help others recognize how easily these behaviors can go unnoticed. Emma reflected on how the diversity of the Baldwins includes those with eating disorders. She declared, “[t]en to fifteen percent of Baldwins, as strong and amazing as they are, represent that group with eating issues.”

Peer pressure to look good included more than achieving an ideal weight. Even for women who were not struggling with eating problems, there was still peer pressure over having the “right” material items. AJ, who disclosed her middle-class, Midwestern background, expressed disappointment in “the low diversity in socioeconomic status” at Duke. She explained, “Coming here where a lot of my friends are very wealthy, and went to private schools…it definitely threw me off when I first got here.” Emma remembered returning home for the first break and asking her mom why she never had any designer clothes in high school. Her mother replied that she was not aware Emma even knew those brands. After a few weeks on Duke’s campus, Emma replied, “Well, now I do.” Short Stuff also recounted how expensive new cars lined the student parking lots on campus. She noted that although not every student drove a luxury vehicle, the perception was that most students received a new car when they turned sixteen, and brought it with them to college.

Participants saw how these academic and social pressures affected the level of self confidence in some of their peers. Crystal, a junior, described how other women in her “top tier” sorority had low self-confidence even though they represented the pinnacle of social standing for women at Duke:
Being in a sorority—a sorority that is looked to often in terms of embodying the ideal—I see in so many girls that their confidence has gone down...dealing with eating disorder, or depression...it's really, really apparent of the disparity of where their confidence should be.

Further evidence of how Baldwin Scholars were open to disclosing this feeling was substantiated in a 2003 internal study on the status of women at Duke University, and discussed in the accompanying report. This report pointed out an overall drop in the self-confidence levels of women undergraduates over the course of their academic careers.

Ellie, a senior, reflected on how accurate she found that finding. She noted, “Everyone talks about women coming to Duke feeling empowered and leaving Duke feeling less empowered. I definitely think that's a real thing. I think it happens for all the reasons cited in the [Women’s Initiative Report] about pressures coming from so many different directions.”

In fact, while analyzing the annual report documents for the Baldwin Scholars Program, I found data verifying this drop in overall self-confidence. A group of women at Duke who did not participate in the Baldwin Scholars Program felt their level of self-confidence diminished over their undergraduate experience (see Appendix I). The control group of non-Baldwin Scholars chosen to participate in these survey assessments reported lower overall confidence.

Baldwin Scholars in this study recognized how their peers at Duke influenced their collegiate environment. The peer pressures to perform both academically and socially...
emphasized an atmosphere of competition among Duke undergraduates. Moreover, there was an additional pressure for women undergraduates at Duke: the pressure to succeed with no effort.

_The expectation of “effortless perfection.”_ Peer pressures increased for women undergraduates because their measure of success was more difficult to achieve than that of male undergraduates. While they strove for the same academic and social recognitions as their male peers, their effort was supposed to appear minimal. The second property of the Duke environment was the expectation that women should reach this academic and social level of success effortlessly.

While none of the participants in this study were on campus when the 2003 Women’s Initiative report was released, the phrase “effortless perfection” was well known among them, and most felt it was still appropriate in describing women undergraduates’ experience at Duke six years after the initial finding.

Sarah, a junior, asserted that “you can’t deny the fact that there is pressure to perform well academically, to be involved in numerous organizations, to be a leader on campus, to, you know, to be able to look gorgeous every single day, and to go to the gym and just fit it all in in 24 hours a day.” Kasey, a sophomore, agreed. “There's just this ideal that's accepted as a norm. And everyone knows what it is and no one knows who established it, but…I mean I don't really let it affect me, but I feel it.” It is interesting to note that Kasey notices the expectation of achieving effortless academic and social success, but does not feel that it has affected her. Emma, a senior, had a similar experience with looking up to upper-class women
at Duke:

I feel like it's harder for the younger girls looking at the older girls, because when you come in, you're intimidated—how are they getting the good jobs? How are they getting the good grades? How are they so skinny and athletic? And it was sophomore year a lot of my friends had eating disorders, or they'd work out four hours a day and try to get all their homework done, and I just feel like there's so much pressure at Duke, and then especially from viewing these girls who are perfect, even though they weren't, that sort of had an influence...it was stressful at times. It affected me, but it definitely affected some of my friends more.

She described not only the peer pressure at Duke to achieve academic and social success, but the additional pressure for women to do so perfectly. She felt, like Kasey, that she was not as affected by this additional pressure as other women on campus, perhaps because of her connection to the Baldwin Scholars Program.

Ellie noticed how “no one, especially women, want[s] to admit that there’s a problem, especially in the larger sense” of how this perceived behavior of achieving success without effort can affect the overall collegiate experience of women undergraduates. Emma agreed that women were the last to admit it was difficult to achieve success. She pointed out how the undergraduate women “put on a show” among men:

[They] don't let any [of their] vulnerabilities known among men. They don't talk about weight or anything in front of guys, and they will occasionally among girls, if you're a friend of theirs. But they have this even more intensely guarded among
women.

This guarding of private struggles from other women encourages the continuation of this model of “effortless perfection” because no one is communicating her difficulties.

Emma continued with her explanation of how guarded women are about sharing private concerns with other women:

So when you're sitting around a table, everyone's so conscious of themselves that nobody's going to let the rest know “I haven't eaten in 24 hours” or “I drink too much.” They just don't let anyone know, unless you're a close friend.

Crystal maintained that continuing to follow this model of “effortless perfection” can harm one’s self-confidence. She observed how her friends were negatively affected by following this pattern of achieving success through supposed minimal effort. She noted that “[e]ffortless perfection makes girls feel overwhelmed and they don't have enough time…I don't think I have enough time to take on other things, and also it's really hard on confidence levels.”

Women undergraduates were experiencing academic and social pressures from peers and facing the expectation to reach their goals effortlessly. This combination of pressures and expectations made it difficult to navigate their journeys toward self-discovery and academic enrichment even when creating positive college connections with faculty and co-curricular involvements.

To continue the “bubble” analogy, women in this study discussed searching for their best fit at Duke, which some women described as finding smaller bubbles, or niches, within
the Duke community. One could be part of several smaller bubbles, as Nancy, a junior, explained:

I think there are a bunch of different bubbles—one bubble would be my sorority, one bubble would be [her residence hall], one bubble would be whatever…and I think each bubble has a different level of intensity.

Her “fit” was a unique combination of these smaller environments, and Nancy could control how much energy and involvement she spent in each. Carolyn also noticed how “everyone” at Duke gravitated towards “sub-bubbles” filled with “people who [were] like ourselves.” Finding “sub-bubbles” that fit was an initial challenge, but then a second challenge was realizing that not everyone at Duke was represented in your niche.

Crystal, a junior, pointed this second challenge out in describing her “Greek bubble.” At first, it felt as if everyone on campus was represented in this bubble:

I think there's like 500 people in my bubble, and it's crowded, so it seems like “everyone” is here. It might even be everyone you know, but then you have to realize how many people you don't know at this school, and that they aren't [all] in this niche of Greek life.

This reflection that the entire school is not represented in one smaller “sub-bubble” is something that the Baldwin Scholars program helped Crystal to see. The creation of the Baldwin Scholars Program offered undergraduate women at Duke an option to the multiple “sub-bubbles” already available on campus.
An alternative to the competitive pressures swirling around the Duke campus was the creation in 2004 of the Baldwin Scholar Program. This program offered women undergraduates a cohort, single-sex leadership development during the four years of their collegiate experience.

The program recruited first-year women who through their application essays and interviews provided insight into why they wanted to be campus leaders. This was not limited to the traditional view of holding formal leadership positions, but rather included a wide definition of campus leaders. The program seemed to appeal to women who already felt they had something to offer and were able to share that sense with the program administrators. Alison, a senior, summarized this by sharing her thoughts of how "it seemed like they were looking for 'self-aware people' who wanted to develop their own skills, confidence-wise, personally, and professionally, and that was something that interested me." The Baldwin Scholars Program offered its alternative to the larger Duke environment through two properties. The first property, building community, concentrated on creating a “safe space” for Baldwin Scholars as they navigated the Duke environment. The second property is this new community supporting Baldwin Scholars as they spread across campus and lead with passion.

Building community in a “safe space.” These women were interested in and applied for the Baldwin Scholars Program in part because it represented to them a smaller community within the larger Duke community, which they were looking for as they explored
how to define their undergraduate experience. Kristen described the process of finding “different places to identify with.” First, she was part of an athletic team on campus. Second, she joined a sorority. Third, she participated in a residence life community-service program and became a Big Sister to a local elementary school girl. These involvements were time-consuming and meaningful, but she was still interested in finding a group where she felt she belonged.

Several other Baldwin Scholars expressed how quickly their schedules filled with their responsibilities and interests. This busyness was apparent in how infrequently they found time to hang out or eat with their friends. Alison talked about scheduling dinners with friends to make sure they happened regularly because everyone was “really, crazy busy.” Stella, a sophomore, explained how her close friends brought her dinner a few nights a week to wherever her next meeting was because they knew she did not have time to eat, and they were “looking out” for her. Several seniors reflected on how after their first year it took much more effort to meet new friends because everyone was “already settled” with their group of friends.

Looking for a community where they felt connected in spite of their overloaded schedules led many Baldwin Scholars to the program. One of the central tenants of this new campus community was to offer support to the Baldwin Scholars. This supportive network was created by both the program administrators and the other Baldwin Scholars.

Program administrators helped to create this supportive community by their openness and availability and by having the program be a safe space for the scholars to grow. In terms
of their availability, Sarah, a junior, asserted that she has “more of a support network here than I think most people, most women especially, on this campus have” by being in the Baldwin Scholar Program. Kristen, a senior, agreed and detailed how her non-Baldwin friends recognized the importance of having a community dedicated to her success: “My friends are really jealous—finding someone I can just call, and they don't really have anyone they can look up to, and so I feel that's really impacted my life.” This daily presence of women administrators seen as role models helped Kristen feel supported in her campus endeavors.

Megan and Zee both expressed gratitude for the safe space that Baldwin meetings and seminars allowed. Zee added, “Overall, I think that Baldwin describes the safe space for women to cultivate their [own] leadership.” Nancy saw how the role of the Baldwin Scholars program in her life had changed from when she first applied to the program: “I think what initially attracted me is the resource, but what has been the most meaningful hasn't necessarily been the money, but the presence of a support system.” This supportive atmosphere was seen as a safe place for Baldwin Scholars to grow and develop during their collegiate experience.

One structured experience of the program requires that each Baldwin Scholar meet with one of three program administrators every semester. These “check-ins” are meant to foster a mentoring relationship between the students and the administrators, to allow administrators to hear directly from the Scholars about their recent leadership experiences, and to provide a benchmark for the administrators to evaluate resources needed by Scholars
to maximize their undergraduate experience.

Ashley, a senior who was very involved in one of the “top tier” sororities, felt the Baldwin program offered a piece that was missing in her sorority experience. In explaining this added benefit, she recounted how “I like having an adult in my life who listens. Even if I don't ever need a [safety] net, I like knowing it's there." She then compared her experience to that of her roommate. Ashley believed that her roommate, who was not a Baldwin Scholar, could have also benefited from the attention of a respected administrator:

And I can't say where along the way somebody would have stepped in, but I know for a fact that somebody would have stepped in at some point and fixed a lot of the things that are now...a problem. And she's successful...you couldn't say something's “wrong” with her life, in fact she's extremely...she has a great life compared to most other people in the world, but if she had been in the Baldwin Scholars...it would be better.

This analysis matched the reflections of several other Baldwin Scholars on how their interactions with staff role models enhanced their collegiate experiences.

Another administrative component of the program that built community was the constant stream of information and announcements about what was happening on campus, in the Durham community, and around the world. Alison, a senior, coined the term “daily doses of inspiration” in discussing the daily emails from Baldwin administrators about happenings and opportunities on campus. Emma agreed, stating that “[The Assistant Director] floods our mailbox with a million and one things going on on-campus, so if you wanted to do everything and be at everything, it would be simple and easy, because she's provided it right
there for you.”

That these messages came consistently over a period of years was another important component of the leadership development program. Some messages and communications were especially for the Baldwin Scholars, while others were announcements made to all undergraduate students. Carolyn, a sophomore, explained how these intentional communications allowed her to feel connected to the Baldwin community. The daily contact showed how “the small influences add up to shaping my day-to-day experiences.” Nancy, a junior, expanded this to include not only how experiences could be made better but also how her thinking was slowly changing: “I think the power of my experience in Baldwin has been an aggregate of small interactions, and small things that make your day a little bit better, or make you see things differently.”

Between “daily check ins” and constant communication, the Baldwin Scholars Program administrators helped to build a supportive community for a diverse group of undergraduate women. In addition to the administrators, fellow Baldwin Scholars themselves contributed to the supportive community. Sarah recounted her understanding of the two levels of “being a Baldwin”:

[S]o I guess there’s like the Baldwin Scholars program in general…and then there’s the Baldwin Scholars themselves and the girls that I’m with, and I think they are what have influenced me when it comes to what organizations I’ve been involved with and stuff.

Sarah saw that in addition to the programmatic aspect of the leadership development
experience and support from the administrators, the community of women themselves became an important aspect of the program. Julia, a junior, captured this idea in her comment about why she wanted to apply to the Baldwin Scholars Program:

I really liked the idea of women bringing up other women, because I think sometimes you, especially when women are in an environment like this where it’s very successful, you find this adverse reaction to women competing with other women as opposed to helping one another. And I really wanted to be a part of a movement that that was like, “We are not competing. We are individuals and we should be helping each other and mentoring each other as a community, and as friends, and as partners.”

Jane also appreciated the opportunity to join this new collaborative community filled with other Baldwin Scholars motivated to make an impact in their college community. She admitted, “it was nice to know you weren't alone in what you wanted to do and you had people that were very interested in what they wanted to do and just the amount of energy in the room was very—was a breath of fresh air, to be cliché.”

This community was more than simply a random collection of women undergraduates at Duke. Adele noticed that other all-women environments she was a part of did not become a community as the Baldwin Scholars Program did. As an example, she remarked on a class she took as a sophomore called Women as Leaders

I have had experiences outside of the Baldwin program that have been gender related, but people were not as willing to share stories in that environment, even though we talked about race and gender, for example. We talked about the women's movement
and women's history, which is actually something we don't get a lot of in the Baldwin program…It wasn't as close an environment...It was all women, but because the women who didn't know each other weren't as willing to share their experiences.

