

**Factors that Support or Inhibit Academic Affairs and Student Affairs from  
Working Collaboratively to Better Support Holistic Students' Experiences: A  
Phenomenological Study**

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Joshua Sean O'Connor

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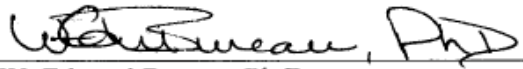
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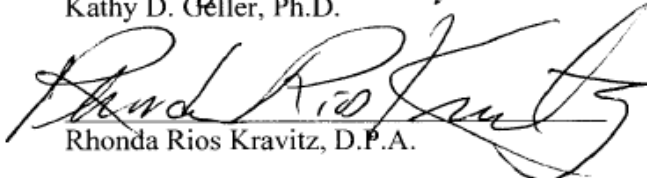
Factors that Support or Inhibit Academic Affairs and Student Affairs from Working Collaboratively to Better Support Holistic Students' Experience

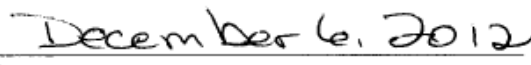
Joshua Sean O'Connor, Ed.D.

**Committee:**

  
W. Edward Bureau, Ph.D.

  
Kathy D. Geller, Ph.D.

  
Rhonda Rios Kravitz, D.P.A.

  
Date

## Abstract

# Factors that Support or Inhibit Academic Affairs and Student Affairs from Working Collaboratively to Better Support Holistic Students' Experiences: A Phenomenological Study

Joshua Sean O'Connor, Ed.D.

Drexel University, December 2012

Chairperson: W. Edward Bureau, Ph.D.

Within a traditional organizational structure in higher education, academic and student affairs divisions may not be collaborating well, and the lack of such collaboration may be impacting the students' holistic experiences. Students' academic and personal development depends not only on the quality of the curriculum and classroom instruction, but also on the quality of another major educational division within the university, student development services, departments commonly collected under the umbrella known as student affairs. This qualitative phenomenological study seeks to identify the factors supporting or inhibiting academic affairs faculty and student affairs professionals from working collaboratively to better support students' holistic experiences. Using three primary methods of data collection – interviews, focus groups, and document review – the researcher examined the following questions: 1) How do higher education professionals describe the interaction between the silos of academic affairs and student affairs divisions? 2) From inhibiting to supporting, what is the spectrum of factors that impact how academic affairs faculty and student affairs professionals work collaboratively? and 3) What are the elements of collaboration between academic and student affairs divisions that would benefit student development? The research intended to examine the collaborative climate on the UC Davis campus in regard to the working relationships between student affairs professionals and academic affair faculty. Five emergent themes ascended from the research: (1) Academic Success, (2) Need for Collaboration and Relationship Building, (3) Silos, (4) Lack of Knowledge of the Other Divisions, and (5) Student Experience. As a result, the research found many factors supporting and inhibiting collaborative work between Academic Affairs and Student Affairs professionals. It is evident silos exist, causing a disconnect in communication, resources, student support, and collaboration between the two divisions. Leadership, increased collaboration, and sharing of information will assist in the deconstruction of preexisting silos. The Academic and Student Affairs Divisions leadership needs to fulfill the mission, goals, and values of their division, while always putting the student first. To accomplish this, the leadership must focus on the mission of the university, reach across silos, and focus on holistic collaborative partnerships that shape the holistic students' experiences.

## **Dedication**

I would like to dedicate this dissertation project to those who have supported me through ten long years of higher education. John O'Connor (dad) and Janet O'Connor (mom) – thank you both for all that you provided to me. I would not be at this point in my life without your love and encouragement. Matthew O'Connor (brother) – thank you for your love and support.

To my loving and supportive grandmother, Henny Marx (Nana), I thank you for paving the way for me and always cheering me on! You are all truly inspirational and give me passion in the work that I do.

## **Acknowledgments**

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I would like to acknowledge the Drexel University Educational Leadership and Management Program for their dedication and commitment to my academic success. I would also like to thank my friends who are scattered along the length of the east and west coast. Without their emails, phone calls and their words of encouragement, I would have been lost.

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## Chapter 1: Introduction to the Problem

In 2010, James Appleton, President Emeritus of the University of Redlands in Southern California, wrote a letter to the editor of the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA) entitled “A New Paradigm.” In his letter, Appleton made a case for closing the gap existing between student affairs and academic affairs – the two groups of professionals, which exist in some form on every college campus (though sometimes under different nomenclature), who work most closely with students. Appleton argues the need for a systemic shift requiring both formal and informal administrative and structural changes. President Emeritus Appleton additionally argued for a need to change the rhetoric in the field, for instance, within language such as “curriculum,” “co-curricular,” and “extracurricular,” that separates academic affairs from student affairs. To expand, “curriculum” is universally perceived as the domain of academic affairs; thus “co-curricular” with its prefix and hyphen denotes something ancillary to and thus, separate from the curriculum. Furthermore, it may tacitly imply something “less than” the curriculum. These real and perceived divides create strong barriers between the two divisions, impeding the collaborative spirit.

As a result, academic and student affairs divisions have become accustomed to working within their own organizational structure or governance on most U.S. college and university campuses. Historically, since the inception of the U.S. educational system, it has been widely understood that faculty (i.e., instructors, teachers, professors) are primarily accountable for the academic, social, and spiritual development of a student. Over time, the faculty’s focus has shifted away from the social and personal

development of the student and solely toward the academic development of the student, a move that resulted in the advent of student affairs professionals, departments, programs, and divisions (Kellogg, 1999). In the time period since this initial divide, the gap between academic affairs and student affairs has widened (Bloland, Stamatakos, & Rogers, 1994, 1996; Kellogg, 1999). Despite the expanding gap, however, academic and student affairs divisions have a necessity to collaborate and ideally develop seamless integration of services and programs for the success and achievement of the student body they serve. Some firmly agree that increasing collaboration and promoting stronger partnerships between academic and student affairs is vital, as such partnerships would serve as mutually beneficial bridges between the services provided to students at any university (Bloland et al., 1996; Bourassa & Kruger, 2001; Kellogg, 1999; Kuh, 1996; Kuh, Douglas, Lund, & Ramin Gyurmek, 1994).

### **Problem Statement**

Within a traditionally organized and structured environment in higher education, academic and student affairs divisions may be collaborating less, and the lack of such collaboration may be impacting the students' holistic experiences.

### **Purpose and Significance of the Problem**

#### **Purpose**

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to identify the factors supporting or inhibiting academic affairs faculty and student affairs professionals from working collaboratively to better support the students' holistic experiences at the University of California, Davis, a four-year higher educational institution. For the purposes of this study, the phenomena of “collaboration” will be generally defined as “a process in which

a group of autonomous stakeholders [academic and student affairs professionals] of an issue domain engage in an interactive process, using shared rules, norms, and structures to act or decide on issues related to that domain’’ (Wood & Gray, 1991, p. 437).

Students’ academic and personal development depends not only on the quality of the curriculum and classroom instruction, but also on the quality of another major educational division within a university: student development services, departments commonly collected under the umbrella known as student affairs (Kellogg, 1999).

This researcher observed the barriers, whether real or perceived, affecting the collaboration between academic and student affairs divisions, and how these barriers impact the student body as a whole. The findings will be significant, as they will facilitate understanding of why there are barriers between academic and student affairs divisions and provide an integral piece of the puzzle toward identifying recommendations to create a more mutually beneficial partnership.

### **Significance of the Problem**

In the 1980s, higher education researchers began to recognize a disconnect between academic and student affairs divisions on most college campuses (Bloland et al., Bourassa & Kruger, 2001; Colwell, 2006; Kellogg, 1999; Kuh, 1996; Kuh et al., 1994). Consequently, leaders in the higher education field began to focus on increasing collaboration between academic and student affairs divisions on campuses (Bloland et al., Bourassa & Kruger, 2001; Frost, Strom, Downey, Schultz, & Holland, 2010; Kellogg, 1999; Kuh, 1996; Kuh et al., 1994). Researchers and institutional staff found that campuses were most often not providing holistic, well-integrated services to their

students due to the organizational structure and relationships between their academic and student affairs divisions. This separation is impacting students' holistic experiences.

Traditional literature describes how as the U.S. higher education system developed, student affairs professionals became responsible for the students' social and emotional development, while faculty were responsible for the intellectual and scholarly development of the student. However, it has become apparent in recent decades that the academic affairs and student affairs divisions on campus should work together (Bloland et al., 1996; Kellogg, 1999; Kuh, 1996; Kuh et al., 1994). Research also shows academic affairs and student affairs divisions regularly engage each other despite the perceived existing disconnection (Bloland et al., 1996; Kellogg, 1999; Kuh, 1996; Kuh et al., 1994).

The disconnect between the two entities is particularly due to the fact that both academic and student affairs divisions at most universities are “vertically” organized units, commonly known as silos. Such siloed organizational structures work independently of each other instead of collaborating “horizontally” across the different divisions at a campus (Davis & Berdrow, 2008). For the purposes of this study, the term “organizational structure” refers specifically to traditionally conceived academic and student affairs divisions. Within such an organizational structure, barriers and obstacles exist – either real or perceived, created purposefully or tacitly – impacting the support to students around their holistic academic success.

This research is of particular importance to the researcher because he works in the field of higher education, specifically in student affairs. He observes and experiences firsthand how higher educational institutions are not providing a collaborative experience for the student due to academic and student affairs divisions not actively collaborating as

well as they could with each other. By working daily in higher education, the researcher has experienced the disconnection between the divisions and observed its palpable impact on the university and the student body. The researcher's goal was to examine the collaborative activities within academic and student affairs divisions at the University of California, Davis (also known as UC Davis), and to recommend actions and activities toward creating partnerships between the divisions to benefit the students.

Prior research has shown that when academic affairs faculty collaborate with student affairs professionals, blended effects are likely to be exerted on students' learning and development, thereby maximizing the impact and quality of the college experience (Bloland et al., 1996; Bourassa, 2001; Frost et al., 2010; Kellogg, 1999; Kuh, 1996; Kuh et al., 1994). If academic affairs divisions on campuses partnered more seamlessly with student affairs divisions, and vice versa, such a partnership would capitalize on and enhance the efforts of each division by enriching the students' academic learning with experiential learning. Table 1.1 gives an example of how academic learning translates to experiential learning (the type most often promoted by student affairs) through partnership and collaboration.

Table 1.1

*Cuseo's Academic Learning Translated To Experiential Learning*

Academic Learning		Student Affairs Experiential Learning
Vicarious Learning	→	Personal Experienced Learning
Abstract Thinking	→	To Concrete (situation-centered) Thinking
Deductive Reasoning	→	To Inductive Reasoning
Theory	→	Practice
Knowledge	→	To Action
Conviction	→	To Commitment

Source: Cuseo (2008, p. 4)

As shown in Table 1.1, academic affairs would also benefit by integrating the student affairs approach of experiential learning into the classroom. Some benefits include helping faculty members better understand and relate to the students, increasing faculty awareness of student development theory and practice, harnessing and promoting positive peer influence on student development, and, finally, complementing the traditional academic curriculum with flexible educational programming (Cuseo, 2010).

The integration of academic affairs into student affairs has already proven to be successful in many aspects at many institutions. Successful programs and activities have resulted in flourishing collaboration between academic affairs and student affairs. Two of the more common examples of successful collaborative efforts likely to be found on U.S. college campuses include a "University 101"/freshman seminar-type program, co-taught by academic faculty and student affairs staff (Kellogg, 1999; King, 1993) and a program in which service learning components are incorporated into academic



curriculum, whereby student affairs professionals assist students in the completion of particular hours (Kellogg, 1999; Knefelkamp, 1991).

Another common collaborative program is some kind of first-year experience programs (FYE), sometimes known as freshman interest group/faculty fellows programs, in which academic faculty and student affairs staff work together to engage collaboratively in educational programs, lectures, and discussions for incoming first-year students (Hyman, 1995; Kellogg, 1999; Phelps, 1993; Schroeder & Hurst, 1996). Furthermore, academic and student affairs staff often collaborate on new student orientation, during which faculty and student affairs professionals work together to orient and acclimate new students to the university (Kellogg, 1999; King, 1993; McAuliffe, Huskey, & Buchanan, 1989). There are strong correlations between all the mutually beneficial collaborative programs and a positive impact on holistic students' experiences, academic success, good academic standing, and retention and graduation rates at the higher education institutions at which they were implemented (Engstrom & Tinto, 2000; Kingston-Mann, 1999; Pike, Schroeder, & Berry, 1997; Tinto, 1987).

There are also many benefits to a partnership between the divisions where the student affairs division supports the academic affairs division. Such a partnership may help maximize and enhance the efforts toward students meeting their personal or social goals and objectives, all the while enriching the students' experiential learning.

According to the Student Learning Imperative from the American College Personnel Association (1994):

Students benefit from many and varied experiences during college, and learning and personal development are cumulative, mutually shaping processes that occur over an extended period of time in many different settings. The more students are

involved in a variety of activities inside and outside the classroom, the more they gain. Student affairs professionals attempt to make 'seamless,' what are often perceived by students to be disjointed, unconnected experiences by bridging organizational boundaries and forgoing collaborative partnerships with faculty and others to enhance student learning. (p. 4)

In addition to the above activities, student affairs professionals attempt to help make the college experience feel more integrated, seamless, and easy-to-navigate for students. Other benefits include increasing student involvement, involving students in development programming, facilitating students in organizing and delivering student-development programs, and, finally, ensuring co-curricular programs are connected to the establishment (Cuseo, 2010).

Though there are successful and positive collaborations between academic and student affairs divisions throughout the country, continued work toward more comprehensive integration is still necessary. The disconnect in collaboration between academic and student affairs divisions in the United States today is still significant, despite the existence of a few collaborative programs on most campuses. As Kezar (2003) pointed out:

The barriers described in the literature shed light on institutional problems and help to identify possible approaches for overcoming these obstacles. The following barriers to collaboration are most commonly identified: organizational fragmentation and division of labor, specialization among faculty, lack of common purpose or language, few shared values, history of separation, different priorities and expectations, cultural differences between academic and student affairs in terms of personality styles, and competing assumptions about what constitutes effective learning (American College Personnel Association, 1994; Blacke, 1979; Kun, 1996; Kuh, Douglas, Lund, & Ramin Gyurmek, 1994; Lamarid, 1999; Love & Love, 1995; Martin & Murphy, 2000). These studies point to existing cultural (lack of a common language or few shared values) and structural aspects of campuses that appear to prevent collaboration and suggest strategies for change (p. 3)

In light of the commonly identified barriers, the purpose of this particular phenomenological study was to study those present specifically at the University of California, Davis, a four-year higher educational institution. At this stage in the research, the phenomenon of collaboration will be generally defined as “a process in which a group of autonomous stakeholders [academic and student affairs] of an issue domain engage in an interactive process, using shared rules, norms, and structures to act or decide on issues related to that domain” (Wood & Gray, 1991, p. 437).

### **Research Questions Focused on Solution Finding**

Toward meeting the objectives of this study, the following questions guided the research:

1. How do higher education professionals describe the interaction between the silos of academic affairs and student affairs divisions?
2. From inhibiting to supporting, what is the spectrum of factors that impact how academic affairs faculty and student affairs professionals work collaboratively?
3. What are the elements of collaboration between academic and student affairs divisions that would benefit student development?

### **The Conceptual Framework**

#### **Researcher's Stance**

The conceptual framework of this study is aligned with both the researcher's background and vested interest in higher education, as well as his philosophical approaches. The researcher is a humanist and social constructivist with a strong interest

and concern for the welfare of all human beings, their right to personal values, and their dignity. In this study, the researcher took an epistemological approach as he has worked his entire career in higher education. He is dedicated to building mutually beneficial relationships within the field of higher education, with a particular focus on the relationships benefitting the student experience. The researcher believes promoting professional, open, and transparent relationships within institutions of higher learning – between all divisions, but especially between student and academic affairs – will generate a more comfortable, developmentally robust, and sustainable environment for the student. Further, the researcher believes that while immersed in such a welcoming and comfortable environment on campus, students will be inclined to have superior academic and personal success, have more opportunities for personal development, and be more likely to remain mentally, physically, spiritually, and emotionally healthy.

The researcher feels a strong sense of duty with regard to improving the lives of students and promoting their individual development. The researcher is an advocate for students, student success, and student well-being. Through his career path and professional development, the researcher anticipates working to improve higher educational services at his institutions and systems by being a change agent in the field.

The researcher chose this topic because he has personally witnessed higher educational institutions not providing fully holistic services to students due, in his estimation, to the lack of collaboration between academic and student affairs. To him, it is a problem in structure, organization, practice, and protocol. In the researcher's opinion, institutions are not providing full services to the student because academic affairs and student affairs, the two main divisions on campus, are not functioning

collaboratively but instead are working as two individual entities. The researcher took a methodological and ontological approach to this research to seek improvement in the field.

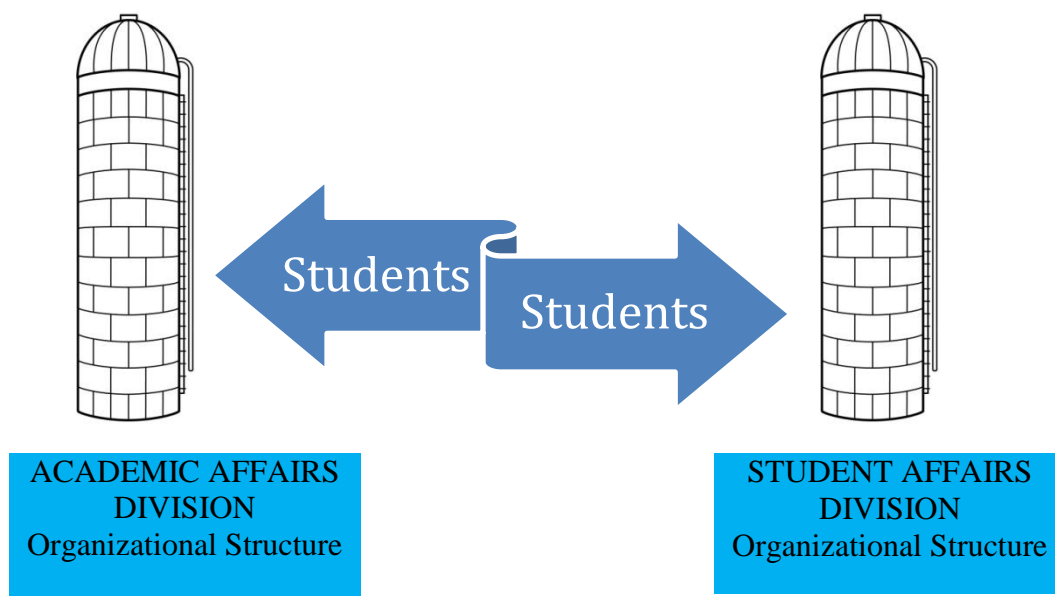
### **Conceptual Framework of Three Research Streams**

This research topic is very important to the researcher as he works in the field of higher education and sees campus academic and student affairs divisions not collaborating as well as they could with one another. This lack of collaboration not only impacts the students but impacts the staff and student services processes of the institution. By working in the field, the researcher is able to examine firsthand this disconnect and would like to work toward increasing the collaboration between the two divisions in a way to benefit the student body. The participants in his research are his peers, colleagues, supervisors, and mentors, all of whom the researcher respects for the dedication and hard work they put forth toward making UC Davis a better place for the students.

The conceptual framework for this study is to explore and investigate three areas in an attempt to identify the factors supporting or inhibiting academic affairs faculty and student affairs professionals from working collaboratively to better support students' holistic experiences. The three areas of research were: a) academic and student affairs history and the services they each provide; b) the impact of those factors on student success; and c) the organizational structure within higher education.

First, there is a well-established historical disconnect in the collaborative activities between academic affairs and student affairs (Appleton, 2010; Blimling & Alschuler, 1996; Bloland et al., 1996; Bourassa & Kruger, 2001; Brubacher & Rudy,

1976; Doyle, 2004; Fried, 2000; Guarasci, 2001; Kellogg, 1999; King, 1993; Knefelkamp, 1991; Kuh et al., 1994; Komives & Woodward, 1996; Hyman, 1995; Loy & Painter, 1997; Miller & Prince, 1976; Moore, Lovell, McGann, & Wyrick, 1998; Rhoads & Black, 1995). Figure 1.1 illustrates the siloed approach academic affairs and student affairs divisions traditionally take toward serving students, working independently of each other and resulting in a complicated process for students to get information, resources, and services. The researcher further examines the similarities and differences between academic and student affairs services, the structural barriers the siloed approach creates, and the impact it has on students' holistic needs.



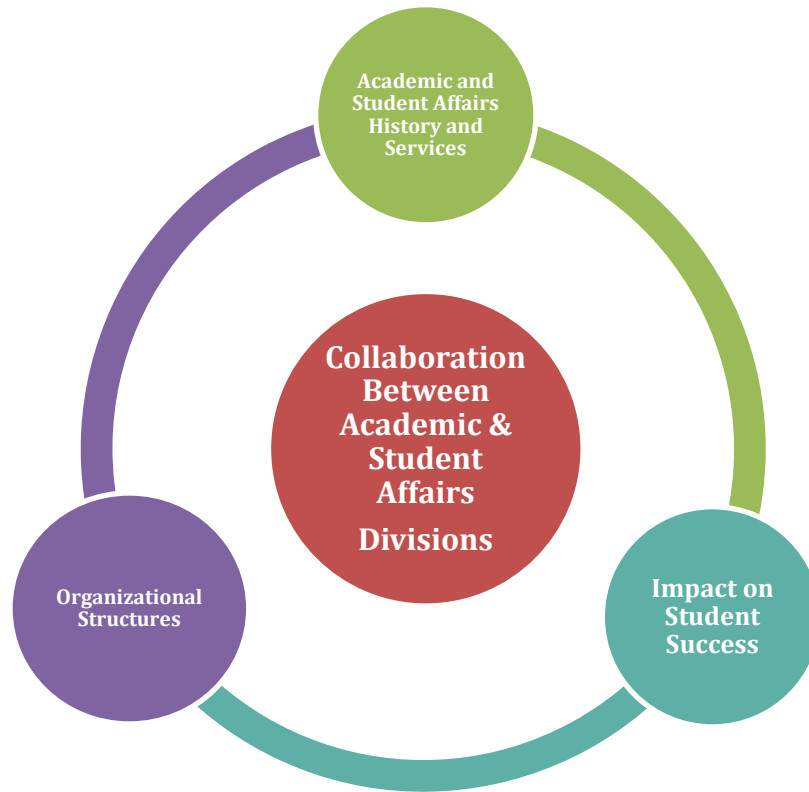
*Figure 1.1.* University organizational structures and the impact on the student.