The community of Baldwin Scholars participated in intentional programming to learn about themselves and each other, and this created a level of respect among the participants.

The undergraduate women involved in this supportive community formed what Sarah termed “a buffer” against competitive aspects of the campus environment. Sarah explained, “it’s like a group of peers, or a group of girls, that kind of, you know, protect you and kind of keep your head on straight.” Stella agreed and saw the four cohort classes as “a Baldwin army. It may be intimating to others, but it is important for the girls in the program to know that we're there for each other.”

There was already a feeling among current Baldwin Scholars that this connection to each other and sense of community would continue throughout their years as Duke alumnae. Sarah, a junior, stated:

I like to say, bragging, that we’re all good at what we do, we’re all passionate about what we do and have worked really hard to get where we are and where we want to be and so, like, ten years from now, there’s no telling where we’re going to be, which is really exciting.

Ellie, a senior, agreed, adding, “long term, Baldwin is going to be a really incredible network who are all going to do great things in the future.” It was already implied that the women who started as Baldwin Scholars expected to not only continue to reach their goals but also to
remain connected to the other women in this program.

*Becoming a Baldwin: “taking up space” on campus*

A second property of how the Baldwin Scholar Program environment influenced the individual women undergraduates is the category of becoming a Baldwin on campus. Becoming a Baldwin at Duke involved the concept of “taking up space” by celebrating their diversity and following their academic and co-curricular passions.

The phrase “taking up space” came from Stella’s rendition of her experience with a public speaking workshop offered for the Baldwin Scholars. Stella appreciated the public speaking course because, as a woman who stood close to six feet tall, she had a tendency to slouch in front of a group. Stella remarked on how the public speaking lecturer spoke to her individually about allowing herself to “take up space” when she was in front of a group. This meant standing straighter and using her height as part of her persona instead of trying to hide it. Stella saw this concept as a metaphor for not only physically filling a room, but also figuratively taking up space on campus by volunteering for events and activities.

This concept of “taking up space” applied to how Baldwin Scholars physically spread into the campus environment to take up space through their leadership. This physical taking up of space was matched by their perception that they had a right to these spaces or experiences, and they felt welcome in them.

In describing this new community, several participants focused on the layers of diversity present within and among each cohort. As Short Stuff described the diversity in the Baldwin Scholars’ backgrounds, Adele, a senior, also saw the diversity in how others spent
their time on campus. Her phrase “corners of campus” captured how the program draws from a wide pool to recruit and select each new cohort of Baldwin Scholars. Adele reflected on how “[b]eing part of this community introduced me to 'corners of campus' and to people that I would not have met otherwise.” Several participants echoed her observation of how the women in the program would not have met except by joining the Baldwin Scholars program.

Ellie, a senior, remarked how the program "gave me a chance to meet a very diverse set of women who I know for a fact I would not have known these women if it weren't for the program.” Carolyn agreed, adding, “I would never have met them or become friends with them otherwise because we're all…we're just ridiculously different.”

Their one commonality seemed to be that they were all selected for the Baldwin Scholar program in an attempt by the administration to create an alternative model to the pressures of “effortless perfection” for women undergraduates. Carla saw this commonality as a strength when she reported that “[t]hey pull us from all over and our one link is our commitment to Baldwin.” The fact that these women were chosen to become Baldwin Scholars propelled them into this new campus community.

Although one of the running jokes throughout the interviews was how infrequently Baldwins agreed on anything, there was also enough mutual respect to “agree to disagree” on certain issues. Ellie illustrated this point:

We're so diverse and we always disagree, but I have such a great level of respect for all my fellow Baldwins that I'm willing to sit there and listen to them, and we can
either hash it out in an intelligent conversation, or we can agree to disagree.

This respect did not necessarily equate to being best friends with everyone in the program. Crystal realized that she “may not be the best of friends with all of them, but I feel like I know them and I’ve seen them in all kinds of ways.” This connection formed a level of mutual respect among the diverse participants and allowed them to feel supported as they became leaders on campus.

This supportive community of diverse women propelled participants into aligning their values and responsibilities. This alignment began for most with being passionate about their commitments and then dedicating their time and energy toward being leaders in these areas. Jane appreciated this shared sense of passion for what they valued: “[I]t was nice to see a bunch of women, young women, same year as myself that were really passionate.” Many participants connected exploring their passions with finding their “fit” on campus. They wanted to be associated with areas that they valued and were important to their personal development. As first-year students exploring the “sub-bubbles” at Duke, they would, as Kristen mentioned, spend time “trying to find different places to identify with.” One of these places for the women was the Baldwin Scholar Program.

Once the interest groups or campus involvements were selected, it was a natural progression to move from participant to leader in that activity or organization. Ashley said that valuing the mission of a group inspired students to become leaders:

[S]o whatever group you're in, if you value what they stand for and what activities they're doing, I think taking a leadership position in those is a great way to get to
know everybody in them, and then actually contribute to something you care about. Carla pointed out that if an organization was important, it made sense to devote time to its success: “[I]t's a matter of you being devoted to an organization, and having a vision of it and wanting to make it better.” And for many students, devoting more time equated to holding leadership positions.

Some Scholars reported how their commitment to finding their passion was influenced not by continual involvement in certain organizations but by their one-time involvement in a campus-sponsored event. Jane recounted how this happened for her when participating in the Duke community experience called “Common Ground.” This four-day retreat takes male and female students off campus to engage in meaningful conversations on sensitive topics such as gender, sexuality, class, and race.

When the group shared their personal stories on the last night, Jane felt a level of compassion for them that contrasted with her experience in Duke’s Student Government. She felt this passionate display of one’s commitment to making a difference at Duke was “the opposite of the DSG meeting[s].” She felt the shared reflection was something that “tends to get lost in the, you know, the gruel of academic life, and student life here at Duke.” Her participation in this formal community experience helped her feel comfortable aligning her passions with her co-curricular involvement at Duke.

In addition to co-curricular involvements, Baldwin Scholars also shared their passion for academics. Adele and Zee both pointed out how few students seemed to be invested in their academics. Adele said she did not feel “like people are connected to their academics—
especially for material that has political implications or things that I'm personally invested in. You know you like to see other people be personally invested in it.” Zee also noticed that other students were doing the minimum required to complete their coursework. Zee liked to spend time researching areas of interest to her in her major for possible topics in later papers, but she did not notice others doing the same. Her passion for her studies was bolstered by her participation in the Baldwin Scholars Program, where a community of diverse women also unabashedly shared their passions.

In summary of environmental influences, this study found Baldwin Scholars influenced by two distinct environments: Duke University and the Baldwin Scholar Program. The environment of Duke University included peer pressure to perform academically and socially. In addition to these pressures, women undergraduates had a societal expectation to achieve success without showing effort. The environment of the Baldwin Scholars Program included a supportive community nested within the competitiveness of these academic and social peer pressures. This supportive environment enabled Baldwin Scholars in this study to “take up space” as campus leaders at Duke University. In the next section, I will discuss the Baldwin Scholar Program’s impact on the undergraduate students, as well as the students’ impact on Duke University.

**Behavioral Outcomes**

The interaction between the women undergraduate students and their environmental influences can be categorized in two findings. The first category represents the environmental impact on the Baldwin Scholar students. Through committing campus
resources and helping to develop a gendered perspective, the university has redefined student leadership. The second category represents the student impact on Duke University. Through their individual and collective roles as motivators, change agents and campus leaders, the Baldwin Scholars are enhancing the campus environment.

**Environmental Impact: Redefining Leadership**

The first finding of behavioral outcomes focused on how actions of Duke University and the administrators of the Baldwin Scholars Program impacted the involved students. There was a deliberate decision on the part of the University to begin the Baldwin Scholars Program as a campus initiative, and the necessary resources for the program to be successful were found. In addition, the Baldwin Scholars administrators developed seminar curriculum that intentionally focused on widening the perspective of the participants. The properties of committing campus resources and developing a gendered perspective further define this category.

*Committing campus resources.* Duke University is known among its students for its seemingly unlimited resources available to students. AJ, a senior, detailed “how great the research opportunities are here, and being a pre-med with the medical center” was wonderful. Sarah, a junior, mentioned how she was going to Ireland on an international travel expedition in a few months, and how she “could only imagine [herself] in that opportunity because I went to Duke.” Short Stuff, a junior, described the wide range of resources available at Duke in general:
Duke has a lot of resources which is well known for, what it’s acclaimed for, and really utilizing those resources—our vast library, all of our academic and social and just entertainment resources, and the fabulous performances, I mean you can really do—you can do what your heart desires at Duke. You can research anything. You can study anything that you want, and you can really decide what your legacy is going to be at Duke, and then take all the steps you need to do. There’s also someone willing to help you, encourage you and support you. It’s really just about being able to go out and find these things, figure out who those people are, and make a contact with them.

When describing to me why they had decided to join the Baldwin Scholars Program, most participants explained that they first wanted to find an opportunity that offered specific, directed resources to them throughout their undergraduate experience. Kasey, a sophomore, joked, “how could you not take advantage of this?” in listening to the information sessions that began the Baldwin Scholars recruitment.

Crystal amplified this point by observing how “Duke was able to fork over the money for four undergraduate students to go to a conference in Dubai. Most schools wouldn't have the capacity in doing [this]." The dedicated financial commitment to the Baldwin Scholars program meant that women in the program could apply for funding throughout the year for leadership opportunities. The participants in this study reported that these requests were usually granted and allowed the Scholars to enjoy these leadership experiences.

Since the Baldwin Scholar Program’s inception after the Women’s Initiative Study final report, there has been a consistent stream of financial resources to maintain this multi-
faceted leadership development program. First, the program has dedicated space on East Campus. This space consists of a conference room used for the first-year and senior seminar courses as well as for private receptions throughout the year. The walls of this room are lined with current and seminal works about women and leadership. In addition, there is also dedicated office space for two program administrators.

This room was outfitted with a key card security system so that Baldwin Scholars can enter the space after hours. During my data collection, I observed this space being used for activities that ranged from creating posters for Duke Student Government elections, to a study group meeting, to various informal chat sessions with the office receptionist, who was also a Baldwin. The graduation ceremony for the Class of 2009 took place in an auditorium in the same building, and the reception took place in the conference room. This Baldwin Scholar space is warm and inviting, and it signals to the participants that they are valued at the institution. Both the space and the financial resources send a message to participants in the program that Duke is dedicated to this program’s success.

*Developing a gendered perspective.* The development of a gendered perspective is a second property of the finding that the environment influenced the students. This perspective came from seminar readings and discussions as well as from informal conversations with other Baldwins throughout their collegiate experience.

In looking at the development of a gendered perspective through the seminars, the Baldwin Scholar Program had two seminar components. The first is in the spring semester for first-year students, and the second is in the fall semester of the senior year. Both of these
seminars focus on exposing Baldwin Scholars to the status of women in different career fields and in society in general. The “safe space” created by the community of Baldwin Scholars allows for open and direct feedback on these issues: it also allows Baldwin Scholars time to reflect on their future as women leaders in society.

Several women I interviewed mentioned that, until the Baldwin Scholar seminars, they had not thought about their status as a woman in society. Jane, a sophomore, spoke about how her identity changed once she came to Duke:

I never thought of myself as a woman before I came to Duke's campus. That wasn't a big identity of mine. I thought of myself as a daughter, as a student, kind of like the “chain of command thing, and then when you get to Duke you all of a sudden think, "I'm a freshman girl. I'm a freshman woman."

Participants also did not realize they had feminist ideologies before these experiences. Kristen, a senior, said, “I never really thought about—I never considered myself a feminist or thought about women's issues as much. I of course wanted equality for women, but it just wasn't my top thing to focus on.” Nancy, a junior, said, "I never paid attention to women—and gender distinctions—before this. But since becoming a Baldwin…through a few different conversations in the first freshman class…I think that re-aligned a little bit of...my lens, I guess. I pay attention now...a lot!”

Emma, a senior, went even further with her analysis of how the Baldwin Scholars program had highlighted inequities for women:
Most women who come to Duke have their regular eyes on, then all of a sudden I was given my Baldwin glasses. My Baldwin glasses are like, “problem, problem, problem, problem—fix it, fix it, fix it.” So you see everything wrong. The only problem is that Baldwin glasses don't come with Baldwin Band-Aids, so you can't like fix everything, so you're like, “Where am I going to start?” So I think the Baldwins have opened my eyes to how to instigate change, and how to see something and make a difference, and how to be a strong woman.

This exposure to gender inequities affected most people in a positive way, motivating them to change the situation.

Once Baldwin Scholars learned of issues still facing women today, the question became how they were going to take that information with them. AJ, a senior, talked about being prepared after the senior seminar class: “I’ve gained a broader sense of what to expect…and how to prepare for it, and kind of how to face those hurdles.” Ellie agreed, and said that becoming aware of inequalities in the professions “left us a little disheartened, but also left us equipped for what we’ll encounter in our own lives.” She continued, saying how these seminars helped her to separate individual and systematic issues: “I'll know more readily that it is a discrimination and that it's not just me…underlying societal current, and not a personal thing.”

As Stella spoke of the “Baldwin Army,” Ashley described the seminar lectures and discussions as making her prepared for battle:

This was a form of armory for me and maybe I'll be a little less innocent and I'll come
off as a little more abrasive, and I won't be as nice to play with as all the other girls, but I will be prepared and I will know what's coming at me, and that's fine with me if that's what I need to sacrifice. I'll find other ways to feel feminine and to embrace my gender and feel “soft” and all of those things, but I will not be ignorant so I can continue to feel like a woman, because that's just not OK with me.

Ashley’s defiance about not letting her femininity water down her gendered perspective is exactly what the researchers involved in the Women’s Initiative Study envisioned for future women undergraduates at Duke. Without removing herself from the social realm at Duke, Ashley has still used her voice to describe her feelings on gender. She was still a leader in her “top tier” sorority, and she was still academically successful. As opposed to most women undergraduates at Duke, she was also comfortable asserting her gendered perspective.