Secondly, once a historical context has been established, the researcher illustrates how both academic and student affairs divisions are distinctly separate hierarchical units

within the same university system. Both academic affairs and student affairs divisions manage their procedures within their own organizational structures instead of working collaboratively through a centralized management process to benefit the students. When working within a hierarchical organizational structure or silo, an organization often develops strong bureaucratic control over all organizational activities and limits collaboration.

Thirdly, after the disconnect has been established between academic and student affairs, the researcher identifies the factors supporting or inhibiting the collaboration. Research shows that both academic and student affairs divisions have become so hierarchically structured it will be a challenge to remove the barriers between the two divisions inhibiting the creation of a more collaborative working environment that would benefit both divisions and the student body (Bourassa et al., 2001; Bruin & Doebeli, 2008; Guarasci, 2001; Hufnagel & Browne, 1989; Jacobides, 2007).

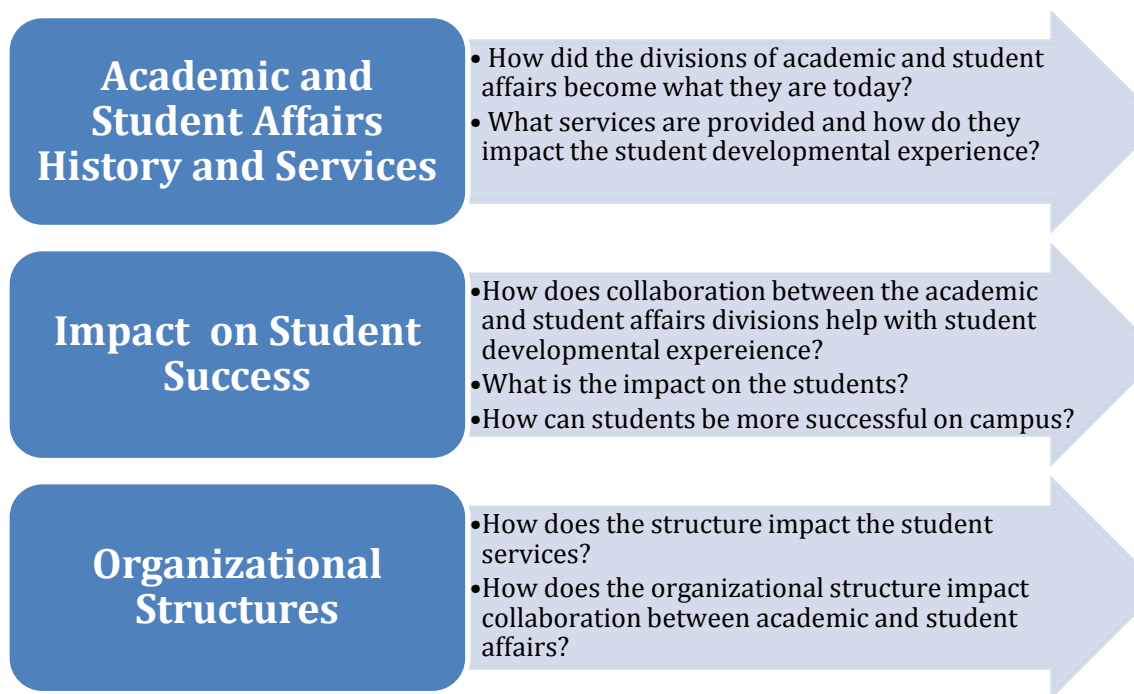
Finally, the researcher examines and makes recommendations regarding how to break down and change the organizational structures of both divisions in order to improve collaboration and positively impact the holistic students' experiences. As represented in Figure 1.2, the researcher identified the factors supporting or inhibiting the collaboration between academic and student affairs through three streams of research: a) academic and student affairs history and services, b) impact on student success, and c) organizational structure within higher education.



*Figure 1.2.* The three streams of research.

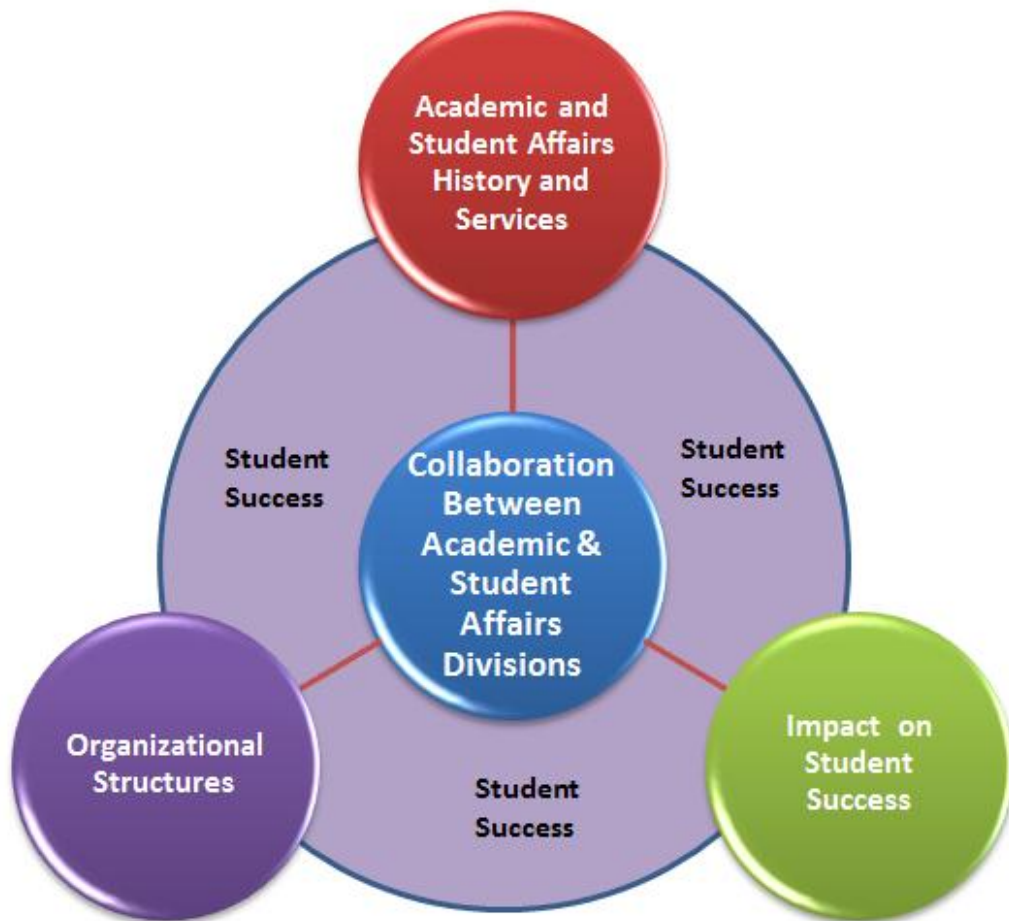
Figure 1.3 provides a detailed examination of each of the three research streams through critical questions that must be answered in the course of research.





*Figure 1.3.* The three streams of research in detail.

Finally, both Figures 1.2 and 1.3 overlap in Figure 1.4 in that the interrelationship and goals of the conceptual framework becomes clear, a cycle in which the three streams constantly work together to create student success. Figure 1.4 shows the ideal relationship between academic and student affairs services, while showing the interwoven impact on students' holistic experiences. Finally, the diagram shows the impact on student academic success and learning, both inside and outside the classroom.



*Figure 1.4.* The three streams of research and the impact on student success.

### **Definition of Terms**

For the purposes of this research, the following terms are defined as follows:

#### **Academic Affairs**

Academic Affairs, also known as academia or the Academy, encompasses university professors, faculty, and/or teaching assistants who provide services and engage students in advanced education and research at institutions of higher education, as well as the Deans and higher-level administrators who oversee them.

**Academic Affairs Division**

The department or division on a college campus responsible for supporting the work of the faculty, teaching, advising, and scholarships and developing and maintaining the academic program as a whole. The academic affairs division at colleges and universities oversees curriculum development and supports new curricular initiatives for campus. The division also oversees faculty hiring, support, research, and teaching, and the administration of all academic departments and programs, as well as various university libraries.

**Academic Affairs Support Services**

Academic affairs support services can include, but are not limited to, Academic Advising, Academic Tutoring Centers, Adjunct Faculty Handbooks, Computer Services, Continuing Studies, Distance Education, Excellence in Teaching, Faculty Committee Membership, Freshman Seminar, First-year Experience, Grants Administration, Honors Program, Library, Media Services, Political Engagement Projects, Service Learning, Teaching, Learning, and Technology.

**Collaboration**

According to Wood and Gray (1991), “a process in which a group of autonomous stakeholders of an issue domain engage in an interactive process, using shared rules, norms, and structures to act or decide on issues related to that domain” (p. 437).

**Developmental Experience**

Personal, psychological, emotional change, and growth a person (in this case, a student) experiences that impacts their values, ethics, and morals.

**Faculty**

Faculty is academic staff of a university. For this research, “faculty” is used as a collective name for the professors, teachers, or teaching assistants employed within an academic affairs division in a higher education institution.

**Functional Silo**

An individual business unit that tends to act as a stand-alone entity, often formulating its own strategies and work plans in parallel with other business functions. This expression is used when describing an organization whose functions tend to be less communicative and collaborative than non-siloed organizations. Private companies with functional silos, for example, may have greater difficulty in creating strong, competitive products because they may fail to recognize the benefit of cross-functional teaming (Technology Training Limited, 2012).

**Matriculation**

A process that brings a college and a student who enrolls for credit into an agreement with the university for the purpose of realizing the student's educational objectives through the college's established programs, policies, and requirements (Scott-Skillman & Halliday, 1991)

**Organizational Structure**

“Organizational structure” is a term commonly used in the field of business and used when a functional unit within an organization focuses internally on its own purposeful objectives. An organizational structure consists of human resources and the activities they undertake such as task allocation, coordination, and

supervision, which are directed toward the achievement of organizational aims (Pugh, 1990).

### **Out-of-the-Classroom Learning**

Any form of experiential, co-curricular, or extra-curricular learning that takes place for students within the university setting but outside a formalized or traditional classroom setting.

### **Silos**

Silos are vertical organizational or management structures often effective at promoting interaction within functional units. However, silos also often create obstacles to interaction, coordination, and collaboration between and among other units (Schroeder, 1999).

### **Staff**

Staff is a set of employees within a higher education institution. For this research, the researcher will be referring to staff as a collective name for anyone employed within the division of student affairs in a higher education institution.

### **Student**

A student is a learner who attends an educational institution. For this research, student is defined as falling under the categories of freshman (first-year), sophomore, junior, or senior attending a traditional institution of higher education. This study excludes graduate and specialized certificate or credential-seeking students.

**Student Affairs Division**

The department/division on a college campus dedicated to the student experience, which includes athletics and extra- and co-curricular activities. In other words, student affairs provides the majority of “out-of-the-classroom” teaching.

**Student Affairs Professionals**

Staff employed within a student affairs division who work to provide services, programs, and resources that help students learn and grow outside the classroom. Student affairs professionals work to enhance student learning, guide academic and career decisions, mentor students, promote leadership skills, and counsel students through crises (NASPA, 2012).

**Student Affairs Services**

Student affairs services can include, but are not limited to, Academic Advising, Admissions, Assessment, Athletics, Career Development, Student Union, Service Learning, Commuter Services, Counseling Services, Dining and Food Services, Disability Support Services, Enrollment Management (Financial Aid, Bursar and Registrar), Financial Aid, Fund Raising and Development, Greek Affairs, Health Services, International Student Services (Study Abroad), Judicial Affairs (Student Conduct), Leadership Programs, Multicultural Affairs, Orientation and First-year Experience/Programming, Recreation and Fitness, Residence Life, Spirituality (Faith or Religious Services), Student Activities, or Student Involvement.

**Student Development**

Student development theory provides basic assumptions for the definition of student development activities and practices: a) each student should be treated and

valued as an individual with unique needs, b) the entire environment of the student should be taken into account and used for educational purposes, and c) the student has a personal responsibility and should take accountability for becoming educated (University of Texas, Dallas, 2012).

### **Student Holistic Experience**

The University providing personal, academic, social and developmental support to all of its students. Providing each student with support and a well-rounded experience that goes beyond their academics.

### **University**

A traditional four-year institution of higher learning, especially one providing a general or liberal arts education rather than technical or professional training.

### **Assumptions, Limitations, and Delimitations**

The researcher also had some pre-existing assumptions of higher education due to past employment, as well as being a student within the field of education. The researcher had pre-existing assumptions about the processes and protocols – both explicit and implied – by which the University of California, Davis Student Affairs and Academic Affairs Divisions govern themselves and generally conduct business. Finally, the researcher also assumed the student affair professionals and academic affairs faculty would willfully participate in his research and work to help provide deep and rich insight. The participants in this research were the researchers' peers, colleagues, supervisors, and mentors, all of whom the researcher respects and whom he believes work hard to make UC Davis a better place for the students. The researcher addressed and mitigated the pre-

existing assumptions so they would not affect or influence his research, study, and results.

The researcher concentrated his phenomenological, qualitative research on the University of California, Davis. Thus, there are several limitations to this study. The first limitation was that the University of California, Davis is one of 10 campuses within the University of California system, all of which have different climates and cultures, despite the fact that they fall under the same direction of the University of California Regents. The 10 campus locations are Berkeley, Davis, Irvine, Los Angeles, Merced, Riverside, San Diego, San Francisco, Santa Barbara and Santa Cruz. Each University of California campus is governed within an organizational structure function. Similar to the way academic and student affairs divisions are governed on campuses, each of the University of California campuses administer independently and do not always collaborate with the other UC Campus, despite the fact that all the University of California campuses report to and are directly supervised by the University of California Office of the President and the University of California Regents.

In addition to the siloed governance of each University, timing was another noteworthy limitation with this research. The methodology required a number of set interviews with both faculty and staff, and their schedules and available time posed a significant issue with regard to scheduling interviews. The researcher was able to get a balanced interview schedule between both academic and student affairs personnel. However, the researcher was only able to conduct focus groups with student affairs professionals because academic affairs faculty were already on summer break.



Lastly, the researcher was both a participant and an observer within the site location, the University of California, Davis. The researcher was a participant, as he was employed within Student Affairs by UC Davis; but he also served as an observer within the university and the University of California System. Furthermore, the researcher had pre-existing knowledge of the collaborative processes on campus as the UC Davis campus was his “backyard,” the environment in which he worked daily. It should be noted that these limitations may not be generalizable.

As for delimitations, there are none at this point under the researcher’s control at in the study.

### **Summary**

Researchers and professionals in the field have made a case to close the gap between the two groups of professionals on campus who work most closely with students, the academic affairs and student affairs divisions. Over time, faculty has focused less on the social and personal development of the student, resulting in the rise of distinct divisions of student affairs and the associated student services professionals. Since this initial separation, the gap in collaboration between academic affairs and student affairs has widened (Bloland et al., 1996; Bourassa, 2001; Frost et al., 2010; Kellogg, 1999; Kuh, 1996; Kuh et al., 1994), and leaders in the field have begun to focus on the need to increase collaboration between the academic affairs and student affairs divisions (Kezar, 2003; Nesheim et al., 2007; Pace, Blumreich, & Merkle, 2006; Whitt et al., 2008). In spite of this recognized need, barriers toward collaboration exist between academic and student affairs divisions through structural (organizational, process, and protocol) and perceived or implied silos on most university campuses. Within a

traditional organizational structure environment, academic and student affairs may be collaborating less, which impacts the holistic students' experiences. The researcher aimed to identify the factors supporting or inhibiting academic affairs faculty and student affairs professionals from working collaboratively to better support students' holistic experiences at the University of California, Davis, a four-year higher educational institution.

## Chapter 2: The Literature Review

### **Introduction of the Problem**

Within a traditional organizational structure environment, academic and student affairs divisions may be collaborating less, which impacts students' holistic experiences. While examining collaboration, a number of expectations and stressors arise. First, and perhaps foremost, there are the expectations of the university held by students and their parents. Second, there are external and internal stressors with which the university must contend, such as retention and graduation rates (as well as goals and mandates), budgets and available finances, tuition rates, public opinion, and student satisfaction. Thirdly, academic and student affairs divisions function within silos and, as a result, may not be providing fully holistic services to the students. As these three sets of factors align, university campus staff and administrators constantly question, evaluate, and re-evaluate whether and how they can meet the expectations of the students, their parents, and the community, while also dealing with the other stressors influencing their decision-making processes.

The expectations of students and parents are fairly straightforward and well understood. Each year, new high school graduates prepare for the transition from high school to college. As young adults, students are nervous, anxious, and likely even a bit frightened as they embark on the important new stage in their lives a college experience represents. Students may wonder what this new experience will bring; however, they (and their parents and families) expect the university has their best interests in mind. For students, the contrasts between high school and college can be significant, often dramatic

changes, including dealing with living away from home for the first time, cohabitating with peers in residence halls or in off-campus housing, academic transition issues (time-management, juggling work, social, and schoolwork pressures), managing their own (often very limited) finances, physical or emotional health issues, and having to learn to be independent. Students do their best to prepare for these differences while making the transition from high school to college, and they and their families expect colleges to support them.

Beyond the typical social and academic uncertainties students have when entering an institution of higher education, recent years have brought a new layer of uncertainty to the forefront of which students must be mindful as well: nationwide, colleges and universities are in the midst of a major financial crisis causing them to operate within (sometimes dramatically) reduced budgets and charge higher tuition and fees. This budget crisis has had a domino effect and, in some cases, university retention and graduation rates have been affected. For example, in 2007, “retention rates among all United States institutions of higher education were 68.7% from the first year to the second year” (Jamelske, 2009, p. 1). Retention rates and recruitment have become one of the main concerns for most universities and colleges. According to the U.S. News and World Report on College Rankings, “an institution’s retention rate carries a weight between 20 and 25% in the ranking process” (U.S. News and World Report, 2008, p. 2). Consequently, a higher retention rate improves the national and regional rankings for the individual university or college and increases its desirability. In response to this information, many higher educational institutions began to invest money and resources in improving their students’ overall experiences. According to the U.S. News and World

Report (2008), higher education institutions believe their incoming classes all have the capacity to be successful college students. Universities and colleges began to recognize that if students were not successful, it may be due to issues beyond the students' control, thus the services offered, practices, and protocols of the university itself might be contributing factors toward the lack of certain students' success. Specifically, educational leaders in the field began to look at this phenomenon and found that an important negative factor is the failure of departments on campus to provide fully holistic services to support student development which could be better achieved through collaboration between university divisions.

Two of the largest divisions on most college and university campuses in the United States are academic affairs and student affairs. Thus, these are two of the most important areas to investigate in terms of student services, the student experience, and collaboration. Current evidence does not definitively determine whether higher education institutions in general are not providing holistic services to their students, but the researcher intends to explore the impact of factors supporting and inhibiting a collaborative partnership between student affairs and academic affairs impacting the students' holistic experiences.

### **Conceptual Framework**

The researcher began to recognize collaboration as a problem by observing patterns and trends at the university where he was employed, UC Davis. The researcher noticed academic faculty focused on research, whereas student affairs professionals focused on student experience and out-of-the-classroom learning. As a result, many students did not feel fully supported since the university structure tends to

compartmentalize students' education by having faculty manage academics and student affairs professionals manage the student experience. This compartmentalized education creates a gap in learning for the student, which has in turn created a problem for the university. To better understand the gap between academic and student affairs, the researcher examines and reviews three streams of research.

The three streams of research examined are a) academic and student affairs history and services, b) their impact on student success, and c) organizational structure within higher education. The first stream provides a historical context of how academic and student affairs divisions were formed and the services they offer students. The second stream will examine the importance of student involvement and its relation to their success. Finally, the third stream will examine the organizational structures, or silos, within higher education. This siloed organizational structure is the primary barrier higher education will need to overcome in order to provide seamless, fully integrated services to students.

### **The Literature Review**

Most university and college mission statements claim that a cornerstone of the institution is to cultivate a student's academic, personal, and social development. University mission statements usually continue by prioritizing excellence in teaching, research, and exploring public service programs that will enhance the campus environment as well as a student's personal and professional development. However, some university and college students are not receiving all of the above services due to the breakdown of the university organizational structure. Examinations of this breakdown in structure have shown that higher education institutions in the United States are not

providing holistic services to their students due to the lack of collaboration between the academic and student affairs divisions.

With this breakdown as a backdrop, educators, professionals, and administrators must answer important questions such as, how do higher education professionals describe the interaction between the silos of academic affairs and student affairs divisions? From inhibiting to supporting, what is the spectrum of factors that impact how academic affairs faculty and student affairs professionals work collaboratively? What are the elements of collaboration between academic and student affairs divisions that would benefit student development?

To answer the questions and provide an enhanced understanding around the lack of collaboration between academic and student affairs divisions, the researcher looked at the following three streams of research: the first stream of research examines the historical context of academic and student affairs and the services provided, the second stream of research examines the impact on student success, and the third stream of research examines the organizational structure barriers between academic and student affairs that may prevent them from working effectively together (see Appendix A for organizational charts for both divisions).

### **Academic and Student Affairs History and Services**

A plethora of research is compiled on the imperative to and the benefits of increasing the collaboration between academic and student affairs (Bloland et al., 1996; Bourassa & Kruger, 2001; Kellogg, 1999; Kezar, 2003; Kuh, 1996; Kuh et al., 1994; Nesheim et al., 2007; Pace et al., 2006; Whitt et al., 2008). To better understand the

current existent gap, it is useful to review the origin of the formation of academic and student affairs as two discrete units.

Over the past 50 years, researchers in higher education recognized that a disconnect existed between most academic and student affairs divisions (Bloland et al., 1996; Kellogg, 1999; Kuh, 1996; Kuh et al., 1994). As a result, leaders in the field began to focus on the need to increase collaboration between academic affairs and student affairs divisions. The traditional literature about student affairs assigns student affairs professionals the responsibility of students' social and emotional development and assigns faculty responsibility for the intellectual development of students. It has become apparent in recent years the academic side and student affairs side of campus must work together (Bloland et al., 1996; Kellogg, 1999; Kuh, 1996; Kuh et al., 1994).

Looking historically at colleges and universities, it was understood that academic faculty were traditionally held accountable for the scholastic, social, and spiritual development of a student. University and college faculty were fully responsible for every aspect of the student's development, both academically and socially. The faculty was responsible not only for the student's academic and intellectual development but also for his or her ethical and moral development. In the first several hundred years of American higher education, university professors, tutors, and presidents served in the role currently implemented by student affairs (Doyle, 2004; Rudolph, 1990). Tutors often lived with the students and served as mentors and counselors (Blimling & Alschuler, 1996; Doyle, 2004). Faculty became responsible for all services promised and provided to the enrolled student. As time went on, university faculty became more invested in their research and scholarly work, and, as a result, they were less interested in investing in their students'



learning (Doyle, 2004). Although Jacobi's (1991) research found that student interaction and mentoring with faculty members promotes academic success, vast bodies of literature indicate that student contact with faculty is linked to academic success (e.g., Astin, 1977; DeCoster & Brown, 1982; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1977; Tracey & Sedlacek, 1985; Wilson, Gaff, Dienst, Wood, & Bavry, 1975). Nevertheless, a faculty shift in responsibility began to take place, creating a dilemma for higher educational institutions: who was going to provide the social services for the students when faculty ceases to do so?