Duke University’s commitment of campus resources and the influence of the Baldwin Scholars Program in terms of helping the Scholars develop a gendered perspective are both important in the success of this leadership development program and the collegiate experiences of these undergraduate women.

*The Student Impact: What it means to be a Baldwin*

A second finding of the behavioral outcomes was the Baldwin Scholars’ impact on each other, their peers, and Duke University. The three properties of being a motivator, change agent, and institutional leader further define this behavioral outcome.

*Motivator to other Baldwins.* The first property of this category of student impact was
the ability of Baldwin Scholars to motivate others in the program to reach their personal and academic goals. Sarah, a junior, told how the program had “given me, I guess the confidence to take some of the roles that I’ve taken on, and reassured me that like I can lead an organization, I can achieve just as much as, you know, whoever else there is. Just seeing what other people are doing has just kind of pushed me to do that much more.” The diversity in the community allows for others to remain motivated because, with 72 Scholars, there is always someone starting something new and different.

One component of the program is the weekly Saturday afternoon Baldwin meeting. These gatherings can sometimes lack direction because of administrators’ decision not to program them. When the Saturday meetings seem to meander through repeated subjects, the Scholars will initiate an agenda item, or bring a topic up for discussion, to use the power of the collected community. These conversations are what Carla is referring to when she discusses how she became motivated by other Baldwins: “When someone takes a risk—that is inspiration.”

Nancy had experience in this Baldwin motivation beyond hearing what others were doing. She was the one thinking about starting something new, and she credits her involvement that quickly in her collegiate career to the motivation and support she received from her Baldwin community. During her first year at Duke, she decided to run for Duke Student Government. As she said, “I don’t think I would have run for DSG my freshmen year if I had not been really, really, really encouraged…I wouldn’t have run without the pushing, or without the support.”
Change agent on campus. The second property of the student impact on the institution is as change agents across campus. One of the participants in this study had recently been elected to be the first female Duke Student Government President in over a decade. She evaluated how being a Baldwin Scholar helped her campaign on a number of levels.

First, she had many Baldwin Scholars help her to “flier” the campus, update their Facebook status, and send out email reminders to the organizations they were involved with to remind them of her candidacy. Secondly, she had a community of supporters that stretched to the “corners of campus” and included those in the Greek system, others involved in the DSG, and many other organizations. Third, she had the respect of 71 other Baldwin Scholars who had spent time with her in weekly meetings, including her cohort of 17 other juniors who had participated in a seminar with her and lived with her during their sophomore year. This Baldwin Scholar was well qualified for the presidency, but she admitted that being a Baldwin had probably helped her win the election.

There were other examples of ways Baldwin Scholars acted as change agents to motivate non-Baldwin Scholars to work together to institute change. Nancy created a new Duke University student organization called Women’s Mentoring Network (WMN) that connects freshmen women to upper-class women in a variety of programs throughout the year. Her intent with starting this new initiative at Duke was to encourage mentoring relationships between first year women and upper-class women. AJ was currently president of the Females Excelling More in Math, Engineering and Science program (FEMMES) on
campus that offers a one-day outreach program in the spring designed to bring hundreds of fourth through sixth grade girls from Durham together on Duke’s campus to expose them to math, engineering and science curriculum. Ellie and Julia were selected to travel with the Duke Women's Institute for Secondary Education and Research (WISER) program to Kenya to help participate in an all-girls boarding school project. These women were acting as change agents on campus, locally, and internationally.

Nancy was encouraged to create her mentoring student group because of her connection with the Baldwin Scholars Program. She saw the need for more mentoring opportunities on campus, and was encouraged by her peers and administrators to move forward on her idea. AJ wanted to lead the FEMMES project because she also saw the importance of exposing local girls to the sciences. Ellie and Julia had heard about the WISER program from other Baldwins and wanted to join them in reaching out to young girls in Kenya who would benefit from a new boarding school. Ashley reflected, “I don't think this happens in the sorority, or in the business group—very pragmatic, networking—and Baldwin is networking, but networking for life and for emotional support as well as career and academic stuff.” This networking for life reflects the strong sense of community developed by the program and then how this supportive community bolsters the individual Baldwin to make a difference.

*Leader at the institution.* The third property of this finding of student impact was the Baldwin Scholars being seen as institutional leaders. The Baldwin Scholars community had created a safe space for participants to explore who they were. Sarah, a junior, explained how
simply “being a Baldwin” was being a leader:

I think being a Baldwin is being a leader. I think that even when you say you’re a Baldwin Scholar you are representing something and representing something—kind of an idea—so in that sense you’re like, part of being a leader is having responsibility, and so I have responsibility to carry myself in such a way that would—wouldn’t put like “shame to the name.”

For example, several seniors noticed male students would tease women who pointed out too many inconsistencies in the treatment of women at Duke. There was even a derogatory term for these women that rephrased “feminists” as “Feminazis.”. Ashley noticed how this anti-feminist perspective colored the perception of women leaders at Duke. If women could be campus leaders without bringing up feminist issues, that was considered acceptable. But women leaders who also pointed out gender disparities were at risk of being made fun of by male students.

Ashley forcefully maintained she was “OK with the persona of being a leader [at Duke]” even though she felt “there is a kind of stigma attached to that.” As a senior, reflecting on her four years of strong formal leadership experiences, including being vice president of a top tier sorority, Ashley did not “for a minute regret having that stigma [of being a leader] attached to me.” She further explained that her experience as a leader helped her separate her positive contributions from the negative perceptions of some of her peers:

It's like something that I'm proud of now. And if that's like unattractive to other people, it's unattractive to guys, that's fine. And I hope, I mean sometimes you don't
think that “Oh, it couldn't possibly affect me—Who would actually judge you for being a leader on campus?” But it happens, and people are...I mean I wouldn't even have to say that they are intimidated, but they could just purely be turned off by that. But if they're that type of person, then that's fine.

This ability to proceed confidently in her leadership experiences shows how Ashley is not influenced by her peers’ negative perceptions of women student leaders.

Many Baldwin Scholars I spoke to took seriously the mission of the Baldwin Scholars program to create new avenues for campus culture at Duke University. Some Baldwin Scholars are bypassing the traditional social scene at Duke and choosing healthier alternatives. Sarah, a junior, talked about how “fraternities that have some really demeaning parties and stuff, and I, by choice, am like, ‘I am not going to that, I don’t want to be involved in that, I don’t want to be associated with that.’”

This study coincided with the five-year review for the Baldwin Scholars. In reflecting on how they see the program moving forward, all the participants in this study felt that this program was at the least worthwhile and at best, life-changing in terms of developing women undergraduate student leaders at Duke. Julia observed how this program forced her to ask herself some hard questions:

[It] challenged me in the ways that I needed to be challenged. It really made me look at who am I as a Duke student? Who am I as a female Duke student? Who am I as a leader? Who am I as a female leader? And to really just see to challenge some of the notions I have about females—female students, female leaders.
In addition to wanting to keep the Baldwin Scholars Program at Duke, all of the participants in this study did not want the number of women in the program to expand. They felt the closeness of the community created by the administrators and the Baldwins themselves would get lost in a larger group.

Some did suggest there should be other programs like the Baldwin Scholars Program started at Duke to increase the number of women who could benefit from a single-sex leadership development program at a coeducational institution. They wanted to share their experiences of creating a supportive community, developing their self-confidence, and following their passions, but they thought the best way for that to happen was to have additional programs for the majority of women not able to take advantage of the Baldwin Scholars Program.

Several of my participants talked about being “Baldwins for life” and having a mini-alumnae group to tap into in the future. Short Stuff, a junior, talked about her Baldwin Scholar peers as knowing “what they want to do, as far as at Duke, what kind of legacy they want to leave, so in that way they have it together. A well-rounded person, they’re respectful, they’re mindful, they’re passionate.” By identifying as a Baldwin, these women used the vast resources available from Duke along with the supportive community of Baldwins to create a pivotal undergraduate experience.

In summary, these women were participating in a cohort leadership development program for women at a highly selective, coeducational research university. Their background provided examples of prior leadership experiences, and they had self-
selected to apply to this program. After being chosen for the four-year leadership
development commitment, the participants in this study illustrated the supportive Baldwin
community and the importance of this community in reaching their leadership goals. These
behavioral outcomes can be categorized into two findings. The first category represents the
impact of the Baldwin Scholars Program on the women participants in this study. The second
category represents the impact of these students on Duke University.
This qualitative study captured the stories of 19 undergraduate women at Duke University who were in the Baldwin Scholars Program. The purpose of this interpretive case study was to explore the collegiate experiences of sophomore, junior, and senior undergraduate women participating in a cohort women’s-only leadership development program at a coeducational institution. Using a theoretical framework based on Kurt Lewin’s psychosocial model of behavior being the function of a person interacting with the environment \((B=f(P,E))\), this study explored the following research questions:

1. What are the collegiate experiences of undergraduate women at a coeducational institution?
2. How are undergraduate women in a coeducational institution shaped by their environment?
3. What are the behavioral outcomes of undergraduate women participating in a leadership program at a coeducational institution?

Lewinian Model of Behavior

One of Lewin’s contributions to social psychology was his model of behavior, which included his concept of field theory (Sheehy, 2004). Lewin’s field theory was the idea that a “field” was created through the action of opposing forces for an individual. These opposing forces create data from events, and an individual’s behavior is then derived from a totality of the data from events. Lewin called this “field” a “life space,” and a person’s life space
comprised all influences acting on the individual at a given time (Marrow, 1969). Lewin, although recognizing the importance of history, felt that behavior was not dependent on the past or the future but rather on the “here and now” (Marrow, 1969).

Lewin’s concept of “life space” included a spatial depiction for understanding one’s behavior. This spatial depiction was long ovals, or Jordan curves, or, as his students dubbed them, “little eggs” (Marrow, p. 22). Everything included inside these Jordan curves represented the person and the psychological environment that influenced the behavior of an individual. The space outside these curves represented the outside influences of either physical or social facts.

Lewin further described his theory of every individual having his own “life space,” and one of the most important components is the group to which the individual belongs. The family group represents the first and usually most lasting group, but as he moves into adulthood, the individual will become a member of different social groups. Different groups may become more important at different times, and the individual will remain aware of which group he belongs to and which group he does not (Marrow, 1969).

In researching the undergraduate women in the Baldwin Scholars Program at Duke University, I asked about their collegiate experiences. Using the Lewinian model of behavior, I analyzed my data to examine the individuals, their environment, and how the potential interaction between the two affected their behavior.

*Person*

Lewin’s definition of the *person* equates to the self, or individual. For this study, the
person part of the Lewinian equation was the 19 undergraduate women at Duke University in the Baldwin Scholars Program. The participants were traditionally-aged sophomores, juniors, and seniors ranging from 19 years old to 22 years old. The women I interviewed represented a wide range of diversity in their ethnicity, academic majors, career interests, and involvement on campus (see Table 4.1 and 4.2). All had lived on campus for at least their first and second year in college, but most were living off campus when we met. The women in this study came from outside the state of North Carolina, where Duke is located, and almost all had international travel experiences while in college. Given these demographic characteristics, the participants in this study were representative of other women undergraduates at Duke University.

The women in this study were also representative of the national demographic data on women undergraduates across the nation. Sax’s (2008) research from Cooperative Institutional Research Program (CIRP) databases shows a wide diversity in the ethnicities and socioeconomic groups of women attending college today. This was true of my participants. For example, out of the 19 women participants, 11 were Caucasian, two were Black, four were Asian, one was an international student, and one was Native American. Socioeconomic status was also widely varied in the sample. The range of women in this study included those who had private nannies growing up, went out of state to exclusive boarding high schools, and did not work during the school year; to those who self-identified as being “middle-class,” were very concerned with financing their higher education, worked more than 10 hours a week while in school, and did not have cars on campus. Examples of
these demographic characteristics came up multiple times during the interview process, when women discussed initially meeting other Baldwin Scholars and learning about their backgrounds. Observing the diversity of Baldwin Scholars, Short Stuff, a junior, shared thoughts about when the newest class of Baldwin Scholars arrived:

And it’s just amazing like no two Baldwins in a class at the very least are the same anything. It’s amazing. And, it’s even more amazing because again, it’s like you have to share this story because you could look at Baldwins and you can see, OK, they’re diverse, these people are Black, there are some Latinas, they’re Spanish, like, I mean, your mind is still going to categorize based on this. But then you’re like, “Wait, she’s Black but she’s from Trinidad; and she’s Black but she’s actually from Mexico; and you know she’s Latina, but she’s Dominican; and she’s Latina, but she’s Bronx Puerto Rican. Like, you know, then you start to see all these nuances. And I think that’s sort of—I don’t want to say the pillars of Baldwin Scholars, but it is like these nuances, what—even though we are the same—what are those things that make us special and unique and different, and able to contribute something, you know, positive and better to our little mini-society that we have.

This diversity was something the Baldwin Scholars saw as a benefit to their program and the community they were creating. They appreciated the different backgrounds and diverse viewpoints of their fellow Baldwins. Carolyn, a sophomore, told me how much she enjoyed “just being able to interact with people who are so diverse and yet have a similar
goal in [that] we want to make positive impact.” Kasey, a sophomore, added that “being plugged into a group of women who are…all very diverse yet likeminded in many ways in terms of the things that matter to me” was one of her favorite aspects of being a Baldwin Scholar.

The Baldwin Scholars in this study also reported high levels of academic achievement and strong intellectual self-confidence. Emma, a senior, identified herself as a “very strong student.” Megan, a senior, talked about how she was worried at first coming from a public school system that she would be behind in her academics: “I didn't feel like I wasn't prepared, but just didn't know if I'd be 'smart enough'…[but] it's not that hard here.” Several other participants proudly detailed their academic skills and seemed confident in their academic abilities. Five mentioned their ability to write well, and most talked about how they were good students overall.