The solution for many colleges and universities was to hire a dean or other student services specialist(s) who would supervise and discipline the students for the behaviors outside the classroom (Boyer, 1987; Doyle, 2004; Loy & Painter, 1997). "Within a student services approach, the primary purpose of student affairs was to support the academic mission of the institution by providing adjunct services necessary to ensure a student's readiness for the classroom" (Doyle as cited in Ender, Newton, & Caple, 1996, p. 76). Eventually, university faculty focused on the social and personal development of the student less, resulting in student affairs professionals materializing (Kellogg, 1999). This process was essentially the birth of student affairs in higher education.

By the early 1960s, student affairs divisions began to establish roots within universities and colleges, and entire divisions of student affairs professionals became the status quo at almost every college or university in the United States (Doyle, 2004; Parker, 1978). These divisions began to break away from academic affairs divisions to assist students with all the non-traditional learning, which consequently created a widening gap between academic and student affairs services.

In addition to student affairs divisions being the entity primarily responsible for learning out-of-the-classroom, university faculty additionally perceived student affairs professionals as those who perform disciplinary roles on college campuses, not primarily as educators (Doyle, 2004; Parker, 1987).

Faculty perceived student service officers as either controlling students who demonstrated inappropriate behavior or protecting students who were unable to take responsibility for their own lives. Student service officers defended their actions with the doctrine of *in loco parentis*, which meant that most students were viewed as children and living away from their homes, and the institution was responsible for acting in the place of the parents. The outbreak of student protests and demonstrations in the 1960s made it more difficult for student affairs professionals to do their jobs. Many student services officers were not prepared for the outbreak of student protests and demonstrations in the 1960s and found their jobs as disciplinarians and parental replacements in jeopardy. Many faculty members blamed student affairs for the unrest among students because student affairs were supposed to be responsible for student issues. (Parker as cited in Doyle 2004, p. 67)

By the mid-1960s, it was clear the student affairs profession was in need of a new and innovative philosophical approach in its efforts toward enhancing student growth and development (Doyle, 2004). Since the traditional framework of student services considered student affairs as supplemental and secondary to the faculty, the classic role of student affairs was labeled dysfunctional and incompatible with students' full development (Doyle, 2004; Miller & Prince, 1976). Nevertheless, today, for most student affairs professionals, the ethic of care is embedded within their personal value system and translated daily into professional practice. Since the profession is premised on the long story of support and care of students, a longstanding relationship exists between moral reasoning based on care and practice in student affairs (Evans, Forney, Guido, Patton, & Renn, 2010).

In summary, university faculty focused on the social and personal development of the student less, resulting in student affairs professionals materializing; hence, student affairs in higher education was born. Student affairs divisions began to establish roots within universities and colleges. They began to break away from academic affairs divisions to assist students with all of the non-traditional learning, consequently creating a widening gap between academic and student affairs services. As previously mentioned, University faculty perceives student affairs professionals as responsible for the undertaking of the disciplinary role; they do not perceive them as educators. Many faculty members blamed student affairs for the unrest among students because student affairs were supposed to be responsible for student issues. Academic and student affairs divisions on campus separated and the impact affected the students.

### **Impact on Student Success**

In Europe, the earliest student development theory held that institutions should act *in loco parentis*, Latin for "in the place of a parent." Educational institutions would act on behalf of parents for the good of the student (Freedman, Fuks, & Weijer, 1993). An *in loco parentis* policy provided a non-biological parent to be given the legal rights and responsibilities of a biological parent if he/she was not the parent of the student. The purpose was to have schools concentrate on encouraging the student's character development mainly centered on traditional Christian values (Gutiérrez de Piñeres, 2006). This classic conception of student development focused on the improvement of the student's character rather than on the student's intellect. *In loco parentis* allowed higher educational institutions to act on behalf of the student, presumably with the student's best

interests in the forefront; thus, the law did not take into consideration that universities might violate student civil liberties.

In the 1960s, student protests began to arise in reference to *in loco parentis*. In 1961, a landmark case, *Dixon v. Alabama*, marked the end of *in loco parentis* in U.S. higher education (United States Court of Appeals Fifth Circuit, 1961). The United States Courts of Appeals found that Alabama was unjust in expelling students without due process while claiming to act *in loco parentis*. Shortly after this case, there was a revolution in student development theory; the student development paradigm began to blend with the student services paradigm (Moore et al., 1998) in which the two paradigms mirrored the idea that students learn both in class and out of class.

In light of the more modern, post-1960s paradigm, student development and student growth are two of the many core missions and goals for higher educational institutions in the United States. In keeping with institutions' missions to develop the "whole student" (Benjamin, 1996), there was a need for professionals to address the issues of student development as they appeared (Moore et al., 1998). Higher education institutions began to recognize the need to develop the student as a whole person. Simultaneously, faculty could not be asked to perform that task alone. Thus, university administrators began to hire student affairs professionals who began to address particular student needs (Komives & Woodard, 1996; Moore et al., 1998). The first serious push for hiring student affairs professionals did not occur until the 1960s, again, largely after the student protests and legal action surrounding *in loco parentis* (Brubacher & Rudy, 1976).

With the post-1960s student services professional field growing, the mission for newly energized student affairs divisions became clear: to combine student academic development with student services toward encouraging students to actively engage with the university, mainly by focusing on student involvement outside the classroom. The impact of student involvement on student development is evident in such areas as leadership, job placement potential and success, and persistence toward completing the degree (Moore et al., 1998; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991). Research shows a strong link between higher campus involvement and greater student development and success. “The greater the student’s involvement in college, the greater will be the amount of student learning and personal development” (Astin, 1985, p. 35). This speaks to the importance of merging academic affairs services with student affairs services to provide more holistic experiences to the students and their overall development.

Moore et al. (1998) furthermore explained the presence of a historical perspective on student involvement and development. “There is a need for student involvement and a call for student affairs professionals to demonstrate their effectiveness in influencing student development and student learning” (Moore et al., 1998, p. 5). Student affairs professionals play an instrumental role in both in- and out-of-the-classroom learning. The role of student affairs practitioners is to work alongside students and other faculty and staff to transform college and university settings (Moore et al., 1998; Rhoads & Black, 1995).

Research has shown that students improve when they have a university experience that combines both in- and out-of-classroom learning (Kezar, 2003; Nesheim et al., 2007; Pace et al., 2006; Whitt et al., 2008). One example of creating a combined

experience is to provide a comprehensive support system in which “all colleges [i.e., Arts & Letters, Social Sciences and Interdisciplinary Studies, etc.] offer a systematic program of guidance and advisement that involves students from matriculation through graduation” (Webb, 1986, p. 10). It is furthermore suggested that this “systematic program of guidance and advisement” bridges the gap between academic and student affairs divisions. Such advising programs are currently in place at most institutions; however, to provide a systematic approach, the services must work collaboratively and effectively.

As successful programming between the two divisions occurred, Chickering and Gamson (1987) provide a list of good practices in undergraduate education that would seem to serve as a foundation for collaboration in order to have a positive impact on student success. These seven principles were primarily focused on collaboration, increased communication, and overall student holistic success. Their findings were gathered into seven principles for excellence. Chickering and Gamson’s (1987) principles for excellence follow:

- 1) encourage students-faculty contact (p. 3)
- 2) encourage cooperation among students (p. 3)
- 3) encourage active learning (p. 4)
- 4) give prompt feedback (p. 4)
- 5) emphasize time on task (p. 5)
- 6) communicate high expectations and (p. 5)
- 7) respect diverse talents and ways of learning. (p. 6)

Chickering and Gamson's principles for excellence focus intently on the faculty and student relationship and active learning. However, some argue that faculty believe their work should not focus on student relationships rather on their research and faculty incentives (e.g., travel funds, development fund, etc.) (Bowen, 1985; Murray, 1992; Williams & Peters, 1994). Williams and Peters (1994) researched faculty incentives and found that incentives and rewards could become a contention with any university.

Murray (1992) and Bowen (1985) found that faculty prefer incentives such as release time, travel funds, development funds, and/or encouragement from senior-level administrator and department heads. Untenured faculty seldom receive any of these incentives to innovate or renovate the learning or teaching environment. (Williams & Peters, 1994, p. 107)

Interestingly, the faculty goal of tenure does impact the student. DeGeorge (2003) researched academic tenure and explained that most institutions follow the rules of tenure by the American Association of the Universities of Professors, which states "faculty members have to be awarded tenure after a maximum of six years or given notice that their seventh year is their final year at the university before being terminated" (DeGeorge, 2003, p. 18). It is important to understand tenure in relation to academic affairs faculty to understand the impact it will have on the student. DeGeorge explains a faculty route to tenure:

The caricature of tenure portrays a young assistant professor spending six years working extremely hard, teaching, doing the jobs the senior professors no longer want to do, and nonetheless finding time to write articles or a book, and finally after six years of doing what is necessary to please the senior professors in the department, being awarded tenure. (DeGeorge, 2003, p. 18)

By understanding the faulty route to tenure, it provides a broader picture of why academic affairs may not collaborative as much and thus, as a result, impacts the overall student development.

Nonetheless, by working collaboratively with the entire university, including all aspects of administration – academic affairs, student affairs and students – the university is working toward creating desired futures for the students. These desired futures not only include the success of the university students, but the success and sustainability of the university itself.

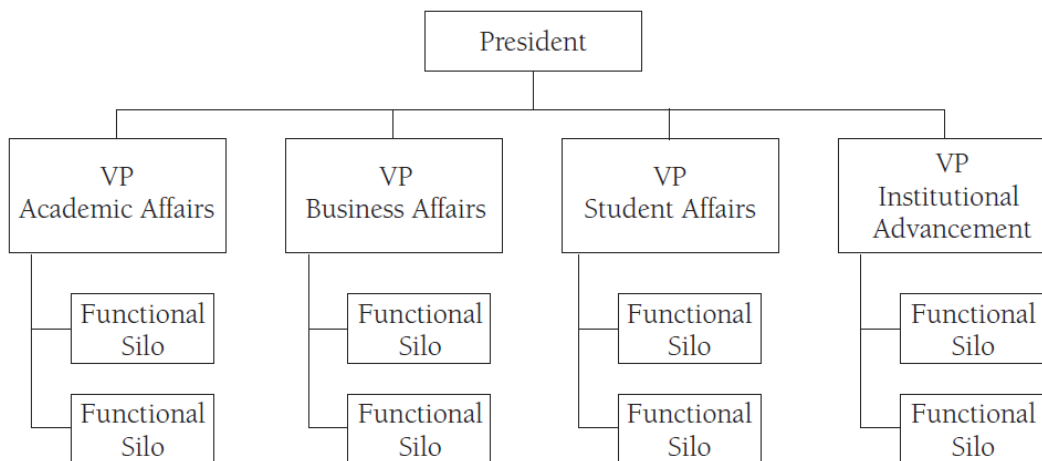
### **Organizational Structures**

Most organizations, either for-profit or non-profit, have a functional organizational structure within their business; higher education is no exception. "Organizational structure" is a term in the field of business that denotes a functional unit within the division of a larger organization that focuses internally on its own purposeful objectives. An organizational structure consists of human resources and the activities they carry out such as task allocation, coordination, and supervision, all of which are directed toward the achievement of organizational aims (Pugh, 1990). Organizational structures also provide (in more or less transparent ways) the perspective through which individuals see their organization and its environment (Jacobides, 2007). Pugh and Jacobides's definitions of organizational structure are developed with higher education institutions as well as in the private sector.

Academic affairs and student affairs divisions in higher educational institutions work within an organizational structure definition; however, despite the disconnect that exists, staff and faculty from each division regularly engage one another. The disconnect between the two entities is largely due to the fact that academic and student affairs divisions, at most universities, are separate organizational structures. In Figure 2.1,



Kleemann (2005) created a visual representation of what a traditional siloed organization chart at a university/college look like.



*Figure 2.1.* Traditional organization chart (Kleemann, 2005)

Kleemann's research continued by stating, "In the traditional culture of higher education, services are delivered in person and each office is focused on a single area of responsibility" (p. 93), which are the functional silos listed above. Yet because of the traditional organizational structure environment, structural barriers exist between the majority of academic and student affairs divisions that may negatively impact student development.

Bennigson (1996) argues that the functional divisions created within organizations contribute to perceived contradictions in goals and internal competition that results in confusion, wasted energy, and squandered strategic capital. These organizations with their hierarchical values and functional silos are not able to respond to a marketplace that demands flexibility and customer responsiveness. (Walker & Black, 2000, p. 93)

As a result of this functional division, the customer suffers when the organization is not able to respond; in education, the customer is the student. If the organization is unable to

respond to the student's needs, there is a corresponding impact on the student's success and development.

Walker et al. (2000) examines the organizational structure impact from the business world perspective; however, the Walker et al. (2000) research is applicable to higher education institutions. Organizational structures have helped create gaps within higher education, especially between academic and student affairs divisions. Research shows there are several challenges and obstacles between academic and student affairs (Bourassa & Kruger, 2001). Within an organizational structure environment, academic and student affairs have collaborated less and, as a result, student development has been negatively impacted.

By creating a common language in which we can discuss difference, we can begin to examine some of the frightening paradoxes of teaching and learning, which have paralyzed our youth and trapped us in "parallel silo" on campus. (Fried, 2000, p. 9)

Language is a key aspect of collaboration and communication. Common language or shared understandings is a crucial feature. Evans et al. (1998) stated:

Many argue that this statement is the foundation of the modern student affairs profession and, indeed, the concept of educating the "whole" student is one which commonly appears in the current literature and everyday language of the student affairs administrator. (p. 8)

Kuh et al. (1994) pointed out, "Institutions with an ethos of learning are blessed with more than a few boundary spanners, people who move among the functional silos, articulating the institution's mission and vision with language that acknowledges and respects both classroom and out-of-class learning" (p. 64). Swartz, Carlisle, and Uyeki (2007) provided research and examples on how a university college library used the language of student affairs to relate to the administration.

Rather than convincing the Office of the Dean of Students of the importance of information literacy, we adopted their language, speaking of “academic integrity” and “academic honesty” rather than “ethical uses of information”. We therefore did not have to convince the deans that plagiarism is an issue or that students need more education in this area. Instead of investing time and energy in explaining information literacy, we focused on explaining the benefits of a partnership to reach shared goals. (Swartz et al., 2007, p. 120)

The functional silos in higher education have become so internalized that the divide between them serves as a significant barrier to communication and collaboration between academic and student affairs. Most campuses with the bifurcated systems of student and academic affairs operate within this siloed system and experience the corresponding barriers, as shown in Figure 2.1. Often, administrators and staff within the divisions of academic and student affairs create their own policy, rules, regulations, and procedures and never consult the leadership in the other divisions on campus. Thus, students need to learn the nuances of each system in order to navigate the university bureaucracy as they work toward a degree. Kleemann (2005) suggested, “students are best served horizontally across functional units, because vertical organizational structures do not usually align with needed functions as experienced by students” (p. 92).

Kleemann offered another suggestion:

Another vision, portraying a web of student services, is web silos. When Web services are created using the old, silo paradigm, students can end up getting the virtual runaround, experiencing many of the same problems and issues that they face in the brick-and-mortar environment. Students may have to log on to multiple systems with multiple IDs and passwords. Every department’s Web site may look different, with different navigation buttons located in different locations. Often the groups creating Web materials don’t communicate with one another, and distance education and on-campus Web services aren’t linked. A student might be able to initiate part of a process online (order books) but have to complete it (pay for or pick up books) in a face-to-face office. (pp. 93-94)

Figure 2.2 is Kleemann’s visual representation of web clusters.

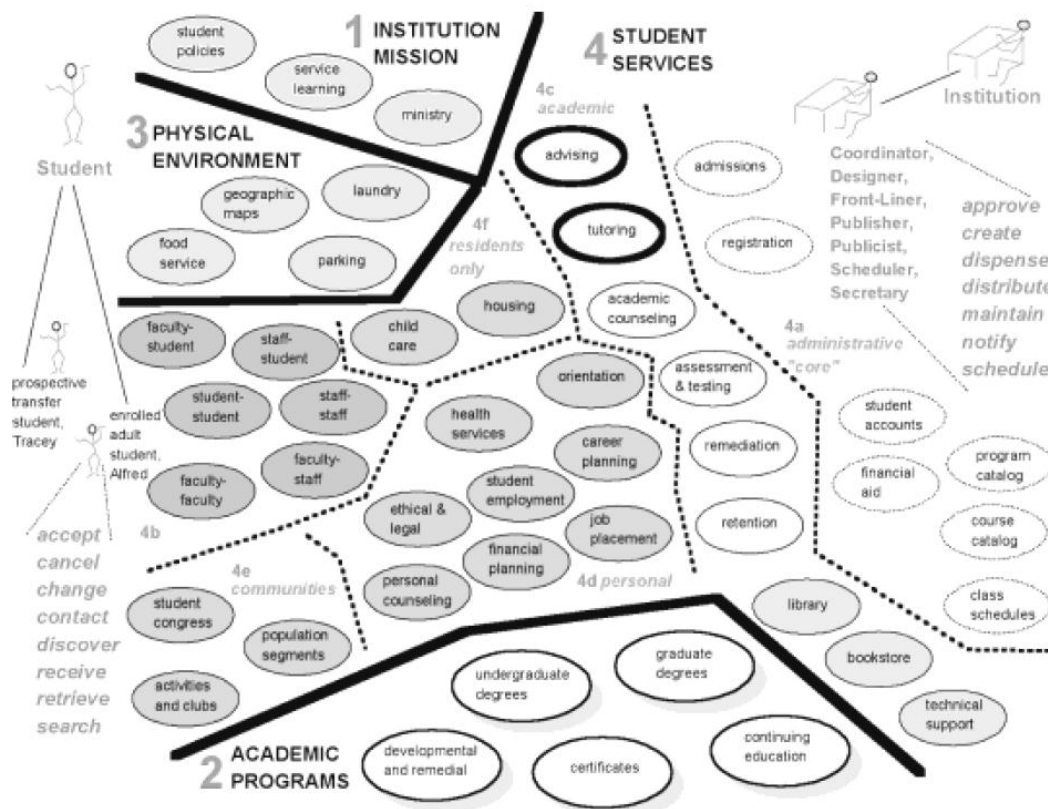


Figure 2.2. Functionality web clusters. (Kleemann, 2005)

Figure 2.2 illustrates the compartmentalization and creation of “functional silos” or “web clusters” create barriers within education, as well as within the business/corporate world.

Schroeder (1999) explained:

Specialization, in turn, has led to compartmentalization and fragmentation, often resulting in what is popularly described as “functional silos” or “mine shafts.” These vertical structures, though often effective at promoting interaction within functional units, often create obstacles to interaction, coordination, and collaboration between and among units. According to Bonser (1992), “not only are there barriers between disciplines, departments, and schools, too often warring factions exist within the units themselves.” Developing a shared vision and collective responsibility for that vision is a difficult when fragmentation and compartmentalization foster insularity. (p. 176)

An example of successful collaboration between functional silos in practice comes from Richard Guarasci, who in 2001 conducted a case study at Wagner College. Guarasci’s

case study was entitled “Building and Sustaining Campus Collaboration: A Case Study from Wagner College” and he wrote:

By 2001 [Wagner College] was recognized in its regional ten-year reaccreditation visitor’s report by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education as a model of collaboration and interdisciplinary across the entire campus and a coherent, focused, and learning-centered educational institution. It provided [the public] with a case study for examining the critical issues and relationship involved in building and sustaining campus collaboration for institutional transformation. (p. 105)

Guarasci’s study focused on the importance and necessity of collaboration among various academic and student affairs units. Guarasci stated, “active and collaborative learning requires students who are involved in dialogue, debate, cooperative problem solving, and experiential community-based learning” (p. 107). The study stated that campus stakeholders [academic and student affairs divisions] need leaders and teachers who are self-confident within the engaged campus while working with a variety of campus personalities and individual dispositions (Guarasci, 2001). For such collaboration to be effective, the functional silos on campus should be deconstructed to a greater or lesser extent to allow a free flow of ideas and decision-making processes between academic and student affairs divisions.

Universities need to enhance the student experience by breaking down the preexisting silos causing barriers. “Moving towards this holistic collaborative environment requires systematizing transition philosophy within the elements of strategic infrastructure and practical activities across all traditional silos between faculties and divisions” (Nelson, Kift, Humphreys, & Harper, 2006, p. 2). Nelson et al. continued by explaining:

Enhancing the student experience in their first year at university requires: students to encounter curriculum that is sensitive to their realities, adequate and timely access to support services, and opportunities for them to become part of communities of learners. Leveraging from the foundations of extensive curriculum reform, two faculties and two divisions in a large university embarked on a project that seeks to systematize a transition philosophy of engagement across academic, professional and administrative silos. (p. 3)

Ideally, universities and colleges will break down the existing silos to create meaningful and seamless services to all students.

Students need to be able to get academic advising (faculty member or advising center), register for classes (registrar's office), pay tuition (business office), get a parking permit (parking office), and purchase textbooks (bookstore) horizontally across functional units—and this even before they have attended a single class! We are moving from a service based economy to an experience-based economy. The challenge is to provide the student with a positive experience and make the system as easy to navigate as possible. (Kleemann, 2005, p. 94)

Figure 2.3 provides a visual of how Kleemann (2005) saw how services were clustered according to their actual use by students rather than by organizational unit and ideally how silos should be deconstructed.

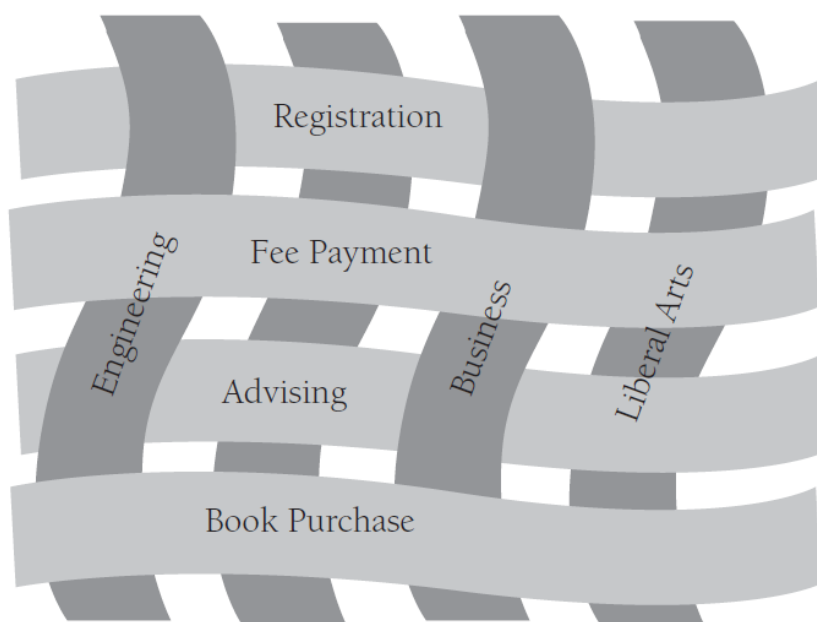


Figure 2.3. Weaving silos. (Kleemann, 2005)

Kleemann's Weaving Silo theory is ideal because it breaks down the actual and implied barriers occurring between academic and student affairs and provides seamless services to the students. Cahill, Turner, and Barefoot (2010) provided supporting research explaining that when silos are deconstructed, quality improves.

The overall [purpose] of [the] study was to explore academic staffs' experience of enhancing the student learning experience and gain an understanding of the factors which create opportunities for, and barriers to, the promotion of quality enhancement activity. Quality enhancement activity was viewed as improving the total or broad experience of the student and engaging effectively with students, staff, outside agencies and departments within the university as a whole, breaking down silos and making where necessary radical changes to aspects of organizational structures, processes, strategies and thinking. (p. 122)

Research found that when silos are deconstructed, satisfaction with all investors tends to increase. Bruin and Doebeli (2008) found that when "functional silos or roadblocks disappear; the company is better positioned to satisfy all stakeholders – customer, owners, and employees" (p. 1). To better satisfy all the university stakeholders, academic and student affairs have an imperative to work collaboratively; for this collaboration to be possible and effective, these functional silos must be removed.

### **Summary**

Most university and colleges, via their mission statements, claim to cultivate students' academic, personal, and social development; however, in practice, most college and universities do not fully place their students' development foremost, or at least do not promote their development as effectively as possible. This is based in large part on the siloed organizational structures of academic affairs and student affairs divisions, which originated when student affairs-type services began to break away from academic affairs to assist students with the majority of non-traditional learning functions (co- and extra-

curricular learning, service learning, etc.). The impact on the two divisions due to these silos is a widening gap between them, which impact the institution's ability to develop the "whole student" per most mission statements. Most universities' functional silos have become so internalized that barriers exist in communication and collaboration between academic and student affairs.

The seemingly widespread disconnect between academic affairs and student affairs within colleges and universities requires serious examination. Three streams of research have addressed pre-existing historical context as background for the research questions. Thus far, the main cause of the gulf between the two divisions seems the strict roles (both implicit and explicit) for both academic and student affairs. Classically, and in common perception, academic affairs faculty are responsible for creating the academic curriculum for the university, while student affairs staff are responsible for academic advising and support services for students. These roles create strong functional silos; however, if the silos were to come down and collaboration increase, it could create mutually beneficial relationships between the two divisions, which would in turn, create a seamless, integrated experience for students and their development.



## Chapter 3: Research Methodology

### **Introduction**

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to identify the factors that work toward supporting or inhibiting academic affairs faculty and student affairs professionals working collaboratively to better support students' holistic experiences at the University of California, Davis, a four-year higher educational institution. At this stage in the research, the phenomenon of collaboration is generally defined as “a process in which a group of autonomous stakeholders [academic faculty and student affairs staff] of an issue domain engage in an interactive process, using shared rules, norms, and structures to act or decide on issues related to that domain” (Wood & Gray, 1991, p. 437). The researcher collected data from faculty and staff employed at the University of California, Davis, and qualitatively analyzed that data in an attempt to identify and understand the perceptions and practices surrounding collaboration (or lack thereof) between the two largest divisions on campus, academic and student affairs.

### **Site and Population**

#### **Population Description**

The population for this research comprised of two primary subject pools: academic affairs faculty and student affairs professionals. Both populations worked directly with undergraduate university students at the University of California, Davis. The first population examined was the faculty within the academic affairs division. Faculty participating in this research were tenured faculty who had taught within the University of California, Davis system and had an understanding of the campus culture,

climate, and dynamics. Five faculty participants were selected from the four colleges on campus: College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences, College of Biological Sciences, College of Engineering, and College of Letters and Science. Due to the size of the University of California, Davis Division of Academic Affairs, the researcher chose not to include the six professional schools in this research. The six professional schools within University of California, Davis were excluded from this study because the primary focus of the six schools is on graduate/professional students, not undergraduates. The excluded schools are School of Education, School of Law, School of Management, School of Medicine, School of Veterinary Medicine, and the Betty Irene Moore School of Nursing (UC Davis, 2012s). Table 3.1 shows the University of California, Davis faculty demographics for all tenured faculty, non-tenured faculty, and the total number of faculty members employed at University of California, Davis within Fall of 2012.

Table 3.1

*University of California, Davis Faculty Demographics Fall 2012*

	African Americans		Asian Americans		Native Americans		Chicano/Latino/Hispanics		Total Persons of Color		Whites	
<b>Academic</b>												
<b>Tenured</b>	23	-1.80%	172	-13.70%	8	-0.60%	51	-4.10%	254	-20.20%	971	-77.20%
<b>Non-tenured</b>	8	-3.80%	47	-22.30%	1	-0.50%	13	-6.20%	69	-32.70%	124	-58.80%
<b>Total Ladder Rank</b>	31	-2.10%	219	-14.90%	9	-0.60%	64	-4.40%	323	-22.00%	1,095	-74.50%
<b>Other Academic</b>	107	-2.70%	904	-22.50%	28	-0.70%	291	-7.20%	1,330	-33.10%	2,461	-61.20%
<b>Academic Student Titles</b>	79	-2.00%	1,054	-26.00%	29	-0.70%	284	-7.00%	1,446	-35.70%	2,224	-54.90%
<b>Total Academic</b>	248	-2.30%	2,396	-21.80%	75	-0.70%	703	-6.40%	3,422	-31.10%	6,875	-62.50%

	Unidentified		Total	Women		Men	
<b>Tenured</b>	33	-2.60%	1,258	370	-29.40%	888	-70.60%
<b>Non-tenured</b>	18	-8.50%	211	97	-46.00%	114	-54.00%
<b>Total Ladder Rank</b>	51	-3.50%	1,469	467	-31.80%	1,002	-68.20%
<b>Other Academic</b>	231	-5.70%	4,022	1,886	-46.90%	2,136	-53.10%
<b>Academic Student Titles</b>	378	-9.30%	4,048	1,976	-48.80%	2,072	-51.20%
<b>Total Academic</b>	711	-6.50%	11,008	4,796	-43.60%	6,212	-56.40%

Source: UC Davis (2012o)

The second population examined was professionals from the division of student affairs. The student affairs professionals participating in this research were full-time, career staff members with University of California, Davis and had an understanding of the campus culture, climate, and dynamics. Five participants were selected from the University of California, Davis Student Affairs Division. The University of California, Davis Division of Student Affairs includes the following departments:

Academic Preparation Programs	ASUCD Business Office	Athletics
Campus Recreation	Intramural Sports	Activities and Recreation Center
MU Games Area	Equestrian Center	Craft Center

Outdoor Adventures	Counseling and Psychological Services	Cross-Cultural Center
Design Services	Ethnic Studies Student Affairs Coordinators	African American and African Studies
Asian American Studies	Chicana/Chicano Studies	Native American Studies
Financial Aid	Graduate Student Association	Learning Skills Center
Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Resource Center	Memorial Union Auxiliary Services	Campus Unions
Campus Union Programs	Reentry Student Services	Registrar
Services for International Students & Scholars	Student Affairs Vice Chancellor's	Student Disability Center
Student Health Services	Student Housing	Student Judicial Affairs
Student Programs and Activities Center	Transfer Student Services	UCD Bookstore
Undergraduate Admissions	University Dining Services by Sodexo	Veterans Affairs
Women's Resource and Research Center		

Source: UC Davis (2012s)

Participants from the division of student affairs were interviewed to gain a better understanding of student affairs professionals' views and opinions on collaboration between their division and the division of academic affairs on the UC Davis campus. Table 3.2 shows the demographics for all UC Davis student affairs professionals – managers, senior professionals, professional and support staff, and as well as the total number of career staff members employed at University of California, Davis as of Fall 2012.

Table 3.2

*University of California, Davis Staff Demographics Fall 2012*

	African Americans		Asian Americans		Native Americans		Chicano Latino/Hispanics		Total Persons of Color		Whites	
<b>Staff</b>												
<b>Mgrs &amp; Sr Professionals</b>	32	-4.80%	52	-7.80%	5	-0.70%	36	-5.40%	125	-18.70%	534	-79.90%
<b>Professionals &amp; Support</b>	973	-7.00%	2,574	-18.50%	132	-0.90%	1,948	-14.00%	5,627	-40.50%	8,055	-57.90%
<b>Total Career Staff</b>	1,005	-6.90%	2,626	-18.00%	137	-0.90%	1,984	-13.60%	5,752	-39.50%	8,589	-58.90%

	Unidentified		Total	Women		Men	
<b>Staff</b>							
<b>Mgrs &amp; Sr Professionals</b>	9	-1.30%	668	393	-58.80%	275	-41.20%
<b>Professionals &amp; Support</b>	223	-1.60%	13,905	9,346	-67.20%	4,559	-32.80%
<b>Total Career Staff</b>	232	-1.60%	14,573	9,739	-66.80%	4,834	-33.20%

Source: UC Davis (2012o)

### Site Description

The site location for this research is University of California, Davis, which is a large public research university, located in Davis, California and one of 10 campuses in the University of California system. The campus has two main divisions that oversee the student body: academic affairs and student affairs. The student body at UC Davis, as of 2012, comprised 32,153 students; this is divided into 24,655 undergraduate students, 4,215 graduate students, and 3,283 professional students (UC Davis, 2012p).

The UC Davis Division of Academic Affairs exists to deliver academic services for the students through four colleges: College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences with 360 faculty members, College of Biological Sciences with 150 faculty

members, College of Engineering with 92 faculty members, and College of Letters and Science with 667 faculty members. The division of student affairs exists to deliver a wide array of student services that effectively support and enhance the students' University of California, Davis academic career (UC Davis, 2012s).

### **Site Access**

In this study, the researcher performed “backyard research” as he is an employee of Student Housing within the Division of Student Affairs at UC Davis. As such, he had extensive access to the UC Davis faculty and staff. Because this research involved human subjects, the approval of the Institutional Review Board (IRB) was required to engage in research on the campus. The IRB permissions must be granted by the researcher's primary institution, Drexel University, and from the research host institution, UC Davis. However, UC Davis did not require additional IRB permissions, but allowed IRB permissions through Drexel University approval. After completing the Institutional Review Board process, the researcher solicited individual participants at UC Davis to participate in the study. He sought an equal number of participants from both academic and student affairs and interviewed them to gather representative views, thoughts, and opinions from both divisions. Lastly, the timing involved in this research is a noteworthy consideration. As previously mentioned, access to the participants was limited due to contract terms and summer break.

### **Research Design and Rationale**

The research in this dissertation is qualitative in nature, using a phenomenological approach. Phenomenology is the descriptive methodology of science, seeking to explore and describe phenomena as they present themselves in the lived world in order to find the

meaning of the phenomena themselves (Mostert, 2002). A phenomenological approach was chosen for this study as the researcher examined the culture, relationships, perceptions, and lived experiences of the people within academic and student affairs divisions at the University of California, Davis. By examining the relationships between the employees and the two divisions, the researcher was able to examine individuals' perceptions within relationships and the divisions.

The researcher's goal was to observe the lived experiences of each participant at a given time and in a given place at the UC Davis campus. Van Manen (1997) believed in the importance of describing people's lives exactly how they appear and letting things and people speak for themselves. The "facts" of lived experiences are always already meaningful experiences (p. 180). The understanding of the participants' lived experiences is particularly important because we all live in a world of experiences, complete with both cultural and social influences impacting our decision making and influencing the way we show up in the world (Caelli, 2000; Van Manen, 1990; Willis, 2001).

To keep the research pure, the researcher needed to bracket himself to suspend judgment or refrain from placing value on the participants' responses, actions, or analysis. By bracketing, the researcher allows the research to speak for itself. Moustakas (1994) described phenomenological bracketing of a topic or question as providing equal value to every statement in order to cluster them into themes (Moustakas, 1994). The researcher followed Saldana's (2009) method of coding to find common themes, codes, and lived experiences from the research.

To gain this knowledge and understand the lived experiences, the researcher relied on three sets of data: a) individual interviews with both academic affairs faculty and student affairs professionals, b) concentrated focus groups with both academic affairs faculty and student affairs professionals, and finally c) document review of UC Davis documents and the division master plan. The data collection instruments for this phenomenological study were administered to academic faculty and student affairs professionals in an effort to understand their attitudes, opinions, and beliefs regarding collaboration between academic and student affairs on the UC Davis campus. The researcher intended to identify the factors that work toward supporting or inhibiting academic affairs faculty and student affairs professionals from working collaboratively to better support students' holistic experiences at UC Davis.

This chapter is designed to help readers understand the researcher's process. By following phenomenological research methods, the researcher identified his intent and study design, discussed approval and access considerations, classified the use of appropriate data collection procedures, and analyzed and interpreted the data. He reviewed and examined the data for emergent coding, beliefs, trends, and themes, which lead to recommendations in Chapter 5. The recommendations from this research are applicable and transferable to UC Davis, as well as to the other nine university campuses within the University of California system and perhaps beyond.

## **Research Methods**

### **Introduction**

To understand and identify the factors supporting or inhibiting academic affairs faculty and student affairs professionals from working collaboratively to better support



students' holistic experiences, the researcher relied on the following forms of data collection: a) individual face-to-face interviews, b) focus groups, and c) document review (see Figure 3.1).

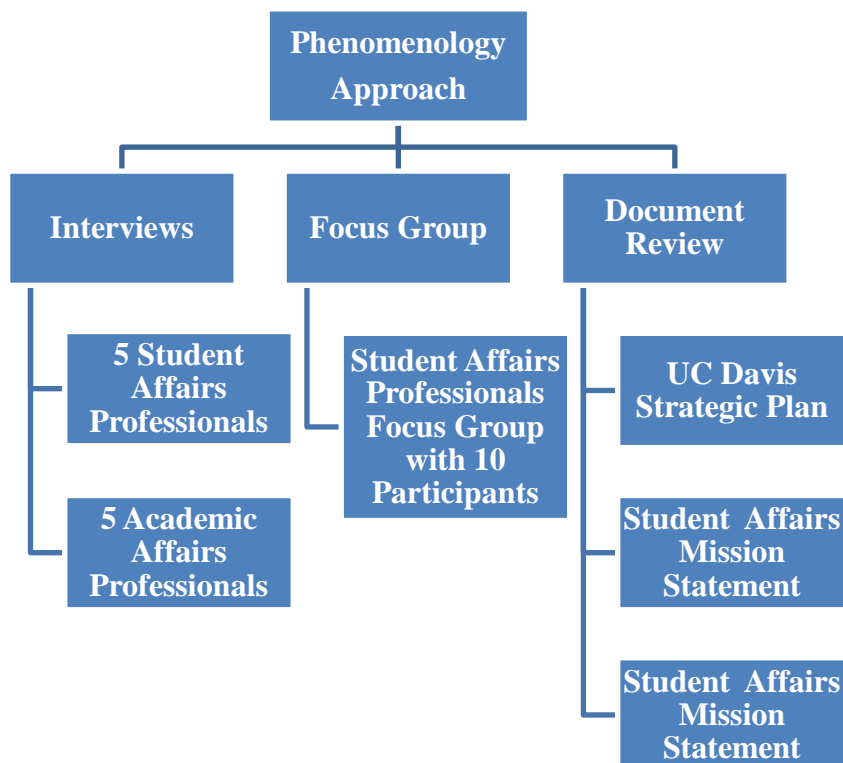


Figure 3.1. Phenomenological method approach.

### Stages of Data Collection

Data collection proceeded in an orderly manner, based on a timeline as displayed in Table 3.3. This section provides a brief description of the research methods followed by an explanation of the study data included in this research. The researcher proceeded with each stage of data collection only after the Drexel University Institutional Review Board (IRB) approved the research project component and granted permission.

Table 3.3

*Proposed Research Timeline*

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Proposed Date</b>
Fine-Tune Research and Methodology	March 2012
Submit Proposal	April 2012
Doctoral Committee Review and Approval	April 2012
IRB Certification at Drexel University	May 2012
Recruitment/Selection of Participants	June/July 2012
Administer of Interviews with Participants	July/August 2012
Administer of Focus Groups	August 2012
Document Review	July-September 2012
Coding of Collected Information	September 2012
Data Comparison/Analysis	September 2012
Report Findings	September/October 2012
Revisions, Editing Report	November 2012
Submission of Final Thesis	December 2012

**Description of Each Method Used**

Three primary methods of qualitative data collection were utilized in this study: interviews, focus groups, and document review. Using an exploratory method design, the researcher examined the instrument description, participant selection, data collection, and data analysis for each of the qualitative data collection methods used.

**Face-to-face interviews.** Via one-hour interviews (phenomenological data collection) conducted onsite at UC Davis, the researcher collected direct, firsthand

observation from participants while recording their responses to the interview question protocol and taking notes. Each interviewee was invited to participate in this research via a letter of invitation sent to his/her UC Davis email account (see Appendix B). Each interviewee signed a consent form to have his or her responses recorded as part of the research (see Appendix C). All interviews with UC Davis academic affairs faculty and student affairs professionals were conducted personally by the researcher, and took place in a face-to-face, semi-structured, conversational manner. Five academic faculty and five student affairs professional staff were interviewed. For each semi-structured interview, the researcher had a set of 15-20 open-ended questions to be used as an aid in discovering the interviewees' personal and professional beliefs, perceptions, and understanding regarding the collaboration between academic and student affairs at UC Davis. A copy of the interview questions is located in Appendix D. Appendix E contains the interview questions and how they directly relate to the primary research questions. The researcher recorded the content of these semi-structured interviews and entered them into a database for analysis.

**Focus group.** In addition to the one-on-one interviews, the researcher held two concentrated focus groups (phenomenological data collection) with UC Davis employees. Each participant of the focus group was invited to participate in this research via a letter of invitation (see Appendix B). The researcher asked 15-20 open-ended questions to gather data on the UC Davis student affairs professionals' personal and professional attitudes, opinions, behaviors, and interaction characteristics regarding collaboration between academic and student affairs divisions at UC Davis. A copy of the focus group questions is located in Appendix F. Appendix G contains the focus group questions and

how they directly relate to the primary research questions. The focus group was made up of 10 members of the UC Davis student affairs professional staff.

Focus group data was collected via manuscript and audio recording. Each individual focus group lasted roughly one- to one-and-a-half hours. The researcher scheduled and conducted the focus groups on site at UC Davis. The content of the interviews was recorded and entered into a database for analysis. Appendix H contains the observation form the researcher used to take notes and observe the groups. The researcher collected, axial-coded, and examined the data. Once the data were coded into themes, the researcher compared the interview data to the document review for validity, and then identified recommendations, limitations of the study, and potential future studies.

**Document review.** Finally, in addition to the aforementioned methods, the researcher conducted a document review (phenomenological data collection) and reviewed the findings for validity and clarification. Document review required the researcher to assess the relevance or responsiveness of the documents and compare those findings to the facts of the case. Both electronic (e-mails, files, scanned copies of documents) and hard copy documents were reviewed as appropriate. The researcher reviewed the following University of California, Davis documents:

2010 UC Davis Annual Report

The UC Davis 2020 Initiative: A Path to Academic Excellence and Economic Opportunity

The Faculty Code of Conduct APM-015

2011 New faculty Workshop: The Academic Personal Process for Senate Faculty

Response to the UC Davis Academic Senate's Executive Council Request for an Action Plan (2012)

The Office of the Vice Provost-- Academic Affairs Mission (2011)

Academic Affair Division -- Unit Strategic Plan 2011	UC Davis Principles of Community, UC Davis progress report 2011-2012
A Statement of Mission, Vision and Strategic Goals for the Division of Student Affairs	A Statement of Mission, Vision and Strategic Goals Division of Student Affairs Addendum 1 – Supplemental Information
UC Davis Two-Year Goals Summary 2011-12 and 2012-13	Letter from President Yudof
UC Davis November 18, 2011 “Pepper Spray Incident” Task Force Report “The Reynoso Task Force Report” March 2012	Review a summary of two-year goals for the Davis campus 2011

Once the document review was completed, the researcher sorted the information into general and broad themes along with the interviews using Dedoose, a database. The researcher axial-coded the data into themes and then identified recommendations, limitations, and potential future studies based on the data.

**Analysis of data.** Once all the data were collected, the researcher organized the data collected to place it into general and broad themes. The researcher followed the six-step process of axial coding the data:

- 1) read all of the transcripts carefully to get a sense of the whole;
- 2) find underlying meaning in the documents;
- 3) begin the process of coding the document (i.e., text segments/codes);
- 4) make a list of the code words;
- 5) use the list to go back over the data; and
- 6) reduce the codes into five to seven themes or descriptions of the research.

Once the researcher coded the data into themes, recommendations, limitations, and potential future studies based on the data were identified.

### **Ethical Considerations**

To ensure ethical conduct while undertaking this research study, the researcher followed the IRB Belmont Report's three main ethical elements for dealing with human subject research: Respect for Persons, Beneficences, and Justice. Since the primary forms of data collection for this study were interviews and document review, the study was considered an ethically low-risk study. All the participants had autonomy to make informed decisions, no harm was done, and all participants were informed of purpose, procedures, risks, benefits, alternative procedures, and limits of confidentiality before the research began.

An ethical consideration the researcher needed to address was the researcher conducted this study at UC Davis, his place of employment. Thus, as a backyard study, the researcher was aware of a few ethical considerations. First, the researcher interviewed his co-workers (peers), so the ethical implication questions that appeared or arose were:

- Will co-workers/peers be open/honest/truthful with the researcher during the interview and focus groups?
- If participants are not open/honest/truthful, is it attributed to fear of his/her supervisor being informed of how he/she responds to the interview, or some other reason?

- If the participant does answer openly/honestly/truthfully to the questions, he/she may wonder if the information provided could have impact his/her current position. What is the possible impact of this?

Secondly, the researcher interviewed his supervisors, so the ethical implication questions that arose, in addition to those above, were:

- Since there will be a power dynamic in play between the interviewee and the interviewer (no matter how minor or benevolent), will the power dynamic impact the content of the interview? Will the interviewee hold back?