These findings ran counter to current research on women undergraduates. Sax (2008) reported that women undergraduates have comparatively low academic and intellectual self-confidence, even when they are academically achieving at high levels. She reported in her study that “the gender gap in intellectual self-confidence actually widens over four years of college” (Sax, p. 79), and men did not seem to be affected by a perceived negative encounter with faculty. Sax points out how “competence does not always translate into confidence” (p. 29) for women undergraduates. Women undergraduates also tend to connect their physical and emotional health, and those in authority, especially faculty, can have an impact on them if their own health is positive or negative (Sax, 2008).
These findings suggest that the intellectual self-confidence of women in a supportive single-sex environment may not wane compared to women in a traditional coeducational setting. The women in this study reported a high level of intellectual self-confidence. In addition, the Baldwin Scholars in this study were making connections with faculty, and these perceived positive academic encounters could help to maintain their high intellectual self-confidence.

The participants in this study connected their physical fitness to their emotional health. Almost every woman I talked to mentioned her conscientious decision to exercise daily. Their routine physical exercise helped them to manage the expected college stressors of academic deadlines and assignments. But the participants also clarified that they were not obsessed with exercising like the “group of women always in their gym clothes” on campus. These other women were overly conscious of their body image rather than their physical health.

This group of Baldwin scholars noticed that an over-emphasis on diet and exercise sometimes led to unhealthy eating behaviors for these women. Ashley, a senior, said “half the girls I know are a little weird about their eating habits and their working out stuff”; she also explained her roommates’ eating behaviors and how easy it was to lose perspective on what is considered normal:

I live with two other girls and they go to the gym everyday, and all of us eat pretty much all organic food. If you go to our apartment and you want something to drink, your options are tea and water—we don't have soda—and
if you open our fridge, you'd be like “who lives here?” because there's a lot of
like squash and vegetables and stuff that I realize is not normal for the rest of
America to eat.

When physically unhealthy patterns start to dominate one’s daily routine, an unhealthy
connection can develop between physical and emotional health. Most of the Baldwin
Scholars in this study knew of someone with an eating disorder. Ellie, a senior, felt "so many
girls struggle with it [eating disorders] here.” Crystal, a junior, shared how "being in a
sorority, a sorority that is looked too often in terms of embodying the ideal, I see it in so
many girls that their confidence has gone down, dealing with eating disorder, or
depression…it's really, really apparent of the disparity of where their confidence should be."
What Crystal is seeing is that a weakened emotional state could quickly lead to lower
emotional self-confidence.

In addition to impacting the intellectual and emotional dimensions of undergraduate
women, self-confidence is also connected with women undergraduates’ interest in being
leaders on campus and in the community (Sax, 2008). Participation in co-curricular
opportunities, as well as academic engagement, can increase the self-confidence level of
women undergraduates, and this increased self-confidence can lead to a “sense of leadership
confidence” (Sax, p. 97) for women during their collegiate experience. To explore whether
the Baldwin Scholars in this study had this leadership confidence, I examined their sense of
self through the three categories I illuminated in the data: self-discovery, academic
enrichment, and creating connections.
The participants in this study were creating their undergraduate experience at Duke University. Part of this experience included their personal journeys of self-discovery. These journeys included the support of their family, the development of their self-knowledge, and the use of their voice in defining their adult selves.

Researchers over the last thirty years (Belenky et al., 1997; Chickering & Reiser, 1993; Gilligan, 1982; Josselson, 1987) have looked at the processes of psychosocial and cognitive-structural development for women undergraduates. The traditional student development theories based on white affluent males were updated to include the data of women of different ethnicities and socioeconomic status. These changes included the addition of an “ethic of care” in moral development (Gilligan, 1982), and a “women’s way of knowing” in cognitive-structural development (Belenky, et al., 1997). In addition, Chickering’s Seven Vectors were updated to include new information on how women students process their identity development (Chickering & Reiser, 1993).

One update to Chickering’s theory was the acknowledgment that personal autonomy did not have to be achieved at the expense of attachment to family. Research had shown that relationships were important in the psychological development of women (Gilligan, 1988; Josselson, 1988). Researchers studying family dynamics noticed that women were closely attached to their families (Kenny, 1990; Lapsley, Rice, & Shadid, 1989; Kenny & Donaldson, 1991). Gilligan (1982) noted that if separation was seen as the norm for psychological maturity, then women who preferred relationships and an attachment to their family...
families might be seen as less competent.

In fact, the attachment model could help promote autonomy instead of being negatively linked with dependency (Ainsworth, Blebar, Walters, and Wally, 1978). When the relationships are healthy, parental attachment with their college-aged children could help the students navigate the transition to college (Kenny & Donaldson, 1991). Recent research has continued to show that having a supportive relationship with their parents had a positive impact on students’ success (Creamer & Laughlin, 2005; Hiester, Nordstrom, & Swenson, 2009), including a better adjustment to college (Mattanah, Hancock, & Brand, 2004). Chickering and Reiser (1993) renamed their fourth vector Moving through Autonomy Toward Interdependence to acknowledge that both connection and autonomy were important.

As seen in the literature (Creamer & Laughlin, 2005; Hiester, Nordstrom, & Swenson, 2009; Mattanah, Hancock, & Brand, 2004) on college students’ relationships with their parents, the Baldwin Scholars I met had strong relationships with their parents and families. Many of the women I interviewed spoke of the strong support they had received from their parents and other adult family members. Some women talked of this support in terms of their parents encouraging them to pursue activities that may not have seemed “feminine,” such as karate. Others talked of their parents supporting them in their high school interests. Emma, a senior, spoke of how her mother support her effort in high school to start a community program to stop school bullies.

When the topic of joining the Baldwin Scholars Program came up in their interviews, many women shared how their parents were the first ones to encourage them to apply to this
program. Ashley, a senior, mentioned how her father had been the first one to talk about applying to the program: “My dad was actually the one who picked it up and said 'this looks great', 'this looks like something you should do' and I was like 'ok, sure, I'll do it". Kristen, a senior, recalled how she was hesitant to tell her parents she had applied to the Baldwin Scholars Program: “I didn’t want to tell them I had applied at first…didn’t want to get their hopes up, I guess….“ When she was accepted into the program, she called them, and they were “thrilled” for her. Adele’s parents did not want her to get involved in the Baldwin Scholars Program at first because they were leery of the tangible benefits and afraid that the time involved would distract from her academic pursuits. “They’ve come around now,” Adele said during her interview, but their input was certainly remembered three years later. All of the Baldwin Scholars in this study spoke positively about their relationship with their parents and reported a strong sense of support from their families in navigating their college success.

With the ability to be connected constantly through electronic mail, cell phones, and social networking, students can and do keep up this attachment throughout their collegiate experience. Some scholars mentioned about how they talked to their mother every day. Some jokingly mentioned how they would not necessarily want their mothers to be on campus with them, but the immediate contact through cell phones and emails was imperative for the women students to feel grounded. For example, two women, both seniors, were having issues with their roommates. As they detailed the situation, both mentioned that their mothers were aware of the situation and had offered their opinion and advice. Both seniors welcomed their
mothers’ analysis and were comfortable sharing this close connection their mothers.

This strong base of family support seemed to help the participants carve out their self-knowledge in college. Several expressed their internal struggles in deciding on their academic discipline—and by association their career choices—and how their family was helpful in making these decisions. For example, five women were considering medical school in their future and spoke of conversations they had with their families about choosing when to attend.

Their self-knowledge came from both informal conversations with various Duke constituents and formal learning environments through the Baldwin Scholars Program. Short Stuff, a junior, shared how a popular gathering space outside of the Commons had been the venue for many informal conversations with peers over the years. This space, a public bench, had at least one student there every day when Short Stuff walked past. She would invariably stop and “catch up” with the other students. She was surprised how often the conversations would be of a deeper, more reflective nature than simple conversation. Many of her opinions on Duke and community issues were shaped by her interactions with others at this bench.

*Academic Enrichment.*

The Baldwin Scholars were also journeying to academic enrichment at Duke. This academic enrichment entails both their efforts to be successful in the classroom and their focus on learning for learning’s sake.

The participants in my study were eager to describe student experiences at Duke University and the opportunities they were participating in to enrich their academic progress...
while undergraduate students. Many mentioned a connection they had made with a faculty member on campus through an independent study course, a travel abroad experience, or a stint as a research assistant. Others spoke of a faculty mentor at Duke University. These mentors either helped them identify their career path or opened their eyes to an entire different career path than the one they were on when they entered Duke. Emma, a senior, found a faculty member on campus through a recommendation from another Baldwin Scholar, and this faculty member has turned into her thesis advisor and mentor in her chosen field of psychology.

These positive connections with Duke faculty add to the research on student-faculty relations for women undergraduates. Previous research looked at student-faculty relations as one reason for the self-described “chilly climate” for women undergraduates (Hall & Sandler, 1982). Additional research examined the ideas of classroom climate and faculty-student interactions by focusing on the impact of gender (Costantinople, 1988; Yeager, Terenzini, Pascarella, & Nova, 1995; Sax, Bryant, & Harper, 2005). These later studies could not confirm Hall and Sandler’s findings. However, using a student development theory lens, more recent studies have found the importance of positive student-faculty relationships. In 2005, Sax, Bryant and Harper looked at men and women undergraduates separately and confirmed the benefits of a strong student-faculty connection.

Recent research on the conditional effects of student-faculty interaction has shown that for most students, positive interaction with faculty members leads to increased self-confidence and an increase in the student’s self-assessed abilities (Kezar & Moriarty, 2000;
Sax, Bryant, & Harper, 2005; Sax, 2008). This can arise from faculty conversations with students outside of the classroom, independent studies, or informal conversations. Sax, Bryant and Harper (2005) were able to support the theoretical framework of earlier women’s development theorists on the “importance of validation, support and sense of connectedness” (p. 654) for women undergraduates in their student-faculty interactions.

Baldwin Scholars illustrated how they met faculty outside of class and had intellectual exchanges about the faculty member’s research, or their own work, or both. This reflects what Sax et al. (2005) found in their research. General faculty support, defined as intellectual, emotional, or career encouragement, led women undergraduates to have “increased confidence in their abilities as scholars, achievers, and leaders; an enhanced sense of emotional well-being; and greater satisfaction with faculty contact and with the campus community” (p. 648). This academic self-confidence helped the Scholars be successful in the classroom. These participants were not, as earlier research suggested (Holland & Eisenhart, 1990), more concerned with their romantic relationships than their intellectual growth. The participants expressed genuine interest in finding strong faculty role models and mentors to help guide them on their journey of academic enrichment.

In addition to the student-faculty interaction, many Baldwin Scholars remarked that they wanted to find and take courses that were meaningful for them. They looked for classes taught by well-known faculty, well-respected faculty, or both, and they created an academic plan of study to reflect their values. This parallels the cognitive-structural theory of Belenky, et al. (1997) who said that “women’s ways of knowing” should add another component—
“connected knowing”—to Perry’s (1970) work. Sarah, a junior, described wanting the classes she took at Duke to mean something:

[What was important for me was] wanting to actually learn material, and to like enjoy the classes that I was taking, and to get something out of it, and to be able to use the things that I learned to like do something with them instead of just learning general chemistry.

It was important for Sarah and other Baldwin Scholars I spoke with to see congruency between their values and their actions. Student development literature (Baxter Magolda, 1992; Belenky et al., 1997; Chickering & Reiser, 1993) maintains that this congruency is necessary to intellectual development. Simply fulfilling an academic requirement was not as important to the Baldwin Scholars as taking a course that “spoke to” them.

Megan and Carolyn had similar experiences with deciding on a major. Both had entered Duke as pre-med students. Megan, a senior, had realized that even though she was still interested in medical school, she was not interested in majoring in the sciences. She changed her major to economics, with a minor in biology and chemistry. She was still planning to attend medical school in the future but had decided to postpone it for now. Carolyn, a sophomore, had many varied interests and did not want to commit to pre-med simply to hold onto the idea of possibly going to medical school in the future. She changed her major to philosophy, and when we met she was deciding between a music or economics minor. It was more important to all three of these Baldwin Scholars to be happy with their academic decisions rather than feel confined by popular opinion of what classes to take or
what major to have.

Many of their positive student-faculty encounters at Duke were created by their status as Baldwin Scholars; faculty interest in working with these students seemed to heighten upon hearing that students were part of this leadership development program. Baldwin Scholars shared stories of reaching their intellectual goals by either succeeding in their chosen field of study, gaining entry into graduate programs that interested them, or developing mentoring relationships with faculty. Reaching these academic goals led to higher levels of academic self-confidence for the participants.

The students in this study journeyed to academic enrichment through positive interactions with faculty in and out of the classroom. These formal and informal interactions with faculty led to intellectual, emotional, and career encouragement (Sax, Bryant, & Harper, 2005) that validated their academic talent. This validation was an important piece of how the student connected with the rest of campus: “Students who were validated developed confidence in their ability to learn, experienced enhanced feelings of self-worth, and believed that they had something to offer the academic community” (Evans, Forney, & Guido, 1998, p. 28).

Creating Connections.

While at Duke University, the Baldwin Scholars were involved in a variety of clubs and organizations. Every Baldwin Scholar whom I met was involved in at least two Duke University organizations, and many had community involvements as well. Ten of the 19 participants had joined a social sorority. Four participants were involved in student
government, including the incoming President of the Duke Student Government. Four women were involved in mentoring programs, and four others had started new organizations on campus. There were two involved in dance, two involved in campus music associations, one who wrote for the school paper, one who wrote for the school literary magazine, and two who started out in sports teams.

Astin’s (1993) work on student development theory has shown that students who are more integrated into campus life enjoy success and well-being. A reciprocal relationship develops between the student and the collegiate institution resulting in conditional effects. Each of the women in this study had a positive overall relationship with her undergraduate institution.

Most participants mentioned their satisfaction with the large amount of resources available at Duke, including campus organizations and activities. “If you don’t find an organization that interests you,” one of the participants told me, “you just start one of your own.” One of the women I met, a junior, had a family crisis during her first year at Duke and decided to leave Duke for a year. On her return the following year, she knew she had made the right choice in coming back: “Most people wonder if they would choose the same school again. I know, because I did.”

I interviewed a woman who was responsible for coordinating “Blue Devil Days,” an admissions event for incoming students, as well as a woman who was responsible for coordinating the annual “Last Day of Classes” celebration. In fact, I was able to interview the incoming president for the Duke Student Government, who was the first female in that
formal leadership position in over a decade. Her campaign experience had been dramatically impacted by her Baldwin Scholars connections, and she credited her community of fellow Baldwins as being an integral part of her success. She relished not being labeled as a member of any one particular group on campus, and she felt secure enough with her multiple affiliations to be connected to a wide variety of groups on campus. While she was a Baldwin Scholar who had reached a highly regarded student leadership position on campus, she was not the only participant who held a position on campus that carried status among her peers.