The third ethical consideration that appeared was due to the researcher interviewing his supervisor's supervisor. The ethical implication questions that appeared or arose were the same as listed above.

The researcher was aware interviewees may provide confidential information to which the researcher would not normally have access. The researcher was aware that if such information was made public or misused, it could impact employee workplace relationships, career paths, and more. The researcher was cognizant of this fact, but did not perceive this to be a problem with this study as the research was not focused on performance-based information, but program-based information. Nevertheless, the goal of the researcher was to have each participant agree to comply with the aims of the research and provide accurate, honest information, while at the same time protect the dignity and privacy of every individual who participated in this study, as their input provided personal or commercial data valuable to the research.

## Chapter 4: Finding & Results

### **Findings**

The focus of this research was to evaluate the factors supporting or inhibiting academic affairs and student affairs working collaboratively to better support students' holistic educational experiences. The research was intended to examine the collaborative working relationships on the UC Davis campus between student affairs professionals and academic affairs faculty. In this chapter, the researcher presents his findings, results, and interpretations. Toward meeting the objectives of this study, he focused on three questions: a) How do higher education professionals describe the interaction between the silos of academic affairs and student affairs divisions? b) From inhibiting to supporting, what is the spectrum of factors that impact how academic affairs faculty and student affairs professionals work collaboratively? and c) What are the elements of collaboration between academic and student affairs divisions that would benefit student development?

Before the researcher presents and analyzes his findings, it is useful for readers to understand who the actual participants in the research were and how the findings are informed by the mission statements of two major divisions of the University of California. Following the overview of participants and mission statements is a discussion of five emergent themes: a) Academic Success, b) Need for Collaboration and Relationship Building, c) Silos, d) Lack of Knowledge of the Other Division, and e) Student Experience.



## Participant Identity

Throughout the data collection process and the writing of this dissertation, the identities of the participants have remained anonymous. The participants are identified by their roles on campus and, in the case of faculty only, gender categories. Again, no gender designations were included for the other participants to discourage speculation of the possible identities of the research subjects based on their positions within the university. The specific descriptions are in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1

### *Participant Identity Code*

Academic Affairs	AA
Student Affairs	SA
Faculty Member	F
Professional	P
Executive	E
Gender	F = Female; M = Male
Student Affairs Professional	SA-P
Faculty Member- Female	F-F
Faculty Member- Male	F-M
Student Affairs Administrator	SA-A
Student Affairs Executive	SA-E

## UC Davis Missions for Academic and Student Affairs Divisions

The University of California, Davis, commonly known as UC Davis, is one of the nation's top public research universities. Throughout this study, the researcher carefully examined university documents, focusing on the two large divisions most largely responsible for the student experiences on campus: academic affairs and student affairs.

The Division of Academic Affairs oversees the university's academic curriculum for the university's 102 undergraduate majors and 87 graduate programs (UC Davis, 2012m). The Division of Academic Affairs' mission is to:

Provide leadership and oversight for the recruitment, appointment, advancement and retention of Academic Senate faculty and Academic Federation members, in accordance with university policy and procedures under the leadership of an academic Vice Provost--Academic Affairs. The division approaches its assigned programmatic responsibilities in a manner that supports the campus philosophy regarding equal opportunity and diversity, so that the campus achieves excellence in a coordinated and accountable manner. In the spirit of shared governance and shared responsibility, OVP--AP works closely with the Academic Senate and Federation, and with staff and student organizations, to assure that campus priorities are met. A major goal is to ensure that a diverse UC Davis campus continues to grow in academic stature and quality. We strive to attain this in concert with the Campus Principles of Community. (UC Davis, 2012m, para. 2)

In contrast, the mission of the Division of Student Affairs is to assist students with out-of-the-classroom learning. The UC Davis Student Affairs website introduces the division to students as follows:

What is the Division of Student Affairs? It's a group of departments dedicated to the student experience, whether that be academic, athletic, or just extracurricular fun! It's the campus division that handles things such as student clubs, intramural sports, student advising, and a host of other student-oriented services. (UC Davis, 2012s, para. 1)

The mission for the UC Davis Student Affairs Division is:

The Division of Student Affairs advances the University's mission by providing programs, services and facilities that foster academic success, student development and campus community. We assist and inspire students as they prepare for their future roles in a diverse, dynamic and global society. (UC Davis, 2012s, p. 1)

### **Emergent Themes**

The information presented in this section summarizes the five major themes of the University of California, Davis culture. Using the Saldana (2009) coding method, five

themes were represented both by the academic affairs faculty and student affairs professionals: a) Academic Success, b) Need for Collaboration and Relationship Building, c) Silos, d) Lack of Knowledge of the Other Division, and e) Student Experience (see Appendix I for visual representations). As such, the participants' opinions are intended to represent how individuals see these five themes at work from multiple perspectives.

### **Academic Success**

The most dominant overarching theme that emerged from the data is the importance of student academic success. The definition of student success being primarily rooted in the classroom curricula is reflected in the mission and goals of UC Davis. Notably, both academic and student affairs mention the importance of academic success in their mission statements, although the statements contain contrasting views of exactly what "success" means.

**Strong commitment to academic success.** A strong commitment to academic success is a theme woven throughout the University of California, Davis campus and culture. The Division of Academic Affairs mission statement proclaims: "A major goal is to ensure that a diverse UC Davis campus continues to grow in academic stature and quality" (UC Davis, 2012m, para. 2). The Division of Student Affairs mission states that the Division "advances the University's mission by providing programs, services and facilities that foster academic success, student development and campus community" (UC Davis, 2012s, para. 1). Both divisions exude a strong commitment to the academic success, though stated in slightly different ways. Regardless of the strong dedication and commitment, a student affairs professional interviewed as a part of the research process

stated the UC Davis mission around academic success should be the same for both divisions:

I think everybody is here [at UC Davis] for the same mission, and primarily it's student academic success... secondary to that as a primary mission is also the research piece of it for this institution. But really, [it's] the student academic success. (SA-P)

Despite the differing understanding of the meaning of academic success in the two divisions, they are both committed to continued academic success for the students. Furthermore, all four academic colleges focused on undergraduate education within the UC Davis Academic Affairs Division have written, publicly posted, and committed to statements of the divisions' dedication to students' academic success. The four academic colleges are the Colleges of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences, Biological Sciences, Engineering, and Letters and Sciences. Although each college has crafted its statement of dedication slightly differently than the others, the messages are similar.

Diane Ullman, Associate Dean for Undergraduate Academic Program for the College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences, explains via the website:

We [the College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences] believe that student success depends on readily available advising and assistance. Our team of talented academic counselors is ready to assist you in finding success on the UC Davis campus, whether it is to find the right classes, identify the best major or deal with academic difficulties. Whether you know your major and career path or you are undeclared and exploring, we have advisors and special programs to position you for success. (UC Davis, 2012b, para. 1)

Similarly, on the College of Biological Science website, under "academic advising," the college makes clear of its commitment to academic success, describing:

The College of Biological Sciences provides a comprehensive advising program for undergraduates. Major advisers are out in the College's departments and provide guidance for completion of major requirements. The Dean's Office advisers help students with many things including: help with general education

and college requirements; academic difficulties; forms and petitions; graduation and commencement. We are successful when YOU are successful, so see an adviser often! There are also many opportunities to enhance your education and decide on a career. We can help you get out of the classroom and explore! (UC Davis, 2012c, para. 1)

In a similar statement, the College of Engineering website describes its mission as follows (this statement is related particularly to academic advising):

Our mission is to promote your success. The entire advising group in the College of Engineering (CoE)—department staff and faculty advisors, student affairs officers in the Undergraduate Office, and peer advisors—are here to help you get the most out of your undergraduate engineering education and prepare for a successful career. (UC Davis, 2012d, para. 1)

Finally, the College of Letters and Sciences also provides a statement of commitment to academic success and student development on their webpage:

The college is committed to providing the best higher education possible, cultivating a brighter future for generations to come. By providing critical thinking and fundamental education to students, it opens doors for future leaders, great thinkers, accomplished scholars, and strong global citizens. The college creates opportunities for undergraduate research and provides enhanced enrichment programs. It is home to seekers of truth in the mystery of the human way, of the stars and everything in between. It is indeed the heart and soul of UC Davis. (UC Davis, 2012e, para. 2)

Likewise, the Division of Student Affairs makes explicit in its mission statement a very strong commitment to student academic success. The Division of Student Affairs mission states that the Division “advances the University’s mission by providing programs, services and facilities that foster academic success, student development and campus community” (UC Davis, 2012s, para. 1). Student Affairs also staffs and maintains the Student Academic Success Center (SASC). The SASC offers free academic and advising assistance to all UC Davis students. The Center offers

professional and peer staff assistance, weekly workshops, drop-in scheduling, and a plethora of other resources. The mission of the Student Academic Success Center is:

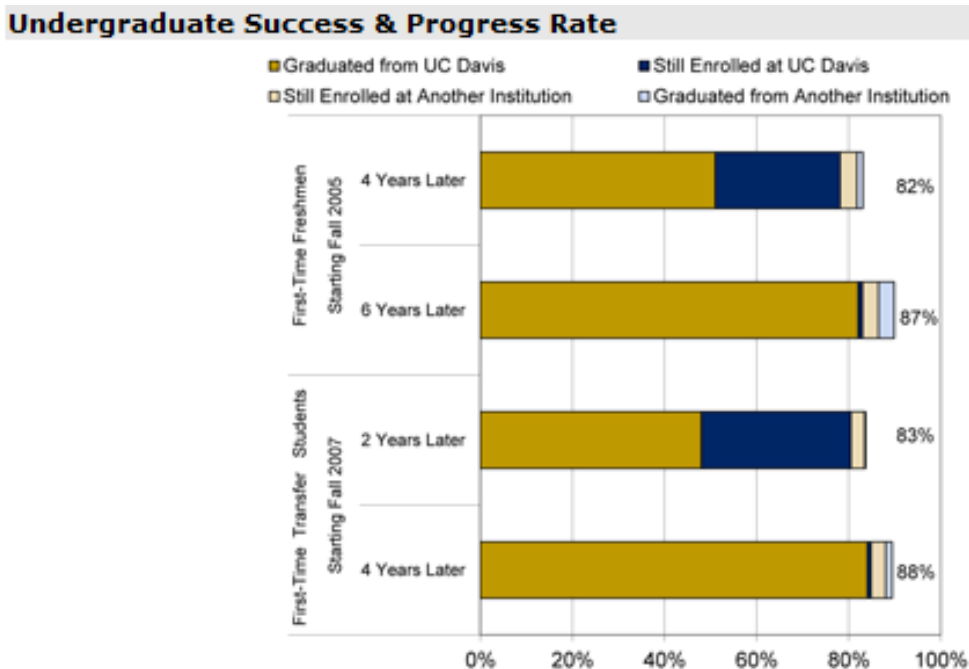
To help students thrive at UC Davis and beyond by providing academic, personal, social, and transitional support. Through various collaborations, we develop services which empower students to take responsibility for their learning. Consistent with the Principles of Community, the Student Academic Success Center strives to meet the needs of a dynamic and diverse student community. (UC Davis, 2012l, para. 3)

According to the Division of Student Affairs 2010-2011 Annual Report, “students benefited from a wide range of academic support services throughout the Division of Student Affairs including individual tutoring, group tutoring, individual advising appointments, and facilitated study halls” (UC Davis, 2012f, p. 14). The Annual Report describes evidence of Student Affairs’ dedication to student academic success:

We [student affairs] saw a rise in utilization of these services across the division in 2010-11. TRiO, McNair Scholars, and the Mentorship for Undergraduate Research Participants in the Physical and Mathematical Sciences (MURPPS) all offered grant-funded tutoring programs. In addition, the Intercollegiate Athletics tutoring program grew significantly. The campus residence halls were also a great source of academic support for students. During the 2010-11 academic year, 2,835 individual advising sessions and 3,880 individual tutoring sessions were held in the campus residence halls’ academic advising centers. Students sought support in the greatest numbers for math (2,509), followed by chemistry (1,259). Writing, statistics, and biology tutoring was also offered. (UC Davis, 2012f, para. 1)

In accordance with the priority UC Davis as a whole places on student academic success, the University prides itself on the associated supporting data of undergraduate success and progress rates. “An 82% four-year success and progress rate means that 82% of students starting in Fall 2005 either graduated or are still enrolled at a higher education institution four years later” (UC Davis, 2012p, para. 3), shown in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2

*Undergraduate Success and Progress Rates*

Source: UC Davis (2012p)

**UC Davis two-year goals.** The data in the above section showed that UC Davis already has a strong commitment to the academic success of its students, yet the university has also incorporated academic success into their future goals, looking to improve student academic success in the future. The UC Davis Two-Year goals summary explains that continued academic success planning will be examined to identify improvements, and that “Provost/Executive Vice Chancellor [name omitted] will lead an academic planning exercise that engages faculty and deans in identifying areas of focused investment and hiring of new faculty” (UC Davis, 2012u, p. 3).

Working within the UC Davis’s Two-Year Plan, Student Affairs, via its mission statement, has dedicated itself to providing a seamless student service system to UC

Davis students, toward encouraging a smooth academic transition for students and advancing their academic success rates. The section of Student Affairs' mission statement that states:

Student Affairs offers a range of enrollment, advising and retention services that foster access to the University for prospective students, enable the academic success and timely graduation of current students and facilitate transitions from the University to the worlds of work, continuing education and civic participation. (UC Davis, 2012s, p. 4)

The mission statement continues by affirming the Student Affairs Division will have “shared delivery of instruction in such programs as: Academic Theme Programs in the residential communities, the Multicultural Immersion Program and the joint appointment of lecturer/coaches” (UC Davis, 2012s, p. 5).

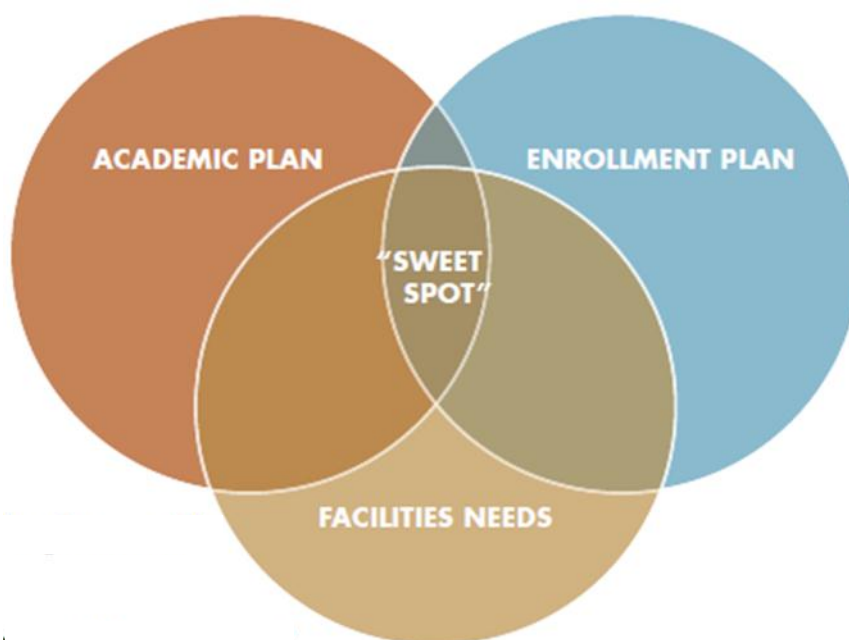
One of the main objectives of the UC Davis Two-Year Goals is to measure its success, including factors that relate to the academic success of UC Davis students. According to the UC Davis Two-Year Plan, UC Davis will measure its success by assessing the following seven key points:

1. Academic selectivity measures, growth in enrollment, and diversity of undergraduate, graduate and professional students
2. Increases in the number of underrepresented students generally and, specifically, in the disciplines of sciences, technology, engineering and mathematics
3. Increases in the number of non-resident and international undergraduate students, and international graduate and professional students
4. Increases in the amount of scholarship and fellowships for undergraduate, graduate and professional students



5. The number of awards, published or performed works, and translational technologies of our faculty and staff, and the amount of associated visibility
6. Increases in the recruitment and retention of faculty and staff, particularly in underrepresented categories, classifications or disciplines
7. Number and quality of student experiences in undergraduate research, domestic and international internships, career and leadership development programs, and public service hours (UC Davis, 2012u, p. 3).

According to the Two-Year Plan, for the UC Davis Two-Year Goals to be effective, “the planning process will require integrated and iterative modeling to test the sensitivity of interrelated assumptions and to develop a viable implementation plan” (UC Davis, 2012u, p. 3). The planning process included “many variables that will need to be mixed and matched to find potential ‘sweet spots’ where academic offering, student demand, and infrastructure requirements intersect favorably” (UC Davis, 2012u, p. 6). A visional representation of the UC Davis Two-Year Goals 2010-2011 is displayed in Figure 4.1.



Source: UC Davis (2012u)

*Figure 4.1.* UC Davis two-year goals 2010-2011.

**Academic success and collaboration.** Speaking candidly to the researcher during an interview, a student affairs professional related a story about academic success and collaboration. While this student affairs professional certainly desires to ensure all UD Davis students’ succeed, this person expressed concern that sometimes the lack of collaboration between academic and student affairs creates a barrier that negatively impacts the student:

I believe in more collaboration...what I would like to do eventually is to have an instructor call me up and say, “Hey. I have a student who would make a wonderful tutor.” But no one ever does that. So I think there is more room for that [collaboration] to happen. But recently, with the influx of the International student population, instructors are walking their “troubled” students over. They are kind of looking at us like, “I don’t know what else to do with this student. Take them.” However, I had one instructor who did that last quarter, and he was really great. He [had also been] an international student himself, so he certainly understands the problems that international students face. But he didn’t know what else to do. So it’s not, “I’m bringing this student over because you’re an excellent resource.”

It's, "I'm bringing this student over because I don't know what to do with them."...I think [collaboration is] a combination effort. I believe that. I try to be positive. (SA-P)

In something of a contrast to the student affairs professionals' narrative, an academic affairs faculty member discussed academic success and collaboration in a different way. The faculty member was focused on optimizing the strengths of academic faculty and student affairs professionals in order to ensure all UC Davis students succeed.

[Student affairs professionals should be] bringing the faculty in just for what they are best at, which is perhaps sharing their knowledge of what it takes [for the student] to be successful in their classrooms at the University, what it takes to go on to some post-graduate study. [The University needs] to optimize that; let people do what they're best prepared to do.... what makes for a successful collaboration is channeling peoples' efforts into those places where they're best prepared to participate and most able to contribute successfully. (F-M)

The UC Davis campus core principles show not only a strong belief in academic success, but also in collaboration, reflected in a section in the University of California, Davis Academic Integrity Project entitled "Collaboration: Respect University Standards." This section of the Academic Integrity Project states, "collaborating responsibly will foster mutual respect within the academic community at UC Davis" (UC Davis, 2012a, para. 1).

The Division of Student Affairs additionally highlighted a similar idea in their 2010-2011 Annual Report, *Supporting the Vision of UC Davis*, which described five new partnerships between student and academic affairs toward promoting academic success. The Annual Report states, "many units within the Division of Student Affairs partner with academic units to create meaningful programs by utilizing interdisciplinary strengths" (UC Davis, 2012f, p. 5). The highlights of the new partnerships include the following:

1. The Student Recruitment and Retention Center offers a training class in partnership with the School of Education to newly selected student staff that improves the efficiency and effectiveness of the services provided via the Student Recruitment and Retention Center to the campus community.
2. Women's Resources and Research Center staff members taught three academic classes this year.
3. Thirteen Counseling and Psychological Services staff members taught or facilitated 636 hours of activities in academic courses (primarily courses in the Multicultural Immersion Program).
4. In the Department of Campus Recreation, Outdoor Adventures added a new field trip to the Channel Islands that will become an annual offering through the Department of Geology.
5. In addition to their partnership with the School of Education, Campus Recreation's Youth Programs unit developed a collaborative camp with the Bohart Museum and Museum of Wildlife and Fish Biology. (UC Davis, 2012f, p.

Overall, these statements published in various areas of student and academic affairs illustrate that student academic success is indeed a common theme and a key aspect of the University mission and goals.

### **Need for Collaboration and Relationship Building**

Also emerging from the data was a need for collaboration and relationship building between academic affairs and student affairs at UC Davis. According to the materials summarized in the previous section, both divisions feel collaboration and relationship building is important. Furthermore, according to the UC Davis Division of

Student Affairs Strategic Plan 2012, two of the four strategic goals are to “develop partnerships that promote student learning” and “provide seamless systems that advance academic transitions and success” (UC Davis, 2012s, p. 4).

The opinions of the participants in this research echoed those sentiments. Each one stated collaboration was important and necessary when asked if he/she believed if there was a need for collaboration between academic affairs faculty and student affairs professionals on the UC Davis campus. For example, according to one student affairs professional:

Absolutely there is a need [for collaboration]. I think everybody is here for the same mission ...80% of a student's time is spent outside of the class, and what they're spending in class is so critical, [that] bridging that gap...is really important. So, when there's this disconnect, you can see it. [For example] if a faculty member does not know what types of resources are available for the student, whether [the resources are] academic...in the students' Residence Hall or on campus, then [faculty] has a hard time supporting that student, getting them the resources, making the referrals that they need because they don't have the depth of information. And I think it goes both ways. (SA-P)

Though student affairs professionals have strong beliefs regarding collaboration, faculty members also believe collaboration is important. A faculty member stated his feelings on the need for collaboration between academic affairs faculty and student affairs professionals as follows:

Oh, certainly. I think [collaboration has] been very advantageous...As faculty, we tend to think we're really important, which I like to think we are. But we like to think that we do all the teaching; we're where the learning occurs. And that's just ridiculous when you think about it. [The students] only spending so many hours a week in class...fifteen, if they're taking fifteen units. All of that other time is outside of the class. And [the students] see other people. Particularly the first year [residence hall] experience...I think it really did open my eyes to the kinds of things student affairs brings between the Internship and Career Center, the advising that goes on in [residence hall] ...and they're academic. The [student affairs professionals] are not...just running the gym and intramurals. There can be a real academic component. And so on that side, I think it was eye opening. I

think it's a really important role for them. I also think, though, that the faculty could be more involved...most faculty, I would suspect, don't even know those things go on [within student affairs]. They [faculty] have a limited understanding. Yeah, there's a Career Center, and Internship and Career Center. There's advising, there's Health Sciences advising and so on that are sort of run out of student affairs. Certainly we know that judicial affairs exists. But the fact that there's a real teaching element that exists, I don't think most of us know. (F-M)

It is no surprise that both academic affairs faculty and student affairs professionals believe there should be a collaborative partnership at UC Davis because not only does it philosophically make sense, but historically there have been some extremely successful partnerships on the UC Davis campus.

### **Successful Partnerships at UC Davis**

**The Residence Hall Advising Team (RHAT).** One example of a successful collaborative partnership between academic and student affairs is the Residence Hall Advising Team. The Residence Hall Advising Team (RHAT) is:

comprised of peer advisors from the College Deans' Offices and the First-Year Experience program from New Student Academic Services in Student Housing. RHAT provides academic advising to students in the residence halls through Academic Advising Centers and academic programs in each living area. (UC Davis, 2012k, para. 1)

A student affairs professional explained the RHAT model as follows:

[The] Residence Hall Advising Team is probably the most successful model, because it really is a model, a system model, but it's also the most enduring that we have. It's been going on for a long time...It's a successful model because [student affairs has] buy-in from the four colleges that do peer advising. And I think that you will hear that throughout campus that peer advising is a critical component to our campus culture, and to the success of the students. And so, that's the base of the model—the peer advising program. I think it started out as a model that was trying to infuse both professional staff advising as well as peer advising. But as the years went on, I think the reality—time, resources, budget, everything else—the peer advising piece is what flourished and has been the most successful. And that's kind of where we've refocused everything. (SA-P)

The Residence Hall Advising Team is vital to supporting first-year student transition, retention, and success. RHAT, which collaborates directly with the academic dean's office and student housing, is also in direct support of the UC Davis Student Housing mission statement, which reads as follows:

The mission of Student Housing is to provide educational living and dining environments that facilitate a successful transition to UC Davis for new students. Additional housing is provided for continuing students in apartments, living groups and cooperative houses. Student Housing programs are designed to support academic success, leadership development, positive decision making and responsible citizenship. (UC Davis, 2012t, para. 1)

Faculty also have a strong belief that the Residence Hall Advising Team is a thriving collaborative partnership. One faculty member described the benefits of participating in the Residence Hall Advising Team as follows:

The Residence Hall Advising Team seemed to come from the grassroots. I don't know quite the origin of it. But there was a former academic advisor from Letters & Science...She was the one who started it. [She proposed] "Let's have some outreach that gets [us] closer to the students." And it grew from that, so I think it was just her effort to do that. But it was certainly embraced by the academic advising staff from housing...I think that was what led to the advising offices that are scattered around the residence halls, and got more of the deans' offices involved with it. I don't think it ever went down to departmental academic advisors being regularly involved, but that just worked very well. (F-M)

The opinions of the research participants involved in the research corroborate that the Residence Hall Advising Team is a successful collaboration between the faculty and student affairs professionals, one that contributes to the academic success of the UC Davis students who participate in the program.

**First-year seminar.** Another successful UC Davis collaborative partnership is the first-year seminar program. "The UC Davis First-Year Seminar Program was established in 1988 to give first-year students an opportunity to interact directly with

faculty members in examining ideas of substance and consequence” (UC Davis, 2012g, para. 1). The seminars are co-taught by both academic affairs faculty and student affairs professionals. The course topics are chosen by the instructor to “reflect their current intellectual interests and to illustrate forms of inquiry and reasoning that form the foundation of the research university” (UC Davis, 2012g, para. 1). The seminars are a success because of “the small size and interdisciplinary nature of the seminars foster intense intellectual exchange between students and instructor and among students themselves” (UC Davis, 2012g, para. 1).

A tenured faculty member who has participated in the first-year seminar program has confidence in the successful collaboration. Though his response about this successful collaboration was positive, it seemed as if he implied student affairs has a much larger contribution to this collaboration than the program description denotes. According to him:

Student affairs does all the work. And that’s what I like about it. When [student affairs professionals] ask me to do these things [first-year seminars]...I’m not setting up. I just show up and entertain the students. So I do the academic thing. But I don’t have to set up who the guest speakers are, get the room, so it’s been very helpful on that level. I guess that’s why for me it’s a great collaboration. I don’t do a whole lot of work. Not that I get oodles of credit, but it’s something. And I enjoy doing it. But I don’t have to invest a lot of time in it, unlike other classes, where I’m the only person there responsible for it. (F-M)

The faculty member made it seem as if the faculty are not as engaged in the process as student affairs would have expected. However, the following was a statement by a student affairs administrator stating that despite the perhaps unequal collaboration, the first-year seminar program is successful:

It’s not that it’s been unsuccessful, but it’s not what I want it to be...Because we have not had as much faculty involvement...We say that it’s seminars led by



faculty, but really, in the last couple of years, it's mostly been staff. That's where we haven't been successful...over the last twelve years. It's ebbed and flowed. Some years we've had faculty, and others we haven't. And with the freshman seminar...part of it is just time and resources. [Student Affairs just doesn't] have the time to do it, to focus on that faculty outreach and getting people involved. I wouldn't say that they're not successful, because they're still in progress. (SA-A)

In spite of some conflicting viewpoints by interviewees, the opinion was that the First-Year Seminar program is a largely successful collaboration between the faculty and student affairs professionals contributing to the academic success of the UC Davis students involved.

**Orientation.** The UC Davis Orientation is a transitional opportunity for the admitted high school student to arrive at UC Davis and learn how to navigate campus and academic resources. Orientation is designed to allow admitted students to interact with fellow students, staff, and faculty from diverse backgrounds who will share with them strategies for academic, personal, and global success. Through a collaborative partnership between academic faculty and student affairs professionals, the UC Davis community welcomes the new student body by providing resources and assisting in charting their academic course. The goals of the UC Davis Orientation program are to:

- (1) Support students' transition into a large research university;
- (2) Connect each student with his/her college and academic advising resources, including undergraduate research and internship opportunities;
- (3) Help each student understand what it means to be a respected and respectful member of our multicultural UC Davis community and introduce the student to our Principles of Community;
- (4) Encourage the student to engage with the campus community and get involved in various clubs and organizations; and
- (5) Guide each student in finding the answers to his/her important questions. (UC Davis, 2012i, para. 3)

As an example of Orientation as a successful collaboration, one student affairs professional praised the program:

I would venture to say that something I think is a really good collaboration that we do really well is orientation. I think that having orientation out of the student affairs side, but very, very heavily involving the [academic] colleges is a really great collaboration. I know it has not been without its bumps in the road. But it is a clear example, to me anyway, of the campus coming together for a common purpose, and doing it really well, and collaborating really well on a regular basis. (SA-P)

To cite one of the “road bumps” mentioned by the student affairs professional above, there are some within the academic affairs division who do not want to participate with orientation because it occurs during the summer quarter, which is typically when most faculty are on summer break. One faculty member made the following statement about the academic affairs faculty involvement with orientation:

Some of the faculty are just very different in their interest and their experience in those areas. Some faculty work a lot with [events that student affairs coordinates and organizes] such as orientation, recruitment days, open houses, Picnic Day, things that are there. Others [do] very little. Others are very much focused in their laboratories and their classrooms, and don’t participate much in those thing. (F-M)

Orientation is a vital and important service to the incoming first-year class. Regardless of the fact the collaboration is not as smooth as perhaps it could be, it is still considered by most a successful collaboration between the faculty and student affairs professionals.

### **Unsuccessful UC Davis Partnerships**

Although the UC Davis campus has been the birthplace of many successful collaborative partnerships including the ones mentioned here, there have also been unsuccessful collaborative partnerships. During the data collection, the term “unsuccessful partnerships” was not defined for the participants, but rather was left up to the individual participants to interpret. Even without a concrete definition, research participants ventured to provide several examples of unsuccessful partnerships at UC

Davis. Many of the examples revolved around specific partnerships between academic and student affairs. Student affairs participants provided examples that focused greatly on the interactions of with faculty regarding programs impacting their students. The following example of an unsuccessful partnership was provided by a student affairs executive:

I think that our Academic Themed Programs (ATPs)... It's not that it's been unsuccessful, but it is not what I want it to be...because we have not had as much faculty involvement...[Student affairs says] that [ATP seminars are] led by faculty, but really, in the last couple of years, it's mostly been staff. That is where we have not been successful...[Involvement] has ebbed and flowed. (SA-E)

Two other student affairs professionals spoke about faculty programs within the residence halls and the challenges that ensue. As one of the two student affairs professionals described:

There are a few faculty members who [teach outside of the classroom] and do faculty programs. And I think that the issue with that is, those faculty members [who volunteer to provide additional "out-of-the-classroom-teaching], we [student affairs] over-utilize them, and then we burn them out. (SA-P)

The second student affairs professional spoke about the issues with faculty programs involving the residence halls as follows:

I think that because we have established relationships with certain people, and that we know will say yes, and we know that when we do reach out it's going to be really difficult to get new people, it's on us for not reaching out to new people as much. But it's also that it is difficult to get new people to come in. But I don't know how much of it is people not wanting to come in, as much as it is we need to educate them about what we do and why it's important for them. Like [they have] a lack of knowledge versus [them] not wanting to. And it just takes a whole lot of time and energy to go out and educate people about why they should come into the first-year residence halls, when it's not a priority necessarily for what they need to do for their job, which is [to] publish, research, and [make] stuff happen. (SA-P)

Academic affairs faculty participants also provided examples of unsuccessful partnerships focused on the interactions between student affairs professionals and the collaborative programs impacting their students. The example of an unsuccessful partnership was provided by an academic affairs faculty member, “There’s still a lot of tension over different messages being delivered by residential advisors and academic advisors in the deans’ offices and departments” (F-M). Another academic affairs faculty member spoke about the challenges he faced between academic affairs faculty and student affairs professionals with the university orientation program:

Orientation has been one [area where] there seems to be a fair amount of tension. And I think recently, the tension has come from something I’m still involved in, which is course availability. Sort of one side reassuring students, “Oh, you’ll get all the courses you want,” but then they register, and a lot of them are full. Their parents are here and everybody is upset. So on the academic side, we’re feeling a lot of pressure from parents that we’re not delivering what they thought they would get. And maybe [parents get] too many assurances [that], “Oh, it’ll be okay.” And I know early on when I was working with that [program]; there were problems with training the students who were working in orientation. It’s been corrected since, but it was an example of some of the problems. (F-M)

Finally, another academic affairs faculty member spoke about the challenges involved in collaborating between the two divisions, how he personally believed academic affairs faculty can be difficult to work with. The faculty member made this comical statement:

I’ve really enjoyed working with [student affairs]. If there’s any weakness...Again, I get this bias from my wife...Whenever she talks to her friends in student affairs, and they don’t know her, and she’ll introduce herself and say, “My husband is a faculty member.” Somehow it comes up in the conversation. [Student affairs professionals] always roll their eyes. She says they invariably just make faces when they hear that somebody is a professor, because it’s just...“Oh, not one of them. Oh, God. Please, help us.” And unfortunately, the [student affairs professionals are] right. So often, we’re (academic affairs faculty) really hard to get along with...some of us. At least the [faculty] that they have to confront. I think it’s more us [academic affairs faculty] (meaning, he feels that the challenge is more on the faculty’s side). I think we [faculty] just don’t see [collaborating in these programs with student affairs] as useful...That’s not part

of our job. Our job is to be scholars. And to go over there and just do advising, or just talk to a bunch of students, it's just not really our gig. You're in our way. (F-M)

**Lack of incentive and/or reward from the academic affairs perspective.** The issue of an incentive and reward structure (or lack thereof) was mentioned by many research participants. It seems as if the faculty are largely driven by the idea of a tangible incentive or reward, particularly gaining tenure. The lack of incentives or rewards for faculty seems to have created a barrier to their collaboration with student affairs professionals. Surprisingly, perhaps, the theme of a lack of incentive or reward recurred from both the academic and student affairs perspectives, and their viewpoints were similar. For example, one student affairs professional commented that from his or her point of view, some of the lack of collaboration was due to the deficiency of incentive on the faculty side to engage first-year students:

I think a message is that not all (or a lot) of professors has a huge interest [in getting] connected with first-year students. They [the faculty] want them [the first year students] to get more experience, get more involved, get their GE [courses] under their belt before they really reach out and become connected. And so...it can be a challenge to get the faculty to come to a first-year student audience, because I don't think they [the faculty] see the cost or time benefit in their favor in doing that. That said, we [student affairs professionals] have great people [faculty] that we work with who are very committed. But it's an individual difference across the board. [Also]...the budget is bad, there are a lot of people doing a lot of things, and it's tough to try and ask for time right now with limited resources. (SA-P)

A faculty member agreed about the large lack of incentive for the faculty to participate with first-year students because more of their incentive comes from engaging in research.

This faculty member described:

I think student affairs reaches out as much as they can. I think that the onus is really on the Senate on the academic affairs side...through the reward structure. [The faculty] are supposed to be doing research and being a scholar and all that

sort of stuff, and there's a lot more kudos and pats on the head from that than there is from teaching...[the faculty are] not going to get rewarded [from engaging first-year students], so it's not like they're going to put their heart and soul into it. So that's where the tension will be. Student affairs can knock on the door all they want, but ultimately, they're only going to have a handful of people that will be willing to do it. (F-M)

**Lack of incentive and/or reward from the student affairs perspective.** The lack of incentive or reward from the student affairs perspective was a bit different from that of the faculty perspective. The researcher sensed frustration and unpleasantness when discussing the reward system, or lack thereof. For example, one student affairs executive made the following statement about the reward system:

When [UC Davis has] a system that rewards a certain group, and that group becomes the leaders who are in charge of policy making and decision making, they are missing a huge part of what they need to understand about our clients, the students, in how they approach policy making. Because from their [faculty] training, it's always been, "how great I am in this very, very specific field of study. And I have written 10,000 articles about it." And that's primarily how you are evaluated as faculty. And that is enough for you to go to the next rank, if you're an administrator. So the system is set up in a way that would perpetuate keeping the barriers in place. (SA-E)

Interestingly enough, when the participants were questioned about unsuccessful collaborations, academic affairs faculty answered the question much differently than student affairs professionals. Academic affairs faculty answered the question by discussing specific programs, with statements such as "what's the Academy role in that?" (F-M) or "There have been problems with some of the interactions with advising at Orientation" (F-M). The student affairs professionals did not as answer as literally or specifically, but remained broad. One student affairs professional commented on unsuccessful collaborations with the following:

There are a few faculty members who [teach outside of the classroom] and do faculty programs...We [student affairs] over-utilize them, and then we burn them

out...[Faculty is] not only a limited resource, but that we're using our resources over and over again. And so we have the same faculty members that have identified that they're committed to first-year students, and that they are willing to make it happen. And so we got to them over and over again. And I think that's a concern. (SA-P)

Another student affairs professional agreed with this example about unsuccessful collaborations in spirit, but viewed the time commitment differently. The student affairs professional described the time commitment in this way:

When we [student affairs] talk about faculty involvement and collaboration, it looks different...a faculty program, it's a very small commitment. It is one hour for the faculty to come in one night to do something. So the outreach for that is going to look much different than it does for an academic theme program [in the residence halls] where we have to get faculty to teach it for ten weeks. To the faculty, it is another class in their already full schedule. And so I think that there's not one answer to that question, because there's different ways that we reach out and try to work with faculty...I think professional staff need to be more involved in that on a regular basis in reaching out. Consistency with staff [interactions] is also a big piece. Our positions [particular positions within student affairs] are not positions that people stay in for ten, twelve, fifteen years normally. So when faculty and academic affairs folks have to continually meet new people and make new contacts, I think that makes it a challenge. It's more challenging for them. I think that can play into that piece of it, too. I think we [student affairs] are aware of that, and we're moving towards bettering that. (SA-P)

Lastly, one student affairs professional, who had worked on campus for five years, could not recall any collaborative experiences (s)he had seen or participated in:

What is unsuccessful is that there are not that many collaborations, period. I've been here for almost five years, and unless I seek something out personally, I don't know of any collaboration I could be a part of, in terms of campus committee of any type where they have student affairs and faculty or academic administrators together for something other than what we discussed as successful collaboration. And so I do wish...And it seems that there's a history of that at UC Davis, in terms of not really having those collaborations and putting the two and two together about how the students can experience a holistic experience at UC Davis by having the collaborations available. So to me, that is unsuccessful in the fact that there either isn't any one particular formal or different formal ways of getting together. (SA-P)

## Collaboration Barriers

Throughout this research and data collection process, research participants presented numerous reasons why there were barriers toward the Academic and Student Affairs Divisions fruitfully collaborating. Some of the barriers were imagined or assumed, and some of the barriers were real. The two most prevalent barriers within the data were “respect” and “political structure.”

**Respect.** In 1990, UC Davis formulated a statement of Principles of Community to “confirm the commitment to providing an environment of civility, appreciation for diversity and respect for the personal dignity inherent in all of us” (UC Davis, 2012j, para. 1). The Principles of Community clearly state that UC Davis “will strive to build a true community of spirit and purpose based on mutual respect and caring” (UC Davis, 2012j, para. 5). However, throughout the data gathering aspect of this study, participants used phrases such as “us versus them” and “they do not respect us” several times. Participants explained that whenever an issue, problem, or disconnect arose, the blame tended to be placed on the other division. The reality reflected in this research seems to work against the UC Davis’ Principles of Community.

The idea that there was an ongoing conflict or divide (“us versus them”) came up several times in conversation with research participants. One faculty member stated his view clearly when asked about what he does for students outside the classroom:

Students with their out of classroom experiences? You know, you say that as though you expect there’s intent I do that. I think the faculty are often primarily focused on the students in class and in activities, which is probably where they see their major responsibility. Do the faculty have a strong personal sense of responsibility to help the students with their out of classroom experiences...I would just say in general with specific exceptions, I don’t think the faculty necessarily see that as within their purview, or that they would be driven to



increase the level of their activities there. However, there are exceptions. A faculty member [may serve as an advisor for a club]. So there, you've got an interaction. And that particular faculty member of course, in the very act of doing that, is helping to facilitate that student engagement in something outside of [the classroom]... You've got faculty serving as mentors for internship and career center internships off at some biotech company in the summer, right? And the students [are] getting credit for that by having a faculty advisor. So there, they're facilitating that. You may even have faculty serving as referees on the [intermural] teams. I have no idea. But if they do, it's a pretty personal ad hoc... I think the faculty are primarily focused on the academic activities of their students, as opposed to the rest of student life, and probably presume that student affairs then has the responsibility for facilitating those other aspects of the students' life. (F-M)

As conversations with participants progressed, the question of how educational degrees are viewed by faculty and staff came up in a few cases. For example, one participant asked, "Does a higher degree equal respect in higher education? Or does years of experience equal respect?" (SA-E). The aspect of respect around the Divisions, positions, and people began to surface. One student affairs executive had very strong views on this matter of "respect:"

I don't have a [terminal] degree, and it's not likely I'm going to get one. But I do have twenty years of experience... So if I cannot be viewed as having the expertise [where people should] listen to what I have to say... just because I don't have that extra set of letters behind my name, then it's just a problem. It's a barrier. So I think that happens a lot with the faculty, and in all fairness, [it's not all faculty]. There are 2300 faculty members, and so I would never say they're all like that, because I wouldn't want them [faculty] saying that about us [student affairs professionals] all being a certain way either. But there is sort of a tendency [on the faculty members' part]... sort of singularly and narrowly focus on their areas of research. [Faculty] are experts in that area, but that doesn't mean that other people are not also experts [who] are on this campus. So that's a barrier. But it's also just about respect. It's about being willing to have respect in every relationship or in every relationship that has to be made on this campus; but does [the faculty] always get to be "the ones" [meaning, the ones who get the most respect]? And I guess because of the way the Academic Senate is set up, with shared governance, in a lot of ways that is how it's set up. (SA-E)

**Political structure.** In addition to the idea of respect, political structure has become a barrier between academic and student affairs. It is clear through the participants' responses that the power of the campus lies within the Academic Senate for both the Academic and Student Affairs Divisions. The UC Davis campus is run by the Academic Senate, which is where the political "push and pull" arises. One student affairs professional voiced frustration:

I hate to keep repeating it, but it's political to me. It's a political reason. I'm not sure what the game is sometimes; whether it's ego, or whether it's that your department isn't going to get this much money or that much money. There is an old feeling out there [perpetuated in this respondent's opinion by academic affairs] that student affairs is a unit that does not provide any useful resources to students. And I think those are the types of collaborations that student affairs really need to work on. If [student affairs] can do that, then I think faculty will begin to break down some of those barriers. It wouldn't be such a political game... because that's what it sounds like to me sometimes. I'm sitting in a meeting, and I don't understand why that's so difficult to [complete a task]. You want to provide this service, or you want to help these students, but you can't do it because of the Academic Senate? Because [the Academic Senate] has their own agenda? I don't even know what the agenda is. I don't think these students know what the agenda is. So I think once the politics is removed from the equation . . . or lessened...then I think there would be more opportunities for [successful collaboration]. (SA-P)

Faculty agreed there are political structures on campus and a power dynamic in play.

Most faculty members and student affairs professionals perceive the Academic Senate as holding the power on the UC Davis campus. To illustrate this point, one faculty member made the following statements about UC Davis Academic Senate politics:

It takes the Senate to get in gear, get its act together. It takes a long time. That's the downside of it. The students ultimately do benefit...the Senate wants to help the students. But it takes student affairs sometimes to tell us what needs to be done. I have four hundred kids in a class. I don't know what they want, per se. I don't know them personally. And sometimes it helps talking to people from student affairs. (F-M)

## Silos

As mentioned earlier, silos are vertical organizational or management structures often effective at promoting interaction within functional units (that is, within the silo). However, silos also often create obstacles to interaction, coordination, and collaboration between and among other units (between one silo and another) (Schroeder, 1999). Organizations use the term “silo” when the functions of their institution tend to be less communicative and collaborative; silos in organizations are typically not positive things. Within the UC Davis structure, due both to the political and structural landscape, there are silos that tend to act as a stand-alone entities within a multifaceted organization.