Student development literature has long recognized the benefits of being involved in co-curricular experiences. Students generally achieve success socially and academically when an institution provides opportunities for involvement (Chickering & Reiser, 1993; Kuh, Schuh, Whitt & Associates, 1991; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991) and the students take advantage of these opportunities. Astin’s (1993) research shows that the more effort the student gives to involvement opportunities, the greater level of overall student success. The women in this study were deeply involved in many academic and co-curricular activities at Duke and were enjoying positive undergraduate experiences.

In addition to campus involvements, almost every participant had extended her undergraduate experience overseas during her time at Duke University. The types of study-abroad experiences ranged from summer internships to fall and spring semesters earning college credit. Several participants talked about the opportunities for student-faculty interactions abroad. In addition to faculty connections, students also enjoyed the peer contacts they made. The women who went abroad appreciated the additional level of
involvement this international study experience brought them and shared how the experience had played a role in shaping their undergraduate experience.

Every Baldwin Scholar in this study described how her participation in the Baldwin Scholar Program helped her create connections across campus. Some concentrated on academic connections: a study group that helped them through a course, a faculty member who became a mentor, or a peer who walked them through changing majors. Others focused on co-curricular connections: the new organizations they founded on campus, the speaker lectures they attended, or the focus group on race relations they had joined. These findings support research that shows that creating relationships and student communities, as well as spending time with diverse people, are an important part of a successful undergraduate experience (Chickering & Reiser, 1993; Kinzie, 2000; Smith, 1995).

Some participants commented on connecting specifically to other Baldwin Scholars: those older Baldwins who alerted them to undergraduate teaching opportunities or internships deadlines, as well as those Baldwin Scholars in their cohort who had shared experiences about the seminars and living together as sophomores. None of the Baldwin Scholars in this study limited themselves to interacting with only other Baldwin Scholars. But they reflected on how, when comparing their experience with other groups on campus, the community created through their Baldwin Scholars environment had been a meaningful part of their undergraduate experience. Kasey, a sophomore, commenting on her many Duke accomplishments, reported “[t]he things I've done here are remarkable. But I've needed Baldwin to sustain me a little bit.” Participation in the Baldwin Scholars Program was more
than an added involvement on campus to the women in this study. It became a campus community.

Through both self-discovery and academic enrichment, Baldwin Scholars were creating connections with faculty and peers. In making connections across campus, they were searching for a sense of community. In the next section, I will share how the participants described the Duke University environment and the Baldwin Scholars Program environment in terms of creating this campus community.

Environment

Lewin’s second element in his behavior model is the environment. This research is concerned with the environment of higher education institutions, and particularly the people and programs that create the environment in those institutions. For these 19 women, who had strong family support, solid academic success, and an inclination to be involved on campus, the environment of Duke University and the environment of the Baldwin Scholars Program impacted their undergraduate experience. These nested environments offer different opportunities and resources to the participants, who benefit from their inclusion in both environments.

Bronfenbrenner’s Human Ecology Model.

Bronfenbrenner’s (1979, 2005) work was based on Lewinian thought and held that interaction exists among forces and regions (Hoare, 2009), and behavior and development are “steered” by interaction between the individual and the environment (p. 81). His work expanded the Lewinian model of behavior to incorporate the dimension of time. By adding
the element of time, Bronfenbrenner provided a way to talk about human development as an outcome at a particular point in time that involves the interaction of a person and his environment.

A person’s development involves the environment on several levels. Bronfenbrenner expanded Lewin’s concept of “life space,” which had one layer of the combined physical and psychological environment, into a system of nested, dynamic layers ranging from face-to-face contact to broader social contexts (Arnold & King, 1997). The four system levels that Bronfenbrenner linked to the Lewinian model are the microsystem (or face-to-face), the exosystem, the macrosystem, and the chronosystem (Arnold & King, 1997; Hoare, 2009).

The settings that are most proximal to the person exist in the microsystem, a network of settings that interacts in the person’s psychological life. These “close-to-the-person” contexts (Hoare, 2009) include workplace, family, friendship group, church affiliations and civic settings). The next tier is the exosystem which is comprised of the larger institutions in life in which “persons may not necessarily have defined, formal roles” (Hoare, 2009, p. 82) but still influence the individual. Some examples of these institutions are the economy, government, the educational system, and the media. The tier farthest away from the person represents the larger culture or society. This macrosystem expresses ideology, mores, and customs.

Bronfenbrenner’s mesosystem is not one of the nested tiers, but is the person’s interactive experience between two or more of the nested settings. The mesosystem reflects the reciprocal influence of the various structures on the person and of the person on the
structures (Hoare, 2009). Bronfenbrenner used the term *chronosystem* to represent temporal, sociohistorical factors that shape individual development differently. As Hoare noted, “different eras and sociopolitical contexts have variable effects on development” (p. 83).

The nested environments of this study are as follows: the women in the Baldwin Scholars Program are nested in the Baldwin Scholars Program itself, which is further nested into Duke University. In addition, Bronfenbrenner agrees with Lewin’s assessment that this formula was never meant to be additive (person plus the environment), but rather interactive: it expresses the interaction between the person and the environment that creates synergy at each of the various system levels. In 2005, Bronfenbrenner wrote about how his perspective was shifting from discrete, nested systems to interconnected systems supported by developmental propositions based on child development research. The outcome of personal and environmental behaviors depends on the unique characteristics of the individual interacting with the unique characteristics of the environment. Students at the same institution can have very different experiences (Tidball, et al., 1998; Wolf-Wendel, 1998; Sax, 2008) based on their personal characteristics and their perceived environment.

When those unique elements interact together, the resulting synergy creates an impact greater than the sum of its two parts. This synergy also allows each component to not only interact with the other but also change the other to create a new person and also a new environment, based on who was involved in those systems. (See Figure 5.1.)
The microsystem represents direct, daily contacts in their most immediate environment. Every participant mentioned specific one-on-one conversations they had with other Duke students (not necessarily Baldwin Scholars) while at Duke that helped them develop their sense of self. These “random” conversations by participants and other Duke students were some of the most meaningful experiences they had as undergraduates because they gave the student a platform for defining her self-knowledge. Alison described how this type of conversation would just “happen” during her undergraduate experience:

[T]he vast majority of those meaningful conversations that really stick out in my mind are those with Baldwin Scholars where it's either in class or it's just kind of an unprompted conversation that we happen to be having over dinner or late at night.

The microsystem level of Bronfenbrenner’s human ecology model can be described as interactions that happen daily.

The exosystem, the next largest level of community, was the Baldwin Scholars Program level. This level interspersed peers and faculty from the microcosm, but also

Figure 5.1

Bronfenbrenner’ four systems
included those women in the program whom Baldwin Scholars only knew because of their connection to the program. Most of the participants in this study mentioned how the diverse Baldwin participants included women from the far “corners of campus” who others would have not met except for the deliberately varied composition of the program.

The macrosystem was the level of the institution itself, Duke University. This level of the environment was the “Duke bubble.” Anyone affiliated with the institution was represented in this level of the environment. The most general level, the chronosystem, is defined as everything outside of the Duke community. This includes the local community (Durham, where several women had made connections), their hometowns, and the places they traveled overseas. (See Figure 5.2.)
Inside the Duke Bubble.

The macrosystem level of the environment for these participants was the Duke University environment. Duke University has a national academic reputation, based on not only a host of renowned faculty scholars and campus resources, but also the undergraduate and graduate students, who together create an environment that attracts the best and brightest students from across the country and around the world (http://about.duke.edu). This environment was described by most of my participants as competitive, both in and out of the classroom. Some participants felt that because of Duke’s competitive nature, students became competitive in all aspects of undergraduate life. In addition to students asking about the academic rank of a peer, there were also questions about what internships they had applied to, or which on-campus interview they had secured. Even the Greek system at Duke
had “tiers” to assign a competitive rank to those that were more prestigious.

Student development theorists have seen how the peer group at an institution can have a dramatic impact on a student’s development (Astin, 1993; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2004). At Duke University, the peer group provided not only academic competition in the classroom but also status competition outside of the classroom relating to material possessions such as clothes and automobiles. Some of my participants tied this materialistic behavior to the Greek system. One senior described her first year at Duke watching the women going through the sorority recruitment program wearing designer clothes and expensive jewelry to the “casual” sorority parties. There was unspoken peer pressure to maintain a lifestyle that included these high-priced items or at least aspire to that lifestyle. A few of the women participants recognized this social pressure to maintain a certain standard of life. Zee commented, "The social environment at Duke has this very homogenized feel to it.” The dominant social stereotype of being wealthy and Greek overshadowed the other alternative groups.

This status-conscious lifestyle also included a heavy socializing schedule. Baldwin Scholars in this study reported the “work hard, play hard” persona of Duke’s student population as an outgrowth of this competitive environment. After intense classes and long nights of academic assignments, students wanted to let loose, and it became a competition to see who would have the most entertaining weekends. Both formal peer groups, such as the fraternities and sororities, and informal peer groups, such as the residents of a housing section, put pressure on others to join the socializing. This could mean accompanying
someone to a restaurant or bar, drinking with them, or even “hooking up.” Such permissive behavior is a characteristic that other researchers (Sax, 2008; Smith & Berger, 2010) have seen in their findings on the socializing of college women. These permissive behaviors, including excessive partying, smoking, and drinking, were not unique to Duke University, but if one did not want to participate in them, there were few alternatives.

This competitiveness continued through the male-female relationships at Duke. Almost every Baldwin Scholar in this study mentioned the “hook-up” culture at Duke. This activity included matching up with someone whom you did not know well at a social event, having a brief intimate encounter, and then, as one Baldwin said, “deciding after you’ve hooked up if you want to start talking with them.”

The women in this study pointed out the high level of alcohol consumption that accompanied these encounters. There was the feeling among the women in this study that women drank large amounts of alcohol to ease the social awkwardness of these situations. This phenomenon is seen in the literature as well (Smith & Berger, 2010). Again, this behavior did not originate at Duke University, but the competitiveness of Duke students seemed to explain for some of my participants why men and women had intimate encounters as strangers, instead of formal (Miller, 1986) or traditional (Bogle, 2007) dates. Formal dating has been on the decline (Miller, 1986) in high schools and colleges for some years, and researchers are still exploring how this new “hook-up culture” is impacting the collegiate experience (Bogle, 2007).

One way the “hook-up culture” seemed to be impacting undergraduate women at
Duke was that, according to several participants, some women “dumbed themselves down” for male undergraduates in an attempt to seem more attractive. Alison, a senior, spoke of how “there's a lot of girls here who try to 'dumb themselves down' so they can be more attractive to guys and I kind of have the opposite experience where like I've always been the friend…and I've never been seen as anything more, and so I've been used for my study guides… I make amazing study guides.” This concept implies that the women at Duke feel they have to choose between sharing their intellectual selves and being attractive to men on campus. This mirrors the literature (Wolf-Wendel, 2000) of earlier research on women on coeducational campuses who felt they had to “make a choice between being ‘brilliant and strong…or dateable’” (p. 338).

While this strategy of pretending to be dumb seemed to work in attracting a “hook-up” encounter, the women participants noticed that this behavior lowered the overall self-confidence of women. As we have seen in the literature, self-confidence plays a large role in many aspects of the overall experience of women undergraduates. Lower self-confidence for women can in turn negatively impact their academic and social standing (Sax, 2008).

If the competitive “hook-up” environment of Duke lowers the overall self-confidence of women undergraduates, this effect provides an example of how the interaction between people and environment can change both elements of the equation. Lewin defined “life space” as the groups to which a person belonged, and while affiliations and the level of importance of these affiliations could change over the undergraduate experience, Lewin felt that a person’s position in these groups impacted behavior. For example, if a person were
new to a club, he would be uncertain whether he had been accepted into the group or not. This lingering doubt about group acceptance would lead to an uncertainty in his behavior, and he could then exhibit a different level of self-consciousness, be less likely to react, or be more likely to overreact (Marrow, 1969). As new students joined the Duke University environment, they were attempting to find their “fit” within the niches that best matched their personalities and interests. For most students, this meant finding ways to fit into the competitiveness of Duke’s environment.

This high level of competitiveness at Duke was documented in the 2003 Women’s Initiative report. In addition to this competitiveness, women also felt that other female peers were able to maintain high academic marks with little effort, were in the most popular social circles, and appeared thin and beautiful with minimal effort. The feeling was so pervasive that there was a phrase attached to it. The term “effortless perfection” was used by a sophomore respondent in the 2003 study to describe how women students seemed to reach their academic and social goals effortlessly. The committee report recommended not only educating the campus about the high rate of stress this ideal was creating, but also redirecting some of the competitive energy through a proactive leadership development program for women. Thus, the Baldwin Scholars Program was created.

*Baldwin Scholars Environment.*

The exosystem level for the women in this study is the Baldwin Scholars Program. Duke University created the program in 2004 to offer an alternative on campus to women undergraduates who were frustrated by the unspoken campus image of women emulating the
unrealistic goal of “effortless perfection.” One of the negative side effects of emulating these efforts was that overall self-confidence of women undergraduates dropped and appeared lower after four years at Duke than when they entered college. This mirrors Sax’s (2008) conclusion that the intellectual self-confidence gap between men and women undergraduates widens during college.

The program was deliberately created to be a single-sex environment in the midst of a coeducational one. Research shows that a women’s-only leadership development program could benefit the women more than a coeducational program (Smith, 1990; Tidball, 1986; Kezar & Moriarty, 2000; Kinzie, et al., 2007) because the women involved gain a strong learning environment (Tidball, et al., 1999) and more opportunities to interact with different types of people (Kinzie, et al., 2007).