**Impact on the student.** The divisional structure of academic affairs and student affairs has an impact on the UC Davis students, whether intentionally or unintentionally. To illustrate this, one faculty member speaking about the silos, which he argued exists at UC Davis, was passionate on how those silos impact students:

We [UC Davis] have our separate silos, and we’re often in different places, so we have to make a conscious attempt to get together and discuss things. And something along that line . . . I can’t remember how many years ago it was that there’s was an interest nationally in one-stop advising centers, that basically one building where you have advisors for all purposes in that building, so students don’t have to run all around the campus looking for advice. And we [academic affairs] looked into it a bit. We had the physical problem of where is this one building that will house everyone? But then we recognized that that’s going to pull everyone together at one point, advisors are even further from the faculty who deliver to program. So then there’s a big gap there. So you removed one bottleneck, and created another with this. But that’s something that we need to deal with again, is how do we do the advising? How much of it is centrally driven? How much of it is decentralizing? How you do keep all of that connected?  
(F-M)

The gaps between the silos can have a negative impact on students. One student affairs professional recalled a distressing story about the gaps in student services due to silos:

One thing that I have encountered was hearing somebody who is very connected to students on an academic relationship basis giving false information about what student affairs services are provided . . . When I heard that and had to correct the information, it just made me [wonder] what other false information has been given to the students. So I'm not sure if that's even happening, but that did happen on one occasion and I thought, what sort of messages have students been receiving outside of the classroom about what student affairs provides that may or may not be accurate, and could taint their vision of what we have [to offer]. (SA-P)

After hearing this response during a focus group, another student affairs professional offered this follow-up:

I would say just to carry on that example, this is the silo effect, and I think that may be part of that is I feel like maybe Student Housing here is pretty unique that we have such an emphasis on the academic side. It's an emphasis that I have not seen in previous institutions that I've worked at, to the level that we incorporate the academic side into the Residence Hall experience. So I think that silo effect is then felt, where the academic side, if they do not clearly understand the mission and the goals that we're going through, then I think that's [where they're coming from]. (SA-P)

Ultimately, the impact on the student is the most important aspect for the university, and thus, providing excellent student resources, academic success, and promoting the individual growth of each student should be the University's goal. One student affairs professional made the following statement about providing these excellent student services within a siloed system:

It's good for student affairs and academic affairs to understand what type of resources are on campus for students. And so when [either division is] interacting with students, whether it is in an academic setting or doing a program . . . [staff members] are aware of some of the collaborative resources and experiences to provide for our students, so that it is a little more of a holistic approach to the education, instead of being in silos. (SA-P)

**Hierarchy siloed system.** According to the literature, in the corporate world, private companies with functional silos may have greater difficulty in creating strong, competitive products because they may fail to recognize the benefit of cross-functional

teaming (Technology Training Limited, 2012). In a related way, within higher education, the creation and use of silos (whether intentional or unintentional) can have negative effects on the client, or in other words, the student. To illustrate this point, a student affairs executive made the following statement about the hierarchy siloed system at UC Davis:

We work in a hierarchy system although there is shared governance. Who's on top of that hierarchy?...Academic faculty. And so when we think about the importance of work, that hierarchy perpetuates a sort of sense of entitlement that also leads to the solidifying of these silos, or these silos remaining as silos. So I have my job, and I know when I'm being evaluated. And you have your job, and you know when you're being evaluated. So it prevents people from sort of crossing the silos. And so when we think about the barriers, it is how we perceive academics in the system, or faculty in the system, and their role, not just in educating our children, but also their role in creating policies, because by nature, traditionally, those who go into the ranks of administration are the faculty members—those who are academics. Now, does that mean that they [academic affairs faculty members] have the background in management, in leadership, or have a good grasp in terms of the other areas that have to do with student development? The answer is no. So when we have a system that rewards a certain group, and that group becomes the leaders who are in charge of policy making and decision making, they are missing a huge part of what they need to understand about our clients, the students, in how they approach policy making. So the system is set up in a way that [perpetuates] keeping the barriers in place. (SA-E)

In spite of the on-campus reality the student affairs executive described, the UC Davis Vision of Excellence has a goal to “build on the interdisciplinary strengths of its faculty...and promote a collaborative environment that spurs innovations in learning and research by discovering ideas that take shape at the frontiers and intersections of academic disciplines” (UC Davis, 2012v, para. 3). One of the goals of the UC Davis Vision of Excellence is to:

Create collaborative gathering places that promote both interdisciplinary discourse and a sense of a scholarly community; create both physical spaces and virtual opportunities to reach across disciplines and include community leaders

and policymakers in these environments (e.g., virtual communication tools, digests of faculty expertise, journal clubs, repurposed facilities, cultural venues and library spaces). (UC Davis, 2012v, para. 3)

**The breakdown of the siloed structure.** Despite the persistence of silos within the UC Davis campus, the university executive team has attempted to break down or deconstruct some of those barriers. According to the 2010-2011 UC Davis Annual Report, there was an initiative dedicated to “systematically improving services the campus community depends on and, when appropriate, re-thinking some of the fundamental assumptions under which the university has been operating” (UC Davis, 2012q, para. 4). During the 2010-2011 academic year, UC Davis implemented some changes to break down the siloed structure on campus. The creation of the UC Davis Shared Service Center was created, an administrative move to create a “one-stop shop” for all finance, human resource, information technology, and payroll services. According to the report:

Through this system, administrative service delivery will be consolidated, streamlined, reengineered and standardized. The system, along with the implementation of enabling technologies, will improve customer service, increase the quality and consistency of information delivery, better manage and control risk, and reduce administrative costs by up to 20 percent annually. Those administrative savings can then be spent on student support and the academic mission. (UC Davis, 2012q, para. 5)

Another goal of the University, according to the 2010-2011 Annual Report, was the creation of the Organizational Excellence Initiative. The Organizational Excellence Initiative was another attempt toward improving collaboration and deconstructing silos on campus. This initiative was aimed at:

Assessing the effectiveness of several administrative organizations through administrative unit reviews, aligning staff as closely as possible to academic programs and initiating strategic energy-efficiency programs. The Organizational

Excellence implementation is based on recommendations from the Organizational Excellence Steering Committee and the Budget Advisory Committee, with the goal of supporting and enhancing the university's academic mission through the strategic and creative reinvention of administrative services. (UC Davis, 2012q, para. 7)

The UC Davis Student Affairs Division also tried to dismantle the siloed relationship between divisions by creating an "Infrastructure" to support the division's vision and strategic goals. As part of the annual report process, which included an assessment of student affairs, the report authors found the division required "an equal commitment to its administrative and resource infrastructure" (UC Davis, 2012q, para. 1). By requesting this commitment to its infrastructure, the Student Affairs Division is working to align strategic planning documents with those in other divisions "to provide strategic direction for the resource needs of the Division and enact its commitment to efficient business practices, compliance to policy and effective measures of accountability" (UC Davis, 2012q, para. 4). The following aspects of the Student Affairs Division will be affected by this change: Human Resources: Involvement and information sharing, Professional development and training, Succession planning, Recognition; Budgetary Planning: Annual operating systems and reserves, Long-term financial planning, Revenue diversification, and entrepreneurial opportunities; Capital Planning: New construction, Renovation, Maintenance, Maintenance and funding reserve systems, in collaboration with other campus entities, Utilities, Technology systems, and infrastructure; Technology: Systems improvement, maintenance, renewal, and replacement, Training and development, Utilization and coordination, and Implementation of short and long-term technology plan (UC Davis, 2012q).

One student affairs professional spoke candidly about the benefits of breaking down the existing siloed structure on the UC Davis campus:

It's good for student affairs and academic affairs to understand what type of resources are on campus for students. And so when they are interacting with students, whether it's in an academic setting, or doing a program or whatever, they're aware, whoever the staff member is, of some of the resources to provide for our students, so that it is a little more of a holistic approach to the education, instead of being in silos. (SA-P)

In contrast, another faculty member took a negative approach when speaking about potentially breaking down silos. When asked about her opinion of how to dismantle existing silos, she stated:

I think the key in all of this is frequent communication. At times we so retreat to our own silos and don't have the opportunities to connect as much. I know there have been attempts at that that were successful at times, and fall apart later. (F-M)

**Creating seamless and convenient services.** If the aforementioned goals of the 2010-2011 UC Davis Annual Report Goals are accomplished, UC Davis students should benefit by experiencing more seamless and convenient services, which will likely be more aligned with how students view the educational experience. One student affairs professional summed up the siloed structure from a student's perspective well:

When students come [to UC Davis] to get an education, they see the entire education as a whole. They don't break it up into academic affairs and student affairs. When [UC Davis students] graduate from the university, they go out and represent the university, again, not in separate silos. So, really, collaborating to put forth an effort to give the students the entire experience you want to give them is important, as well as molding them to go out there into their jobs and careers, other schools, and represent UC Davis in a positive way. (SA-P)

A student affairs professional took another approach on this perspective from the student's view:



When students come here [UC Davis] to get an education, they see the entire education as a whole. They do not break it up into academic affairs and student affairs. When [the student] graduates from the university, they go out and represent the university, again, not in separate silos. So, really, collaborating to put forth an effort to give the students the entire experience you want to give them is important, as well as molding them to go out there into their jobs and careers, other schools, and represent UC Davis in a positive way, isn't just going to be about the academics they learned in the classroom, but how they interact when they get outside the university and in a job. The skills that student affairs focuses on are a lot of the interpersonal skills that may not be figured out in the classroom. And so I think that it's really critical for the institution to really put an effort in both areas in collaboration between both. (SA-P)

### **Lack of Knowledge of the Other Division**

Another dominant theme that emerged from the data is that staff from academic affairs and student affairs lack knowledge of the division to which they do not belong. The “them vs. us” mentality of and challenges involved in faculty often “speaking the language of an academic” (which makes communication and collaboration between student affairs staff and faculty more difficult at times) became recurring subjects. Both of these difficulties run counter to the mission and goals of the UC Davis curricula, which clearly outline that all units at UC Davis should strive to collaborate. Naturally, both academic and student affairs have opinions as to the reasons for this lack of knowledge.

**“Them vs. Us.”** In the opinion of the researcher, there seems to be a good deal of miscommunication between Academic and Student Affairs Divisions at UC Davis. The following phrase sums up a recurring expression stated by participants from both Divisions: “they [the other Division] didn't take our expertise, they didn't acknowledge our expertise” (SA-E). Clearly there are misconceptions or other barriers toward productive collaborations in this sense between the academic and student affairs divisions. One student affairs professional's described the misconceptions as follows:

There are a lot of other pockets of academic affairs on campus that just are not in tune or aware of what student affairs are doing in its totality, in its philosophies, in the holistic way that we serve students. [Academic affairs] might have bits and pieces, but I think there are a lot of academic folks that do not even know [student affairs has] academic advising centers, or a Residence Hall advising team—those types of things. So it's kind of this constant informing and making people knowledgeable about that. (SA-P)

**Language of academia.** After the researcher received the above information, he asked the student affairs professional participants what could be done to increase the awareness and knowledge about the programs, functions, and services of the other division between the two divisions. One professional responded:

We [student affairs] need to be able to make the time and train professionals, or hire trained professionals, to conduct research within the student development experience...I'm a huge believer of...kind of looking at it from a cultural perspective; to understand the faculty and academic culture we need to speak their language. So I think that we need to be able to conduct our research, and then communicate that research to the faculty and the academic side of the house, in a way that [academic affairs] can understand it and buy into it, and then they will buy into more what we're doing as a Student Affairs division and all of our units...increased research is probably the one thing that I would like to see [student affairs] do more of on our campus that I don't think we do an appropriate job of doing. Part of that is the timing. Everyone is so busy. It could be budget cuts; it could be lack of skill and knowledge. [Student affairs hires] people that have Master's degrees, or not Master's degrees, and that research piece is not necessarily a component of that. (SA-P)

Though this was only one student affairs professional's opinion, others agreed. One student affairs executive specifically echoed the idea that student affairs professionals need to learn the language of academia to be able to better communicate with faculty as follows:

I think what student affairs can do is become very familiar in terms of the language that academics speak. And I think the student affairs folks can begin to look at how to identify specific situations and circumstances that they can share with faculty in terms of, "These are some things that you may encounter, so be prepared for it," so that [academic affairs] can share information. I think that is an opportunity for knowledge sharing that can translate into collaboration...Student

affairs practitioners speak a different language, and academics speak a different language. And so that's what happens when two silos have been created... In the history of student affairs, essentially, from deans of students, you're the babysitter. You're the ones who take care of all the crap outside of the classroom. That's how it's been created. And so, is there a way that we can go back to sharing knowledge, sharing the language that we speak so that there is greater familiarity in terms of what resonates with faculty in terms of what they deal with, and what resonates with student affairs in terms of what they deal with. So that's an important part of the effort to build collaboration between the two entities. (SA-E)

Though student affairs professionals may have to improve on learning the language of academia, faculty also conceded they could do a better job of being aware and knowledgeable about the resources available to students on the UC Davis campus. It is generally understood that faculty's primary job is to teach classes and explore research; thus, some faculty admitted that getting involved with campus activities tended to fall off their radar. Traditionally, when faculty is hired, their primary focus is to research, teach, achieve tenure, and get accustomed to the UC Davis academic culture. One UC Davis faculty member spoke about the disconnect between the divisions and related challenges for faculty:

We need a process where faculty has a better knowledge of what student affairs provides... especially [for] young faculty who come into a research institution with all the pressure to publish, [because] it's not going to be their focus to go out and look for that information. So I know it's presented to them in a new faculty orientation program each Fall, but they're bombarded with so much information. It's kind of like our orientation for incoming freshmen. We give them so much—how much can they retain? It seems to be for faculty... they've been here, and they become tenured, and then they start [saying to themselves], “okay, now I've got time to be more involved in the campus.” It's then that they seem to connect more with student affairs and the rest of the campus. (F-M)

Another UC Davis faculty member also spoke about how the disconnect happens for faculty using a specific example around student academic advising:

So there's advising which comes down through that office and through the colleges, through the deans' offices, through the departments, which I would sort of say is the academic branch of advising. And then there's advising that runs through student affairs: the residential advisors, the Health Science advising office, and so forth. So when you talk about collaboration between the academy and student affairs, you pick out issue by issue. If you pick out advising as an issue, there's a real chewy question about collaboration there. You have two independent advising operations going on. And the faculty, I suppose, provide something of a nexus between those two operations—the faculty may send them off in the direction of the advising empire run by academic affairs. And they may send the students off in the direction of an advising opportunity that's run through student affairs. (F-M)

### **Student Experience**

The last common theme that emerged from the data revolved around the student experience. UC Davis expects their graduates “can be found throughout the world, making an impact in professions that affect all aspects of our lives—from our health, environment and culture, to what we eat and drink” (UC Davis, 2012p, para. 1). In order to prepare the UC Davis graduates to move forward and be productive in their lives, the University publicly states a dedication to the student experience.

Students benefit from a wide range of academic and extracurricular programs, an interdisciplinary research community involved in local and global issues, and an abundance of opportunities to lead and to make an impact on society. UC Davis offers students the experiences in which they discover what matters to them and how to succeed after graduation. (UC Davis, 2012n, para. 1)

**Importance of student experience.** Understanding the student experience is important for both academic and student affairs. The UC Davis Office of Student Development strives to create opportunities for personal growth that will augment the academic goals of the UC Davis diverse student population. A student affairs professional made the following statement when speaking about a holistic view of the student experience:

When I think about the college or collegiate experience of students, I think about, particularly in this day and age, about [how critical it is that] the college experience [not be] something that's relegated to an intellectual exercise. I believe that institutions of higher education are charged with ensuring that students are not only smart, but that they're ethical, that they're civil, that they have a way of contributing in the world that really makes a difference. And I think that [often] that piece of it gets left out. So in order for those goals to be satisfied, the relationship between the academic side and the student affairs side is absolutely critical. Otherwise, I believe the mission of fully or holistically developing students becomes impossible. (SA-P)

Another student affairs professional commented on the student experience in relation to a collaborative experience between Academic and Student Affairs Divisions:

Collaborating to put forth an effort to give the students the entire experience you want to give them is important, as well as [to mold] them to go out there into their jobs and careers, other schools, and represent UC Davis in a positive way. However, it is not just going to be about the academics they learned in the classroom, but how the student interacts when they get outside the university and in a job. And the skills that student affairs focuses on are a lot of the interpersonal skills that may not be figured out in the classroom. And so I think that it is really critical for the institution to really put an effort in both areas in collaboration to benefit the students. (SA-P)

According to the Office of Student Development website, the office strives to provide the following:

Students will be exposed to additional education outside the classroom with a myriad of academic, transition, leadership and citizenship support services. We provide academic advising for first year students, assist incoming students and family members during summer orientation, and serve the needs of on-campus residential students as well as the fraternity and sorority community. (UC Davis, 2012h, para. 1)

Student experience is a priority for UC Davis, but the university believes the student experience is a partnership between the student and the University.

Students who are actively involved in their own learning and development are more likely to be successful in college. Colleges and universities offer students a wide variety of opportunities both inside and outside the classroom to become engaged with new ideas, people and experiences. Institutions measure the effectiveness of these opportunities in a variety of ways to better understand what

types of activities and programs students find most helpful. (UC Davis, 2012n, p. 5)

In 2010, the University of California Undergraduate Experience (UCUES) was administered to the UC Davis Seniors. Questions on the survey were grouped into categories that positively correlated to student learning and development. The results reported in Table 4.3 are based on the responses of UC Davis seniors who participated in the survey. It should be noted that the response rate for all students at UC Davis was 47% and the response rate of seniors was 54%. These rates are in comparison to the University of California system response rates of 43% and 44%, respectively (UC Davis, 2012n).

Table 4.3

*University of California Davis Undergraduate Experience Survey Results*

<p>Group Learning Experiences (in the last academic year):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 77% of seniors worked outside of class on class projects or studied with classmates;</li> <li>• 20% of seniors spent at least 6 hours per week participating in student organizations or clubs;</li> <li>• 31% of seniors reported serving as an officer or leader in a campus organization or club;</li> <li>• 82% of seniors helped a classmate better understand course material.</li> </ul>
<p>Active Learning Experiences:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 65% of seniors reported making class presentations;</li> <li>• 84% of seniors spent at least 6 hours per week studying and other academic activities outside of class;</li> <li>• 54% of seniors enrolled in at least one independent research course;</li> <li>• 28% of seniors participated in a study abroad program;</li> <li>• 59% of senior participated in an internship;</li> <li>• 50% of seniors assisted faculty with research;</li> <li>• 52% of seniors participated in community service in 2005-06.</li> </ul>

Table 4.3 (continued)

<p>Institutional Commitment to Student Learning and Success:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 85% of seniors were satisfied with advising by faculty on academic matters;</li> <li>• 81% of seniors were satisfied with advising by college staff on academic matters;</li> <li>• 72% of seniors were satisfied with the availability of courses needed for graduation;</li> <li>• 84% of seniors reported raising their standards for acceptable effort due to the high standards of a faculty member.</li> </ul>
<p>Student Satisfaction:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) 63% of seniors were satisfied with the value of their education for the price they paid;</li> <li>2) 83% of seniors were satisfied with their overall academic experience;</li> <li>3) 84% of seniors would choose to attend this institution again;</li> <li>4) 86% of seniors reported that their campus had a strong commitment to undergraduate education.</li> </ol>
<p>Experiences with Diverse Groups of People and Ideas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 95% of seniors rated their ability to appreciate, tolerate or understand racial and ethnic diversity as good or better;</li> <li>• 93% of seniors rated their ability to appreciate cultural and global diversity as good or better;</li> <li>• 57% of seniors gained a deeper understanding of other perspectives through conversations with students of a different nationality;</li> <li>• 57% of seniors gained a deeper understanding of other perspectives through conversations with students of a different race or ethnicity.</li> </ul>
<p>Student Interaction with Campus Faculty and Staff:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 69% of seniors sought academic help from an instructor or tutor;</li> <li>• 57% of seniors talked with an instructor outside of class about course material;</li> <li>• 26% of seniors worked with a faculty member on a campus activity other than coursework.</li> </ul>

Source: UC Davis (2012n)

**Institutional commitment to the student experience.** The student experience is clearly a priority for the Office of Student Development; however, the Student Affairs Division also publicly commits to their devotion to the UC Davis students' holistic experience via their mission statement and other strategic planning and public documents. According to the UC Davis Student Affairs Division mission, student experience is a priority and a value. The mission states:

In concert with the UC Davis Vision, the Division of Student Affairs supports students and all members of the campus community in their academic, social, cultural, personal and civic development, thereby enabling them to contribute to the advancement of our campus and the global society . . . Student Affairs provides broad opportunities that encourage student growth and development, promote health and wellness and value the exploration of life-long learning. (UC Davis, 2012s, p. 3)

The UC Davis Student Affairs mission continues by listing the division's commitments to the UC Davis students' experience. The UC Davis Student Affairs mission has six aspects that support the student experience:

1. Services and facilities that provide the necessary foundation to support every student's academic pursuits, including food services, student housing, bookstores, registration services, access assistance, health and psychological services and financial support.
2. Experiences for leadership development, identity and values clarification, and ethical awareness.
3. Opportunities for engagement, education and interaction in diverse cultural and programmatic environments.



4. Comprehensive recreational and athletic opportunities, including facilities for recreational programs, intramurals and sport clubs and nationally recognized intercollegiate athletic competition.
5. Collaborative ventures and services in health and wellness education.
6. Experiences through student organization participation that promote leadership and personal growth. Promote Personal Growth, Wellness and Life-Long Learning. (UC Davis, 2012s, p. 11)

**Student experience as daily practice.** In accordance with the written documents that commit UC Davis to the student experience on campus, work toward improving the student experience and getting students engaged can also be found in daily practice. Both Academic and Student Affairs Divisions attempt to go “above and beyond the call of duty” to enhance the holistic student experience. In speaking to a student affairs executive, (s)he felt the student experience is the division’s most important priority:

I think for the reason that when [student affairs thinks] about student development, approaching it holistically is key. Students are not here to just address the students’ intellectual capacity, as it relates to their academic experience here. [Student affairs is] here to develop them holistically. And [the students] come to the university not just a brain that takes in information, but they come here with a lot of other things that make them who they are. That also means beyond what they have shown in terms of their intellectual capacity, but also how they develop as individuals when they interact with each other; how they develop as individuals when they are faced with a challenge. How they are going to develop as individuals in how they address those challenges. I think when we think about [students’] development, someone can be a straight-A student and complete scholar, but a [ethically, morally or socially underdeveloped] outside of the classroom, that does not make for a good example in terms of how we have prepared our students to go to the next level, or how to go to the environment outside of the safety of the university. So when we think about student development, [student affairs has] to look at how [students] experience their success here, both academically and also personally, in their growth; psychologically in their growth, emotionally in their growth, socially. All

of those things cannot be separated. They are all important parts of the individual. (SA-E)

The research data illustrate that student affairs professionals approach student development directly while academic affairs faculty approach the student experience in a different way, or more indirectly. One academic affairs faculty member made the following statement about his involvement in helping create the student experience:

The university is working on a WASC [Western Association of Schools & Colleges] accreditation and I'm seeing that [academic affairs needs] to have an assessment program for student development on the academic side, as well as on the co-curricular side. And so it's well recognized that students are not just here to get an education in the academic sense. So the many programs in student affairs really contribute to the other half of the development process here. [Academic affairs needs] to keep the two units connected, collaborating, and working together. [UC Davis is] required to have each division do an assessment now by WASC. And as I search around . . . I'm usually looking on the academic side, because I'm working with academic programs to define student learning outcomes and [find] ways to measure them. And as I go looking for examples elsewhere, I often find that more effort has been done on many campuses to assess the co-curricular programs, often end up in Student Affairs Division instead of Academic Affairs Division. They seem to, and it might be expected, that they could be more responsive to that approach than academics would, which is what we're kind of dragging the faculty kicking and screaming to this learning outcomes and assessment process. (F-M)

### **Results and Interpretations**

At the center of this research was an examination of the collaborative climate on the UC Davis campus with regard to the working relationships between student affairs professionals and academic affair faculty. The researcher worked to evaluate the factors supporting or inhibiting academic affairs and student affairs from working collaboratively to better support students' holistic experiences. Using the Saldana (2009) coding method, five emergent themes were represented by participants both from the academic affairs faculty and from student affairs: a) Academic Success, b) Need for Collaboration and

Relationship Building, c) Silos, d) Lack of Knowledge of the Other Division, and e) Student Experience.