In addition, by creating a women’s-only leadership development program, Duke University could create a supportive environment for women undergraduate student leaders. Researchers (Tidball, Smith, Tidball, and Wolf-Wendel, 1998; Wolf-Wendel, 2000) have seen that for some women undergraduates, a women’s college environment is more conducive to success than a traditional coeducational environment. Wolf Wendel’s (2000) research illustrated how coeducational campuses can model the positive aspects of women’s colleges to develop women-friendly environments. These environments are considered women-friendly because students perceive that their voices, actions, and abilities are noticed, supported, and appreciated (Wolf-Wendel, 2000). These women-friendly environments are generally more collaborative than traditional coeducational environments, and research has
shown that women learn more in a collaborative setting than in a competitive one (Belenky, Cinchy, Goldberger, and Tarule, 1987).

The Baldwin Scholars Program combines academic seminars, residency with a cohort, and weekly all-Baldwin meetings to create a community environment that many of the participants in my study described as an integral part of their undergraduate experience. Baldwin women share their backgrounds, ideas, values, and experiences with each other. Many women in this study pointed out how this connection with other women created a sense of community that was as important to their college experience as the actual program components.

The Baldwin Scholars Program comprised the Scholars themselves plus the program administrators. Many of the women reported that being a Baldwin Scholar had offered them the support they needed to navigate a successful undergraduate experience. They appreciated having a supportive environment where they could freely discuss aspects of Duke’s campus environment that they found frustrating, work through their personal and academic development with others in a safe space, and use the resources readily available through the program to make connections across campus.

The idea of a safe space (Wolf-Wendel, 2000) represents both a physical place to meet as well as a psychological space where complex issues can be freely yet safely explored. The Baldwin Scholars observed the importance of this safe space in their academic seminars in their first and senior years. In addition, they met as a collective community most Saturday afternoons throughout the year to discuss project planning for the Baldwin Scholars
Program. For traditionally-aged undergraduate women, there is little time for intentional reflection during college, and many women do not stop to grapple with issues such as gender equity. Creating time and space for such reflection is part of this program’s mission, and the program creates intentional experiences for this very purpose.

The Baldwin Scholars described the benefits they felt in having a women’s-only leadership development program in a coeducational setting. Some explained how the seminars felt different with only women in them. Alison, a senior who had just completed the senior capstone course a few months before, stated, “Our discussions in our Baldwin seminars and the way we’re able to talk freely is totally different from the way it is in a coeducational class.”

Others disclosed how it was more than simply feeling free to speak up in seminar courses. As women were developing their adult identities, it helped to be in an all-women’s environment. Crystal, a junior who had experienced the first-year seminar and the weekly meetings with all the Baldwin Scholars, explained that “confidence levels are being formed and broken as women are figuring out what they want to do,” and that the allwoman environment tended to foster confidence rather than break it down. Sarah, another junior, felt she was able to have the best of both worlds with a women’s-only program within a coeducational setting:

I feel like it’s like the best of both worlds because I have this women’s only part of a coed experience. I love going to a coed school. I couldn’t really see myself at a women’s college, BUT, I have this component of my college experience that I can tap
into and connect me as a woman who I am, and it’s like a source of inspiration and
motivation to do what I want.

The literature on women’s student development (Gilligan, 1982; Josselson, 1987;
Komarovsky, 1985; Belenky, et al., 1997) shows how women’s development is shaped by
their interactions within environments that include their families, peer groups, and faculty.
These interactions help to solidify a sense of connectedness with their institution and leads to
a synergistic cycle in which the individual shapes the environment, which then impacts the
individual, and so on, continuing throughout the individual’s collegiate experience.

The rate of this development is affected by the amount of challenge and support
(Sanford, 1962) the students receive from their environment. In this case study, the
challenges were many: academically challenging coursework; competition for experiential
opportunities outside of the classroom; and (for women) the task of overcoming these
challenges “effortlessly” while maintaining a beautiful physical image as well. For women
undergraduates at Duke University to succeed through and in spite of these challenges, they
needed to have access to an equivalent amount of support.

The participants in this study reported a high level of support stemming from the
Baldwin Scholars Program. This supportive community allowed the Baldwin Scholars to take
on the challenges inherent at Duke University. Many participants credited their faculty
mentors, other role models, and peer groups on campus with giving them the support they
needed to succeed in college. Every Baldwin Scholar described the Baldwin Scholars
Program as sustaining them throughout their undergraduate experience by offering the
necessary sources of support.

The women in this study had embraced the community of peers in the Baldwin Scholars Program because, as one sophomore reported, “we were all chosen, so there must be something of value in each of us.” They adamantly insisted that there was no expectation to be best friends with all 72 Baldwin Scholars. Those not in sororities claimed, “We don’t pretend to be sisters,” but all valued the connection they felt to the other Baldwin Scholars.

Sarah explained how she was connected to her cohort:

I have more of a support network here than I think most people, most women especially, on this campus have…I have met the most amazing women. I can say that there are 17 other girls on this campus that I’m associated with that are doing amazing things with their life and are very inspirational and are very, you know, hard-working, and are people that I can go to when I have a problem or have a question.

And are people that I’m like connected to in some way.

By having such a diverse group of women form a cohort, the Baldwin Scholars Program was seeking to be representative of all Duke women undergraduates.

During the interview process, I asked every Baldwin Scholar why she had chosen to be involved in this leadership development program. Several participants mentioned searching for a sense of community when they came to Duke University and thought the Baldwin Scholars Program could be that community. Julia, a junior, captured this idea in her explanation:

I really liked the idea of women bringing up other women…because I think
sometimes you, especially when women are in an environment like this where it’s very successful, you find this adverse reaction to women competing with other women as opposed to helping one another. And I really wanted to be a part of a movement that was like “we are not competing, we are individuals and we should be helping each other and mentoring each other as a community, and as friends, and as partners.”

This sense of community was important to some participants, such as Short Stuff, Zee, and Julia, who had already identified the need to belong to a supportive community at Duke.

The idea of community building was also important to Alison, Kasey, and Nancy, who recognized the additional resources that would be available to program participants. Nancy recognized how both the resources and the community building had become equally important to her undergraduate experience: “I think what initially attracted me is the resource, but what has been the most meaningful hasn't necessarily been the money, but the presence of a support system.” Most Baldwin Scholars are not seeking a community because they were too timid to strike out into the Duke environment on their own. In fact, the opposite was true. Most Baldwin Scholars wanted a community because they had already decided to venture out on their own and recognized the benefits of having a supportive community behind them.

A fundamental aspect of this new Baldwin Scholars community was the building of new relationships among the participants. These relationships were built on mutual respect of the other “chosen” Baldwins, with their participation in the program being their strongest
similarity. When there was a difference of opinion, the women listened to each other because they valued every Baldwin’s opinion. This respect developed through the sharing of backgrounds, beliefs, and experiences. Explaining the program dynamics, Ashley reported how “they do a lot of work trying to build trust within the group, and try to build it on very meaningful [levels]— if not shared experiences, then shared stories even. They want us to know about each other and they want us to understand each other and learn from each other.”

This is seen in the literature on Relational Cultural Theory (Jordan, 2004; Surrey, 1991), which recognizes the collective experience of women as relational beings who connect through shared experiences. The central theme of this theory is to organize the “self” in the context of important relationships as opposed to separation from others. These relationships are created to mutually transform both parties and leads to increased self-esteem through shared understanding (Jordan, 2004). The power of these connections or relationships leads to a sense of empowerment (Surrey, 1991).

Adele shared one example of this mutual respect among women who had varied ideologies. During her second year on campus, when it was time for the annual sorority singing contest, her cohort of Baldwins was equally divided on how to approach this event. Those not in a sorority found this event distasteful and thought it catered to an aggressive fraternity social scene. Those in sororities, on the other hand, understood the event to be a form of women’s empowerment on campus because sorority women controlled the social scene. After both viewpoints were heard, Adele realized that this was more than a simple discussion about how to lead a values-based life as an undergraduate at Duke. She valued
having mutually respectful Baldwin Scholars to converse and debate with, because doing so reinforced how multi-layered the collegiate experience can be. This development of relationships in the Scholars’ new community added a layer of connectedness to their support system.

**Behaviors**

In Lewin’s model of behavior, a person’s interaction with his environment produces the behavior patterns for that individual. The behaviors Baldwin Scholars chose in terms of their academic and social environments helped to develop their leadership experiences. Bronfenbrenner also added the dimension of time to this model to incorporate the concept of development. The Baldwin Scholars were developing their leadership experiences through their sense of self-discovery, academic enrichment, and college connections in the nested environments of Duke and the Baldwin Scholars Program. In addition to the leadership experiences of individual Baldwin Scholars, the group itself was seen as a leadership entity on campus. The Baldwin Scholars in this study recognized how the campus viewed “the Baldwins” as a collective, and there was a group identity to their respected unit on campus.

Rodgers’s (1990) research illuminates how Lewin’s model examines three areas, including how “[t]he student, the environment, and their interaction are involved in these differential outcomes, not just the student or the environment” (p. 31). Based on their varied backgrounds and developmental stages, students can experience the same environment differently. In addition, changes in the environment may lead to changes in development for different students (Rodgers, 1990).
Rodgers offered a more complex Lewinian equation to factor in the developmental level of the person and the environment, using the criteria for the developmental areas being considered. For instance, Chickering & Reiser’s vectors would be the student development theory that characterizes the developmental level of the individual (psychosocial theory) and the environment. Rodgers (1990) envisioned Lewin’s person-environment model to be integrated with developmental theories into the paradigm. This analysis guided me in exploring the degree of congruence or incongruence (Rodgers, 1990) in interactions between the students and their nested environments.

*Environmental Impact.*

The availability of resources at Duke and the Baldwin program’s intentional development of a gendered perspective were two environmental factors that influenced the Baldwin Scholars. Several participants mentioned the availability of campus resources when emphasizing the value the institution placed on this leadership development program. The program was created through the recommendation of a campus committee report and therefore received strong institutional support in terms of both physical and monetary resources to ensure its success.

A previous college president had donated the president’s suite to house the program on campus. This gave the program not only a “home” but also a connection with its namesake, Alice Baldwin, who shared this space during her tenure at Duke. The participants enjoyed having a space on campus to meet for seminars, receptions, or even informally with one another. In addition to the physical space, the program offered each participant funds to
participate in research and conference opportunities off campus that required travel. Many of the participants in this study had used these travel funds to support their various co-curricular and academic activities. The women were eager to share with me the different ways they had used this funding to participate in conferences in other cities or in some cases other countries.

In addition to institutional support, the program itself offered two academic seminars with a feminist perspective on the current status of women in America. These seminars focused on the workplace and included a wide range of readings and speakers. Discussions followed these exchanges to allow the Scholars to process what was often new information to them.

While the information they were learning in their seminars seemed to be new to many of the Baldwin Scholars, a few mentioned how unbelievable it was that others on campus did not have this knowledge. One senior shared how her roommate was in a women’s studies course the semester they met, and each night she saw the roommate have “lightbulb moments” in which she discovered another gender inequity. The Baldwin Scholar grinned as she said, “I guess she hadn’t been ready to hear what I had been saying for years.” Jane, a sophomore, discussed her experience in the Duke Student Government as they underwent a complete constitutional renovation. She pointed out to the board that the “he” pronoun was used throughout the document, and she asked why “she” was not also added. “It would take a lot of work” to change it, was the reply. Jane looked at me and said, “It’s one word. How can they say that?” She was hoping that the next administration would take her concern more seriously. In her co-curricular activities, Jane had made the connection between language
use and subtle forms of gender discrimination and was slightly frustrated when others did not also recognize this.

_Students Impacting the Environment._

Women in the Baldwin Scholars Program were seen as leaders across campus and had the leadership roles and accolades to prove it. The participants were comfortable “taking up space” across campus in their roles as leaders. This concept of ‘taking up space’ applied to how Baldwin Scholars physically spread out into the campus environment to take up space through their leadership development experience. This physical taking-up-of-space was matched by their perception that they had a right to these spaces or experiences, and they felt welcome in these leadership roles and outside the classroom. In fact, Baldwin scholars often claimed space by seeking the most recognized student leadership roles on campus.

Julia, a junior, spoke of walking into the weekly Saturday meetings for Baldwin Scholars and using this venue to collect support from clubs and organizations across campus for a new initiative. In the room, she said, were “literally twenty representatives” of some of the most prominent groups at Duke. This informal networking for support on new initiatives felt comfortable within the connected Baldwin community, but it also indicated that Julia, and others like her, felt relatively confident that the Baldwin group could help meet the needs of other organizations.

Other Baldwin women connected being in a classroom environment with feeling compelled to share their ideas and insights. They were comfortable speaking up in class regardless of who was in attendance. This was also true of speaking up in their “Baldwin-
only” seminars. They all mentioned how those seminars had an open and accepting atmosphere that allowed them to feel comfortable talking about personal experiences and offering personal insights.

A few juniors and seniors also discussed how they were much more willing to speak up in class on issues of women’s equality after being a Baldwin Scholar. Many of these women had experience doing this before entering college, so their Baldwin experience did not necessarily create this willingness. However, the women in this study reported that they had become even more comfortable offering feminist critiques, even if doing so earned them a “crazy feminist” reputation.

Every Baldwin Scholar in this study was asked about their definition of leadership and whether they self-identified as a leader at Duke. Almost every Baldwin Scholar described her involvement at Duke as being connected to something she was passionate about and strongly valued. While some could extend this to their academic major as well, the majority had spent time at Duke getting involved in clubs and organizations that aligned with their values. Several Baldwin Scholars had created new organizations because they saw a need for them on campus and wanted to make an impact on the campus community.

Participants did not want to be known as leaders who simply added experiences to their resumés, though they all assumed that many at Duke did just that. They were intent on searching for meaningful activities where their interests and skill sets could make a difference, and they wanted to spend their energies creating not only more opportunities for development at Duke but also qualitatively better opportunities. This mirrors the literature of
Schlossberg’s (1989) concept of mattering. By knowing that their opinions and actions mattered, the Baldwin Scholars felt as if they mattered to the program and by extension to the institution. The literature on women’s development shares this belief that women students who feel valued and connected are more successful in college (Belenky, et al., 1997; Wolf-Wendel, 2000).

Nancy, a junior, shared how she had recently decided to stop her involvement in one organization because it required too great a time commitment, and she realized that this organization and the people associated with it did not share her values. She decided instead to begin a new organization that she valued, and she attracted other people on campus who shared her value system.

Chapter Summary

The environmental influences of Duke University and the Baldwin Scholars Program were examined through the Lewinian model of behavior. This model was extended to include Bronfenbrenner’s understanding of development and how a human ecology model can explain the nested levels of environment in this case study. In examining both the individual behavior of these 19 women in the Baldwin Scholars Program and their collective behavior as a group participating in this leadership development program at Duke, patterns emerged on how they developed their leadership experience. The Baldwin Scholars wanted to lead only those programs and organizations that they believed would make a difference in their communities.

The participants were fully engaged in their academic and co-curricular environments
at Duke University. All of the women in this study appreciated the Baldwin Scholars Program not only for the amount of additional resources the program provided but also for the community it intentionally created to connect diverse Duke women to each other. This connection provided not only a supportive “safe space” in which to explore their leadership development but also academic components that allowed them to reflect on their gendered experiences. Connection in this strong community allowed the Baldwin Scholars to feel empowered to speak about women’s issues on campus and to discuss openly ways that Duke could foster a less competitive environment, especially among women.

In the next chapter, I will talk about the implications of this study for theory and practice as well as future research opportunities that could arise from the findings.
CHAPTER 6

My qualitative case study captured the undergraduate experiences of 19 undergraduate women at Duke University in the Baldwin Scholars Program. Their experiences included connecting with faculty, becoming involved in campus-related activities, and developing leadership skills and potential. By exploring the collegiate experiences of sophomore, junior, and senior undergraduate women participating in a cohort women’s-only leadership development program at a coeducational institution, I found that their individual characteristics interacted with nested levels of the environment and propelled them to create unique undergraduate experiences.

The 19 women participants were fully connected to the Duke University community. They were involved in academic pursuits that included independent studies, international travel, and research. They were also involved outside of the classroom with clubs and organizations, and many of them held jobs on campus or in the local community. The range of these activities included political organizations, business ventures, medical programs, and social sororities. Half of the women in this study chose to join a sorority at Duke. A few had started their collegiate experiences as part of an athletic team, and many had traveled internationally while undergraduate students. Some had identified very strongly with their co-curricular involvement, while others had spent their energies more on academic endeavors.

Their participation in the Baldwin Scholars Program was part of the many different “bubbles” or layers of their undergraduate experience. The women in the Baldwin Scholars
Program recognized the unique Duke University environment and the way this environment created a sense of competition and a set of challenges for undergraduates, especially women undergraduates. In addition, women undergraduates tried to perfect their academic, social, and personal identities by appearing to be effortlessly brilliant and beautiful. As a newly founded community, however, the Baldwin Scholars asserted that this strategy was not helpful and only continued to perpetuate the notion that women do not need support or friendship from other women on campus. The Scholars found support through their new community in the Baldwin Scholars Program to help them navigate these challenges. Throughout this study, the participants shared how their single-sex leadership development program offered the level of support necessary to meet the challenges of their competitive coeducational environment.

Women in this study were looking for their “fit” at Duke, and they felt that the Baldwin Scholars Program had helped them find their institutional home. The program had become a “safe space” in which they could lean on each other, learn from each other, and motivate each other to accomplish their personal and academic goals. These participants helped define a new standard of what was appropriate for women undergraduate student leaders at Duke. The literature on women’s colleges and their ability to create safe spaces (Smith, 1990; Tidball, 1986; Tidball et al., 1998) supports this finding. Through the program, the Baldwin Scholars had developed from women who already possessed some motivation for creating a meaningful undergraduate experience, to women who made things happen in and out of the classroom.
These women were not only developing a broader intellectual perspective on what it means to be a woman leader in today’s world; they were also acting on this knowledge through the emotional support of the program’s administrators and the financial support of the program itself. Program documents assessing Baldwin Scholars compared to other groups on campus showed how the Baldwin Scholars Program helped to positively change the thinking of Baldwin Scholars in terms of expanding their levels of self-confidence and broadening their world view. This result modeled the responses from the interview portion of this study. I found the women determined to create a unique undergraduate experience where their background and skills were valued and their leadership experience was meaningful. This unique undergraduate experience included exposing themselves to diverse people, developing their sense of self, and creating an impact across campus.

The most encouraging part of meeting these Baldwin Scholars was the shared sense of inclusiveness they displayed in wanting to continue to recruit new “classes” of Baldwin Scholars into this program. They not only appreciated the resources and opportunities shared with them but also noticed the sense of community that developed among the different cohorts. While it was not their only means of support on campus, the group of Baldwin Scholars represented a unit of strength and support that supplemented their other campus friendships. This community developed into a “safe space” where the Baldwin Scholars could feel supported as they met the many challenges faced by women undergraduates at Duke.

This sense of community is seen in the higher education literature (Kuh, 1991; Astin,
1993) as well as in psychology literature with the Relational Cultural Theory (Jordan et al., 2004; Surrey, 1991). Research has shown that women’s development is influenced by their relationships and community building (Gilligan, 1982; Belenky et al., 1997; Komarovsky, 1985; Surrey, 1991). The undergraduate experiences of the women in this study were affected by the Baldwin community and the relationships this community afforded them.

The leadership qualities of both men and women are necessary in society. Developing leadership opportunities is thus critical to forming future leaders. Creating a level playing field for leadership development opportunities can provide women with the experience necessary to lead in the future: “Instead of lacking the requisite skills for leadership, women are more likely to lack opportunities for exercising leadership and role models they admire and wish to emulate” (Klenke, p. 9).

By creating intentional leadership opportunities, higher education institutions are serving their mission of developing future leaders. In higher education institutions, co-curricular leadership opportunities are the primary responsibility of those who work in student affairs. Programming can include involvement in themed clubs and organizations or participation in academic study groups, but the most direct leadership development opportunities take the form of long-term programs that create a series of meaningful events for the cohort to experience as well as an opportunity to reflect on these events during their undergraduate experience.

The earliest student development theories focused on the psychological stages of the student and placed all college students under the same pattern of development. By the 1970s,
researchers realized that developmental changes related to individual experience (Flavel, 1970); as a result, specialized student development theories about women, members of different ethnic groups, and members of different classes began to emerge. By expanding theories to more accurately match the student’s experience, student development professionals could design more intentional programming to meet the needs of their students.

For this study, I created a model for looking at women undergraduate leadership experiences. My model was based on Lewin’s model of behavior \( b=f(pxe) \), and extended to include Bronfenbrenner’s model of human ecology and Jordan’s Relational Cultural Theory. I chose to include Bronfenbrenner’s model of human ecology because of his concept of multiple nested environments that reciprocally interact with the individual. As student development researchers have recognized how context plays a role in the person-environment interactions of human development, I found Bronfenbrenner’s model of constant interaction between the environments and the individual to be important in analyzing the experiences of women undergraduate student leaders. In addition to the interactions between the person and the environment, I also saw the importance of the participants in this study in developing and sustaining mutually beneficial relationships during their undergraduate experience. These relationships were built between faculty, administrators, others in the Baldwin Scholars Program, and other classmates at Duke University. This ability to reach out and connect with others during their collegiate years helped the Baldwin Scholars develop their leadership characteristics. These relationships offered both mutual respect and support to the women in this study and were reported as
necessary in their goal of creating college connections. These relationships were also
paramount in tracking the behavioral outcomes of these participants. Their choices in their
behavioral outcomes were heavily influenced by their ability to feel connected to others in
their journey toward self discovery and academic enrichment.

Duke University has a reputation of attracting the highest-achieving high school
students from across the country each fall who enter a competitive environment where
academic pressures push them to be top achievers in the classroom. This competitive
environment extends to include social pressures and peer pressures to perform well in this
social environment. While the mission of the Baldwin Scholars Program is to help women
feel empowered to change the campus culture and reduce the feeling of overwhelming
pressure among women students, the Baldwin Scholars in this study felt a limited sense of
power to affect institutional change.

The women did acknowledge that the Baldwin Scholars Program had provided the
resources and created a supportive community for them to feel empowered from within to
chart their own leadership paths. As individuals, and collectively as Baldwins, the women
were creating some ripple effects of change on campus. For example, participants noticed a
more pervasive appreciation of women undergraduate student leaders over the last few years,
such as a female candidate elected president of Duke’s Student Government for the first time
in 10 years.

Overall, their perceptions mirrored the research on developing a critical mass of
women leaders (Klenke 1996; Wolf-Wendel, 2000). However, the participants expressed
concern about the small number of Baldwin Scholars on campus. In reflecting on the long-term impact of the Baldwin Scholars on Duke University, Short Stuff noticed how the small number of Baldwins would matter:

I don’t think Baldwin single-handedly can change campus culture at Duke. It is still only 72 of us out of 6,000. Whose responsibility is it now to empower all of our women? Is it really the Baldwin Scholars? No. Can we help? Of course. That’s why we’re here.

Carla mentioned other all-female entities at Duke who could join this overall mission of changing the campus environment. She noted that “[t]here needs to be more of these experiences for other people on campus and I don’t know if that’s a role for the women’s center to take up, or Panhellenic, or what.” Without a critical mass of women undergraduate leaders on campus, the Baldwin Scholars in this study felt limited in their individual ability to change campus culture. There is still a competitive environment at Duke that is perceived as nonsupportive of women.

Research shows that women students may be more successful in “woman friendly” environments (Wolf-Wendel, 2000), both in and out of the classroom. These woman friendly environments offer certain advantages, such as creating a supportive environment and connecting students to their communities, which in turn allow students to feel validated in their behaviors and encourage them to believe that they matter to the success of the institution. Opportunities to develop in woman friendly environments allow women to succeed as undergraduates. Further research (Belenky, et al., 1986; Jones & Dindia, 2004;
Buchmann, DiPrete, & McDaniel, 2008) shows that women learners achieve more in supportive, communal environments than they do in competitive ones.

The Baldwin Scholars program is one example of a leadership development program created for undergraduate women that offered such a supportive environment to its participants. This program invites women to participate in personal development experiences such as public speaking workshops and private receptions with nationally recognized speakers. In addition, the participants are exposed to leadership opportunities across campus, locally, and around the world, and they can use this exposure to feel more confident in their own leadership abilities. This cohort model creates a community model that offers a level of support to its participants including the resources to deal with the challenges of their undergraduate experience.

Students selected to be Baldwin Scholars can benefit from this women’s-only community within the coeducational campus. The women participants felt that they benefited from the regular “check-ins” with administrators, the two academic seminars, the living-in component, and the intentional programming associated with the program.

The collegiate experiences of the Baldwin Scholars in this study were shaped by their environments—both their coeducational institutional environment and their single-sex leadership development program environment. They were shaped by interactions with their peers, their faculty, and their program administrators. Their progression on their journey of self discovery and academic enrichment were impacted by the relationships they built through these interactions. In analyzing their collegiate experiences, I noticed how often
their behaviors were directly influenced by their family, or their peers, or faculty. The college connections and relationships created during their undergraduate experience helped shape their leadership behaviors. Their environment mattered to the participants, and more specifically the experiences gained from the single-sex environment positively enhanced the collegiate experiences of these women.

Implications for Theory

The findings in this study have three implications for theory. First, the findings add to our understanding of college as a gendered experience. Researchers have shown that there are gender gaps in the collegiate experience (Sax, 2008) and that women and men experience college differently. This study showed evidence of the social scene being driven by male students, specifically fraternity members. With fraternities controlling the social agenda, women undergraduates at Duke felt peer pressure to be either intellectual or attractive, but not both. These negative peer pressures continued outside of the classroom as well. In reflecting on the Duke social scene, Carla mused that “we realize we play into a culture we don’t believe in.” The peer pressures were heightened by the common expectation that women should succeed “effortlessly” in the classroom and on the social scene.

In addition to peer pressures, a constant aggressive competitiveness also defined the undergraduate environment. One of the participants with past experience in Duke’s Student Government recognized this and commented on the “aggressive, screw-the-administration style” leadership in student government. While most research on the gendered college experience concentrates on faculty and administrators (Ropers-Huilman, 2003), this study
shows that the undergraduate experience can be gendered, as well.

Secondly, this research adds to the literature in two ways. First, it shows how the collegiate environment impacts the undergraduate experience, specifically the experience of women undergraduates. As seen in the literature (Chickering & Reisser, 1993; Kuh, Schuh, Whitt, & Associates, 1991; Pascarella & Terenizini, 1991), multiple opportunities for co-curricular involvement help students to succeed academically and socially. For student development theorists, this research shows how the person-environment paradigm, when integrated with student development theories (Rodgers, 1990), can provide more nuanced programming for student success.

The latest wave of student development research brings a holistic approach to understanding students through all of their intersecting identities (Torres, Jones, & Renn, 2009) and brings the student affairs field full circle to recognize a “fully three-dimensional, developing person in an ever-changing context” (Torres, et al., p.590). This work analyzed the distinctive parts of the individual while placing her in a multi-level context and also expanded the empirical evidence found in Sax’s (2008) work that the same environment can impact different student populations differently.

Secondly, this research adds to the literature by expanding the limited research on women’s-only leadership programs on coeducational campuses. While earlier research found that supportive environments for women’s leadership development can be found in all-female settings (Whitt, 1994), few studies have examined all-female leadership programs in coeducational institutions. The qualitative responses from the participants of this study offer
insight on how women in coed settings may not even realize until they are in a single-sex setting that their single-sex environments do not support their development.

In addition, current student leadership research (Komives, et al., 2005) has found four categories to be the “essential developmental influences that fostered the development of a leadership identity” (p. 596). These categories were adult influences, peer influences, meaningful involvement, and reflective learning (Komives, et al., 2005). This study, although focused on the leadership behaviors of identified student leaders and not their identity development, found all four categories present. The emphasis on this research in examining the interaction of the environment with student identity expands leadership development research to include the importance of environment, especially for women in a coeducational setting.

A third implication for theory is the development of a new model to study women undergraduate student leaders. The conceptual framework of this study is rooted in the two socially constructed concepts of gender and leadership. Gender studies have showed the importance of relationships (Belenky, 1986; Gilligan, 1982; Jordan, Kaplan, Miller, Stiver, and Surrey, 1991) in women’s development. Leadership studies have showed the importance of context in developing leadership (Klenke, 1996; Rhode, 2003). In exploring how single-sex learning environments could be helpful in developing women undergraduate leaders, I decided to add both Relational Cultural Theory and Bronfenbrenner’s Human Ecology model to Lewin’s model of behavior.

This model for studying women undergraduate’s experiences may be helpful to
studying other diverse student groups on campus. Other identity groups on campus (e.g. sexual orientation, ethnicity, race) may also be searching for a supportive community to help them navigate their collegiate experience. This model of creating a sublevel environment within the larger, dominant environment may be helpful in future research. The recognition of how the different tiers of the environment interact with the students, along with the importance of building respected relationships among various members of the campus community, could be important components of studying other diverse student groups in the future.

Implications for Practice

This research has three implications for future practice in higher education administration. The first is that administrators may seek the support from the host institution that is needed to sustain these important leadership development programs. One of the successful aspects of the Baldwin Scholars Program at Duke University was the amount of institutional support the program received. Programs developed without the full physical and fiscal support of the institution may not present the same level of success on campus. The strong reputation of the Baldwin Scholars Program played a crucial role in the annual recruitment of participants and expanded the direct benefits of the Baldwin Scholars to participate in costly opportunities outside of campus.

The second implication for practice is that administrators may intentionally create opportunities for discussing gendered experiences outside of the academic venue of women’s studies courses. Only one out of 19 participants in this study were in the Women’s Studies
program at Duke University, but many responded to the two academic seminars in the Baldwin Scholars Program which exposed them to issues of gender in contemporary society. By expanding the base of college-educated women who have been exposed to conversations about gender, institutions will give more women the opportunity to interrogate gender as a social construct instead of interpreting it merely from an individual perspective. Researchers (Boatwright, Egidio, & Associates, 2003) feel that women students “may be less willing to relinquish their leadership aspirations and more willing to fight for institutional change if they understood the potential problems before encountering them in the workplace” (p. 664).

The third implication for practice is that administrators may create multiple women’s-only leadership programs on campuses. There are several reasons for this strategy. First, creating multiple programs on campus creates more opportunities for women to experience the important aspects of being in a selected community. In these supportive environments, it is easier for students to perceive that what they say or do is important and appreciated (Wolf-Wendel, 2000). This allows multiple options for women to find a “safe space” to form a critical mass (Wolf-Wendel, 2000) of women undergraduate leadership. Secondly, it gives women more opportunities to validate their relational identities which are rooted in connection. These leadership programs for women can address not only leadership theory and skills but also the psychological variables that lead women to pursue leadership positions (Boatwright, Egidio, & Associates, 2003).

Implications for Research

This study yields three implications for future research. The first would be for
researchers to look qualitatively at the undergraduate women at Duke who applied to the Baldwin Scholars Program but were not accepted into the program. A qualitative study of their collegiate experience would round out the quantitative data relating to their self-reported levels of self-confidence and other leadership behaviors. Ideally, data would be collected from women in similar cohorts to the ones participating in this study, in order to make accurate comparisons to their collegiate environments.

Secondly, a longitudinal study is needed to examine the impact of this community of women after they have graduated from Duke University. This new study would provide longitudinal data on women undergraduate student leaders who graduated from a coeducational institution. This research would provide some comparison to Tidball’s earlier work on looking at the alumnae of women from women’s colleges. In addition, this longitudinal study would offer insights on how the participants used their newly formed gendered perspective in the world of work. Several Baldwin Scholars spoke of feeling bolstered by “protection” against the overt and subtle biases against women in American society. The goal is not to eliminate gender schemas but to recognize them in terms of the accumulative advantage they offer to men, and the accumulative disadvantage they offer to women (Valian, 1998). A study detailing how this recognition actually worked would be important in evaluating the program seminars’ curriculum.

Third, this study should be replicated at other institutions of higher education. This would allow researchers to determine if this phenomenon was unique to Duke University, or if other coeducational colleges and universities could also enhance women undergraduate’s
experience through similar women’s-only leadership development programs. Future research could also begin to peel away the layered components of this single-sex leadership development program to find which components can work autonomously and in what context to allow possible characteristics of this program to be replicated without the cost of sustaining the entire multi-layered program.

In conclusion, environment matters to women undergraduates, and single-sex experiences can enhance the collegiate experiences for women. But while a single-sex leadership development program in a coeducational institution can positively shape the individuals’ experiences, the participants still felt a limited sense of power to affect institutional change without a critical mass of women student leaders on campus. In future research studies, the framework used as a model in this research may work to better explain the leadership experiences of more women undergraduates in an effort to decrease the gender disparity among leaders.
REFERENCES


APPENDIX A

Email Letter to Baldwin Scholars Program

Friday, January 30, 2009

To: Donna Lisker, Co-Director of Baldwin Scholars Program

Dear Donna, I am excited to begin interviewing Baldwin Scholars for my dissertation research on women undergraduates and their leadership development. Please forward the message below and the attached letter to all Baldwin Scholars who are not first-years. Those interested in interviewing will complete the second page questionnaire, and send back to me directly by email. I will then start coordinating interviews with 5 sophomores, 5 juniors, and 5 seniors this spring semester in the Baldwin Scholars conference room at Duke. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions.

Dear Baldwin Scholars, The attached letter is from Lori Haight, a doctoral student at NC State University who is interested in studying women in a women’s only leadership development program at a coeducational institution. Participation in her study is voluntary. If you are interested, please read the attached letter.

[attachment "Participant letter and questionnaire.doc"]
APPENDIX B
Letter to Participants

January 29, 2009
Attn: Baldwin Scholar
Baldwin Scholars Program
Duke University

RE: Baldwin Scholars interested in participating in a research study on women undergraduates’ leadership development

Dear Baldwin Scholar:

Hello! As a doctoral student at North Carolina State University, I am conducting a research study to study undergraduate women’s understanding of their collegiate environment and their leadership behavior. I am excited to talk to fifteen Baldwin Scholars about their collegiate experiences at Duke University. I am interested to see how involvement in the Baldwin Scholars program has impacted your undergraduate experience, including your personal leadership development.

If you are interested in participating in an interview process, please complete the second page of this letter and return to me within one week. The questionnaire should only take a few minutes to complete. I am only interviewing a certain number of Baldwin Scholars who return a completed questionnaire. I am looking for five sophomores, five juniors, and five seniors to interview this spring semester.

If you are chosen to be interviewed for this study, I will contact you within one week of receiving your completed questionnaire to schedule your interview. Interviews will last approximately ninety minutes and will be held in the Baldwin Scholars office on Duke University’s East Campus. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me by phone at (919) 727-0770, or email at lori_haight@ncsu.edu.

Sincerely,
Lori P. Haight
Doctoral Student
APPENDIX C

Participant Selection Questionnaire

Name:
Email:
Telephone:

Age:
Year in School:
Academic Major:
Academic Minor:

List all College Internship Experiences:

Are you employed? Yes__ No__

Do you live on campus? Yes__ No__
Do you currently, or have you ever, roomed with another Baldwin Scholar? Yes__ No__

Hometown (city/state):
Would you consider your hometown to be urban, suburban, or rural?

Please list your campus and community activities: (or include most current resume)
Feel free to use additional lines as necessary.

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What are some general things you should know about research studies?
You are being asked to take part in a research study. Your participation in this study is voluntary. You have the right to be a part of this study, to choose not to participate or to stop participating at any time without penalty. The purpose of research studies is to gain a better understanding of a certain topic or issue. You are not guaranteed any personal benefits from being in a study. Research studies also may pose risks to those that participate. In this consent form you will find specific details about the research in which you are being asked to participate. If you do not understand something in this form it is your right to ask the researcher for clarification or more information. A copy of this consent form will be provided to you. If at any time you have questions about your participation, do not hesitate to contact the researcher named above.

What is the purpose of this study?
The purpose of this case study is to explore the collegiate experiences of women participating in the Baldwin Scholars women’s only leadership development program at Duke University.

What will happen if you take part in the study?
If you agree to participate in this study, you will be interviewed by Lori Haight once for 1½ - 2 hours. You will also have the opportunity to review a transcript of the interview which may take up to one hour. If any additional follow up is needed, you may be contacted by telephone for clarification which may take half an hour. The total duration of the study will be approximately three hours. The initial interview will take place at Duke University.

Risks
No discomforts, distress, or risks to exceed that which you experience in everyday life are expected.

Benefits
There will not be any direct benefit to you from this research, however your participation will benefit future Baldwin Scholars and will help add to the literature base for gender specific leadership development programs.
**Confidentiality**
The information in the study records will be kept strictly confidential. All names in the documents will be replaced with pseudonyms. Data will be stored securely in a limited access location. No reference will be made in oral or written reports which could link you to the study.

**Compensation**
You will receive a $15 gift card from Starbucks for completing this interview.

**What if you have questions about this study?**
If you have questions at any time about the study or the procedures, you may contact the researcher, Lori P. Haight, at 150 Remington Court, Youngsville, North Carolina, 27596 (919/727-0770).

**What if you have questions about your rights as a research participant?**
If you feel you have not been treated according to the descriptions in this form, or your rights as a participant in research have been violated during the course of this project, you may contact Deb Paxton, Regulatory Compliance Administrator, Box 7514, NCSU Campus (919/515-4514), or Joe Rabiega, IRB Coordinator, Box 7514, NCSU Campus (919/515-7515).

**Consent To Participate**
“I have read and understand the above information. I have received a copy of this form. I agree to participate in this study with the understanding that I may choose not to participate or to stop participating at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which I am otherwise entitled.”

Subject's signature_____________________________________ Date _________________
Investigator's signature_________________________________ Date _________________
APPENDIX E

Interview Guide
A Case Study of Undergraduate Women in a Leadership Development Program at a Coeducational Institution

Pseudonym: Place:
Interviewer: Lori Haight Scheduled Time:
Date: Start:_______ End:_______

Background/Opening Questions

1. What role have leadership experiences played in the lives of your family of origin?
2. What do you see as the value of holding a leadership position (either on campus or in a civic/community organization)?
3. In your opinion, what makes a good leader?

RQ1: What are the collegiate experiences of undergraduate women at a coeducational institution?

4. Imagine a prospective student applying to Duke asks you to introduce yourself and describe your experiences here.
   a. In a few words, what would you tell that prospective student about what you have valued/enjoyed the most?
   b. What would you tell that prospective student about what you have valued/enjoyed the least?
   c. Walk me through what a typical day is like for you at Duke.
5. Think back when you first considered Duke University for your undergraduate experience.
   a. How did you learn about the Baldwin Scholars program?
   b. What most attracted you to the Baldwin Scholars program?
6. How would you describe yourself as a student?
   a. What are your strongest academic skills?
   b. What are the areas that you seek to improve?
   c. Tell me about a time that you had a meaningful classroom experience.
7. What do you think are your strongest personal characteristics?
RQ2: How are undergraduate women shaped by their environment at a coeducational institution?

8. If Duke were an island, and you only had 3 - 5 people with you to support you through your collegiate experience, who would comprise your core group of people?
   a. Person #1/ Why did you select this person?
   b. Person #2 - #5/ Repeat
9. Tell me about a time when you had a meaningful experience with other Duke students. What happened?
10. Who are your most important influences at Duke?
11. Who are your negative influences at Duke?

Research Question #3:
What are the behavioral outcomes of undergraduate women participating in a leadership program at a coeducational institution?

12. How has being a Baldwin Scholars impacted your undergraduate experience?
   a. How has your experience as a Baldwin Scholar affected your world view?
   b. What additional personal development opportunities were open to you from your participation in this program?
   c. Looking back over your Baldwin experience, can you share a really powerful learning experience that you've had, in or out of school?
13. How would you identify yourself as a leader at Duke?
14. What advice would you give to another woman desiring to become a leader?
15. Is there anything else that you would like to add about being a female participating in a leadership development experience at Duke?

The following probes suggested by Bogdan and Biklen (2003) will be used as necessary:

What do you mean?
Would you explain that?
What were you thinking at the time?
Give me an example.
Tell me about it.
I’m not sure that I’m following you.
APPENDIX F

Document Analysis Guide

Document Title:
What kind of document is this? How do you know?
When was it written?
Who wrote or created the document?
   How did the creator procure the information?
   Does the creator have something to gain or lose by relaying on the information?
For whom was the document written or created? How can you tell?
Where was the document written or created? How can you tell?
Why was the document written?
   Was the document for public or private use?
   What was the creator trying to accomplish?
Are there other sources that deal with this topic?
   How do they compare to this record?
   Do they corroborate or contradict things in this record?

Adapted from: Missouri Historical Society (see http://www.lewisandclarkeexhibit.org/4_0/4_1_0_supportingdocs/document_analysis_guide.pdf), and a History Worksheet: (see http://www.ebrpss.k12.a.us/lessons/tahil/analyze/documents/documents.htm)
APPENDIX G

Participant Observation Guide

Observer: __________________________________

Date of Observation: ____________________________

Time:  __________________________________

Place:  __________________________________

Purpose of Observation: ___________________________________________

Participants: (Who and how many) ___________________________________

________________________________________________________________

Activity: ____________________________________________________

1. What were the main issues or themes that struck me in my observations at this setting?

2. What questions could be asked concerning the location I observed?

3. What questions could be asked concerning the participants I observed?

4. What questions could be asked concerning the activities I observed?

5. For each of the above elements of this situation (location, participants, activity) I observed, identify the main information I acquired (or failed to acquire) for the questions above.
6. Was there anything else that struck me as salient, interesting, illuminating or important?

7. If I were to undertake another observation in this setting, what new questions would I consider?

APPENDIX H

University of Richmond WILL Program

Westhampton College at the University of Richmond has a Women Involved in Living and Learning (WILL) program that mirrors these characteristics. However, the University of Richmond operates as a coordinate system and thus has an intentional emphasis on creating leadership experiences for women as part of its mission.

Since 1914, Westhampton College for women and Richmond College for men have had joint academic programs but have created single-sex residential, judicial, honor council, and student government systems. The Women Involved in Living and Learning (WILL) program at the University of Richmond began in the late 1980s to meet the needs of women undergraduate students who were looking for a community in which to talk about the role of women in college through academic coursework, internships, and special programs focused on meeting the needs of women students (Rosenbaum, 1989).

This intentional focus was well received by both the students and the administration, and in the 1990s, Westhampton College began offering educational sessions to other institutions interested in starting a similar program. Duke University participated in one of these educational sessions when planning for its new women’s-only leadership development program.