### **Academic Success**

Academic success is clearly an important value for both Academic and Student Affairs Divisions at UC Davis. Both divisions recognize they must address particular student needs to work toward ensuring each student succeeds academically (Komives & Woodard, 1996; Moore et al., 1998). The data gathering in this study showed that the disconnect between the two divisions, contributing to the silo effect, was centered around how academic and student affairs define the term “academic success.” Most student affairs professionals define academic success as the student learning that takes places both inside and outside the classroom to create an all-inclusive student experience. In contrast, most academic affairs faculty members define academic success solely as the learning that takes place within the classroom.

The feelings of the student affairs research participants seems to be in concert with Dr. Astin’s statement, “the greater the student’s involvement in college, the greater will be the amount of student learning and personal development” (Astin, 1985, p. 35). It is important for both divisions to continue to work toward merging academic affairs services with student affairs services to provide more holistic experiences to the students and to improve their overall development, a part of which is academic success by any measure. There can be no doubt students’ success inside the classroom is an important part of students’ overall success; however, academic affairs and student affairs collaborating to support the expanded definition of academic success would be ideal.

To elaborate, academic success is clearly vital to both Academic and Student Affairs Divisions; however, UC Davis needs to redefine the definition of what “academic success” means because both divisions have a different meaning for the term. Academic affairs seems to define academic success as focused on the student achievement within the classroom; however, this definition excludes out-of-the-classroom learning. This philosophy runs counter to a good deal of other research, including Jacobi’s (1991), who argued that supporting student interaction and mentoring with faculty members promotes academic success. A vast body of literature indicates that contact with faculty is linked to academic success (e.g., Astin, 1977; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1977; Tracey & Sedlacek, 1985; Wilson et al., 1975; cf., DeCoster & Brown, 1982). When examining UC Davis’s Two-Year Goals, all academic planning for student success focuses primarily on in-the-classroom learning, whereas little to no mention was made about how the student is succeeding in other areas within the university.

In contrast, the student affairs definition of academic success revolves around the student finding a holistic self, and finding success both inside and outside the classroom. The Division of Student Affairs mission focuses on providing programs, services, and facilities that foster academic success, student development, and campus community. Student affairs focuses on being a partner with the student and their academics. This theory of student support and development is supported by the research of Moore et al. (1998) as well as that of Rhoads and Black (1995), who explained that the role of student affairs practitioners is to work alongside students and other faculty and staff to transform college and university settings.

Despite the two divisions' different conceptions of what "academic success" means, the researcher appreciates that both divisions recognize the importance of academic success, regardless of how each division defines the term. UC Davis prides itself on academic success. The researcher believes a more universal definition of how UC Davis defines "academic success" for the students, colleges, divisions, and the university as a whole, would improve developmental processes for all parties involved, from planning to implementation. Through a common definition of "academic success," students will also have a richer understanding of what it means to belong to a university community that supports a seamless and holistic approach to their education.

### **Need for Collaboration and Relationship Building**

Collaborating and building relationships between the Academic and Student Affairs Divisions is paramount for any university. Strong relationships, open communication and solid collaboration are the keys to providing seamless services to the student body. Guarasci (2001) supported this assertion when he stated that collaboration and relationship building sustain a campus and help transform an institution for the better.

The researcher observed that academic affairs faculty and student affairs professionals both felt collaboration and relationship building is ideal, yet acknowledged that both tasks are currently very difficult to accomplish completely. Despite the challenges in establishing collaboration and productive relationships, the researcher found there have been very successful collaborative programs and partnerships at UC Davis that have enhanced the students' holistic experiences. These include the Residence Hall Advising Team (RHAT) and the First-Year Seminar and Orientation programs. These programs have been and continue to be successful; still, the researcher received the

impression that the programs were successful largely due to the momentum of the Student Affairs Division. The research of many scholars (e.g., Engstrom & Tinto, 2000; Kingston-Mann, 1999; Pike et al., 1997; Tinto, 1987) shows strong correlations between mutually beneficial collaborative programs such as those mentioned above and a positive impact on the holistic students' experiences, academic success, good academic standing, and retention and graduation rates at the higher education institutions in which they were implemented.

In contrast to the several highly successful collaborations at UC Davis, when examining the unsuccessful partnerships on campus, much of the lack of collaboration in certain areas seems to be due to academic affairs faculty's lack of incentive to engage in the out-of-the-classroom teaching or collaboration. The research of Williams and Peters (1994) supported this finding; they researched faculty incentives and found incentive and rewards could become a part of contention with any university. Murray (1992) and Bowen (1985) found that faculty prefer incentives such as release time, travel funds, development funds, or encouragement from senior-level administrators and department heads.

The researcher for this study found that the faculty assumed or expected praise or compensation (either financially or through the leadership hierarchy) for participating in collaborative experiences. Consequently, collaborative barriers began to arise around respect and political structure between academic and student affairs. Chickering and Gamson (1987) provided a list of good practices in undergraduate education that would seem to serve as a foundation for this collaboration. Their findings became the seven

principles for excellence, which include respect, cooperation, active learning, high expectations, and collaboration.

With all such factors taken into account, the researcher perceives the Student Affairs Division has made an ample investment in collaborative partnerships to ensure the holistic success of the student. Further, the researcher concludes that academic affairs has less of an impetus to participate in collaborative partnerships due to the lack of incentive or reward system that impacts individual faculty members who choose to or would like to get involved. Philosophically, the overall incentive and reward could be the student's overall holistic academic, social, and personal development and success; unfortunately, such a reward is likely not enough to overcome the realities of the current climate of higher education (shrinking budgets, increasing workloads, competing calls for faculty's time, etc.).

The researcher concludes that based on the data, the lack of faculty involvement extends from executive leadership within academic affairs. If executive leadership required faculty to engage in out-of-the-classroom learning, then faculty would be required to participate without incentive or reward, just as student affairs is perceived to have been doing for years. Or, if an incentive or reward system is a vital component to the faculty, executive leadership should incorporate collaborative partnerships into the reward system. Regardless, the ultimate incentive and reward should be the UC Davis students' academic holistic success, not monetary or individual employee progression.

### **Silos**

The research conducted as a part of this project supports that structural silos exist within and between both the Academic and Student Affairs Divisions at UC Davis. The

study found that both divisions recognized silos exist, and the employees within the two divisions know they are partially responsible for creating the barriers between the divisions. The data have shown the silos have caused a disconnect in the student experience, which directly impacts the UC Davis student. This finding supports Walker and Black's (2000) theory stating, "organizations with their hierarchical values and functional silos are not able to respond to a marketplace that demands flexibility and customer responsiveness" (p. 195).

Although most participants recognized that functional silos exist on the UC Davis campus, the data showed that in the participants' perceptions, few individuals are taking action to deconstruct the existing silos. The researcher observed the silos and the related barriers impact holistic students' experiences, since educational services are not as seamless to students as they could ideally be.

As a result, the researcher recommends an increase in collaboration in order to work toward deconstructing the institutional silos. Nelson et al. (2006) provided research supporting this theory: "Moving towards this holistic collaborative environment requires systematizing transition philosophy within the elements of strategic infrastructure and practical activities across all traditional silos between faculties and divisions" (p. 3). To begin this increase in collaboration and start the process of deconstruction, there should be direction provided from the upper administration of both divisions. The silos seem to have continued in their vertical hierarchical structure largely because of the leadership's lack of cross collaboration. The data summarized in this report shows there have historically been (and continue to be) some very important collaborations on campus that could lay a foundation for deconstructing the silos, beginning especially during the 2010-



2011 academic year with the creation of the UC Davis Shared Service Center and the Organizational Excellence Initiative. Kleemann (2005) showed, in “Weaving Silos—A Leadership Challenge: A Cross-functional Team Approach to Supporting Web-based Student Services,” how services are clustered according to their actual use by students rather than by organizational unit, and made suggestions regarding how silos ideally should be deconstructed. The weaving silos model provides a more holistic experience for the students.

Acknowledging and recognizing silos on the campus is the first step for the university to make; however, the problem truly lies in the fact that there has been very little action to address and deconstruct the silos. Again, and according to Kleemann (2005) as well, to deconstruct the silos, there needs to be direction coming down to individual units from the upper administration. The researcher believes division leadership needs to encourage their employees to participate in cross collaborative classes, programs, and experiences. The silos, both real and imaginative, will lessen as collaboration increases.

### **Lack of Knowledge of the Other Division**

Due to the functional silo structures, Student Affairs and Academic Affairs Divisions work primarily within their own silo, and not across to others. As a result, there is a breakdown in knowledge in both divisions about the other division. The data presented in this paper show that both Student Affairs and Academic Affairs Divisions have limited knowledge about what the other division is doing to support the overall mission of the university and student academic success. The miscommunication between

Academic and Student Affairs Divisions is so great, the researcher perceived a palpable resentment and lack of respect toward the other division from interviewees.

The data show that both academic and student affairs are aware a gap in knowledge and understanding of the other division exists. The lack of knowledge of the other division was so evident that student affairs professionals and executives asserted they needed to start speaking the language of the faculty to try to close the gap. The student affairs professionals believe they need to start speaking as if they are researchers to meet the faculty where they are: “to understand the faculty and academic culture [student affairs professionals] need to speak [the faculty’s] language” (SA-P).

The Academic Affairs Division also noted a disconnect and gap within their division concerning the faculty’s knowledge and understanding of student affairs. They stated there was a knowledge gap due to the lack of collaboration; however, the researcher discovered that the faculty members for the most part did not participate in collaboration due to pressures from upper administration. The faculty spoke in great length about how their primary focus was to research, teach, become accustomed to the UC Davis academic culture, and eventually achieve tenure. Many researchers’ work on academic tenure, including Murray’s (1992) Bowen’s (1985) Williams and Peters’s (1994) and DeGeorge’s (2003) helps explain why academic affairs may not collaborate as much as they could or as would perhaps ideally suit the university community, as well as provides context for the process a full-time faculty member must undertake to be awarded tenure.

As a result of the contrasting views from academic and student affairs, the researcher believes there needs to be an increase in sharing of information and knowledge

about the purposes, services, and cultures of the two divisions between the two divisions. The researcher understands the student affairs professionals' viewpoints and feeling they needed to speak more academically to be understood by the faculty. Though this likely would be a positive step toward collaboration, the faculty also needs to improve their understanding of the Student Affairs Division. Researchers Evans, Forney, and Guido-DiBrito (1998), Swartz et al. (2007), and Kuh et al. (1994) explain the role of using everyday language to help create a common acceptance between both divisions while educating the whole student, rather than one group simply changing and adapting to the other. Essentially, they argued the process must be a give-and-take, not a one-sided effort. The effort to communicate must itself be collaborative.

Throughout this research, the data show participants both from academic and student affairs believe the Student Affairs Division has reached out to the faculty to create a collaborative partnership, while also sharing knowledge and information about the philosophy of and services offered by student affairs. Concurrently, both academic and student affairs have also made it clear Academic affairs has not put forth much effort toward the collaborative process. It is commendable that both sides are able to make an honest assessment of their collaborative processes; however, there needs to be more of a momentum from academic affairs to share information and knowledge with student affairs.

### **Students' Holistic Experiences**

A student's holistic experience is one of the most important aspects for educators in both academic and student affairs to keep in mind as they both strategically plan and embark on day-to-day activities. However, most employees are likely unfamiliar with the

term “student experience.” UC Davis does not have a universal definition of “student experience,” let alone “student holistic experience.” Most employees who work within higher education want to create, enhance, and exceed the student experience, despite having to deal with the politics, silos, and potential shortcomings of collaborative partnerships. This research paper shows UC Davis has a public, strategic written commitment to the student experience with the Office of Student Development, Student Affairs Division, and the Academic Affairs Division. The data also demonstrate that the focus on the student experience can be found in daily practice on campus. Evans et al. (2010) supported this theory when they discussed the “ethic of care” for student affairs professionals who embed their personal value system into their work and translate it into daily professional practice. It is clear some professionals at UC Davis approach their daily work in the manner Evans et al. described.

The research establishes that both Academic and Student Affairs Divisions attempt to go “above and beyond,” or to make additional efforts beyond, the everyday routine to enhance the holistic student experience; however, each division takes a different approach. The Student Affairs Division seems to tackle the student experience directly by working with students directly. In contrast, the Academic Affairs Division appears to approach this issue from an indirect stance by addressing “behind the scenes” items such as accreditation, academic programs, and defining student learning outcomes for the colleges’ curricula. The university as a whole needs to collaborate to arrive at a singular definition of the “student experience,” or the “student holistic experience.”

Given the results of the research in this project in light of the review of literature, the researcher believes the student experience should be the primary focus of all

employees at UC Davis. Most of the student affairs professionals make a valiant effort to focus on the student experience, but there is always room for improvement. For example, the Student Affairs Division could look at each of its learning outcomes, programs, activities, and educational opportunities and assess how it will impact individual students' experiences and development. The Student Affairs Division could also be more intentional with in-the-classroom student experiences, such as having students set their own personal development goals and take responsibility for their own learning; strive for excellence in their studies; be prepared to learn and be intellectually challenged; and seek to achieve high academic expectations in all their courses. Chickering and Gamson (1987) support a similar assertion with their seven principles for excellence that encourage cooperation, active learning, and respect diverse talents and ways of learning.

As for the Academic Affairs Division, the researcher believes the division could similarly more intentionally promote a holistic student experience. Though most faculty members within academic affairs provide academic programs and define the student learning outcomes, student affairs does as well; but student affairs provides a great deal of out-of-class learning opportunities and academic affairs provides few. Thus, nearly all co-curricular activities take place through student affairs. The pendulum needs to swing back toward the center where there are a great number of co-curricular activities available to students through both divisions and through collaboration. The researcher would like academic affairs to step outside the classroom to help provide a well-rounded student experience. Moore et al. (1998) also expressed a need for more student involvement and

a call for student affairs professionals to demonstrate their effectiveness in influencing student development and student learning.

### **Theme Crossover**

Several patterns emerged from the data crossing all five of the themes: Academic Success, Need for Collaboration and Relationship Building, Silos, Lack of Knowledge of the Other Division, and Student Experience. The two most common themes that arose throughout this research project were the needs for increased communication and for increased collaboration. The researcher found that each of the disconnects within the subcategories could likely be ultimately resolved through enhanced and intentional communication between Academic and Student Affairs Divisions, or in any case, better communication as a necessary first step. Such communication is a key component of the research from Chickering and Gamson (1987), Evans et al. (1998), and Swartz et al. (2007). By increasing the communication between the two divisions, collaboration would also likely naturally increase as well, mainly due to the fact that both divisions recognize they are doing the same work, supporting the students' development and success. As a result of the increase in communication and collaboration between academic and student affairs, the student experience would improve accordingly.

### **Summary**

Academic Success is clearly an important value for both academic and student affairs at UC Davis. A disconnect exists around how academic and student affairs define the term academic success. The results of the study indicate that academic success is important to both Academic and Student Affairs Divisions; however, UC Davis needs to

redefine what academic success means. Academic affairs defines academic success as the focus of what the student achieves within the classroom.

The need for collaboration and relationship building between academic and student affairs is vital for any university. Both academic and student affairs established that the idea of collaboration and relationship building was ideal, yet it was very difficult to accomplish completely. Consequently, collaborative barriers began to arise from the issues of a lack of mutual respect and the political structure between academic and student affairs. The researcher perceives from the data that Student Affairs Division has made an ample investment in collaborative partnerships to ensure the holistic success of the student. In contrast, the data indicate that academic affairs faculty has less of a drive to participate with collaborative partnerships because there is a lack of incentive or reward system.

Structural silos exist within both academic and student affairs divisions at UC Davis. Both divisions recognize silos exist and the employees within the two divisions know the institutional silos create barriers toward successful collaboration and serving students. The silos have created severe barriers between the two divisions, causing a major disconnect and ultimately impacting the UC Davis student. As a result, the researcher suggests an increase in collaboration to begin deconstructing the silos.

Due to the functional silo structures, Student Affairs and Academic Affairs Divisions work primarily within their own units and not across units. The researcher found that both Student Affairs and Academic Affairs Divisions have limited knowledge about what the other division is doing to support the overall mission of the university. Both academic and student affairs are aware that the gap in knowledge and understanding

of the other division exists. Both divisions have made it clear the Student Affairs Division has really reached out to the faculty to create a collaborative partnership while also sharing knowledge and information. Academic affairs needs to put in more effort toward the collaborative process.

The student experience is probably the most important aspect of educators' work within both academic and student affairs. UC Davis has made a public, written commitment to the student experience via the Office of Student Development, the Student Affairs Division, and the Academic Affairs Division. Although the division is already doing a good job of promoting a holistic student experience, the Student Affairs Division could be more intentional with in-the-classroom student experiences. In general, the Academic Affairs Division needs to be more intentional toward providing a holistic student experience. The researcher believes academic affairs needs to "step outside the classroom" and make more of an effort to provide a well-rounded student experience. The researcher also believes UC Davis needs to define what "student experience" means for their campus such that all the major stakeholders on campus can agree.



## Chapter 5: Conclusions and Recommendations

### **Introduction**

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to explore and identify the factors supporting or inhibiting academic affairs faculty and student affairs professionals from working collaboratively to better support holistic students' experiences. The conclusions drawn from this study follow the research questions and the findings, therefore addressing a) the interaction between the silos of academic affairs and student affairs divisions, b) the factors that work toward inhibiting academic affairs faculty and student affairs professionals collaborations, c) the factors that work toward supporting academic affairs faculty and student affairs professionals' work collaborations, and d) the elements of collaboration between Academic and Student Affairs Divisions benefitting student development. The following is a discussion of the conclusions drawn from this research and its findings. The conclusions section is followed by the researcher's recommendations.

### **Conclusions**

Within a traditional organizational structure in higher education, academic and student affairs divisions may be collaborating less, and the lack of such collaboration is impacting the holistic students' experiences. Students' academic and personal development depend not only on the quality of the curriculum and classroom instruction, but also on another major educational divisions within a college: student development services and departments commonly collected under the umbrella of student affairs. This study sought to identify the factors supporting or inhibiting collaborative partnerships to

better support holistic students' experiences. To address the objectives of this study, the following questions guided the research:

1. How do higher education professionals describe the interaction between the silos of academic affairs and student affairs divisions?
2. From inhibiting to supporting, what is the spectrum of factors that impact how academic affairs faculty and student affairs professionals work collaboratively?
3. What are the elements of collaboration between the academic and student affairs divisions that would benefit student development?

The following are the answers to these research questions:

1. How do higher education professionals describe the interaction between the silos of academic affairs and student affairs divisions?

Higher education professionals describe the interaction between the silos of Academic and Student Affairs Divisions as limited. Simply stated, silos exist and are responsible for the breakdown in collaboration between the two divisions. Due to the functional silo structures, Student Affairs and Academic Affairs Divisions work primarily within their own units, resulting in minimal collaboration. However, this study found that both divisions recognize the existence of silos and that they created them. Most of the UC Davis employees work within their respected division, resulting in partial responsibility for creating barriers.

Surprisingly, even though most participants were aware and recognized that silos exist on the UC Davis campus, the researcher found they were not taking action or planning to take action to deconstruct the silos. One of the primary reasons most participants were not acting toward the deconstruction of the existing silos was time.

With the current state of the economy and the lack of focus on education by the government, higher educational institutions are being negatively impacted. On most campuses, UC Davis included, employees are repeatedly asked to “do more with less.” Academic affairs is focused on the curriculum, in-class teaching, publishing in professional journals, and achieving tenure. In contrast, student affairs is concerned with developing and maintaining the student experience, offering student advising, and collaborating with faculty when possible. As a result, there is little or no time to try to reach across silos to work together more; hence, both academic and student affairs tend to operate in a more parallel way with each other and less collaboratively.

It should be noted there was a strong sense of increased collaboration and communication between the two divisions reported by the professionals who participated in this study. There has been some positive movement forward, as the university upper administration has relatively recently created collaborative services that work to streamline the services to students, such as the UC Davis Shared Service Center and the Organizational Excellence Initiative. Creating collaborative partnerships such as these is the first step toward breaking down the barriers and silos that exist on campus.

Overall, the researcher observed barriers related to silos impacting students’ holistic experience, mainly because educational services to the student are not as seamless as they could be. UC Davis should increase the interaction between the silos of academic affairs and student affairs divisions to better support the students. To initiate this increase in collaboration, an impetus should stem from the top leadership of each division to promote collaborative classes, programming, workshops, and brainstorming

sessions. Ultimately, the “weaving silos” approach would break down the barriers and provide more of a holistic experience for the students.

2. From inhibiting to supporting, what is the spectrum of factors that impact how academic affairs faculty and student affairs professionals work collaboratively?

The spectrum of factors impacting the collaborative work of academic affairs faculty and student affairs professionals is diverse. On one side of the spectrum, there are positive factors including: I) two-way intentional and collaborative communication between both divisions, II) the goal of developing and mentoring students, and finally, III) a common definition of student academic success.

- I. Two-way intentional and collaborative communication between both divisions: Collaboration and relationship building between the Academic and Student Affairs Divisions is important for any higher education institution. To create positive collaborative relationships, the university needs strong relationships with open communication and solid collaboration. Through such collaboration and communication, a university can better work toward providing seamless services to the student body. The researcher observed that both UC Davis academic affairs faculty and student affairs professionals established that collaboration and relationship building was ideal behavior for both divisions; however, a high level of communication and collaboration is extremely difficult to accomplish completely, largely due to lack of leadership, time, and direction.

Despite the challenges in establishing collaborations and relationships, the researcher discovered there have been successful collaborative programs and

partnerships at UC Davis that have enhanced the holistic students' experiences, such as Residence Hall Advising Team (RHAT), and First-Year Seminar and Orientation. These programs continue to be successful due to two-way intentional and collaborative communication between involved divisions. Effort, planning, and time was strategically invested into the success of these programs creating positive two-way intentional and collaborative communication between both divisions.

II. Goal of developing and mentoring students:

Both Academic and Student Affairs Divisions have committed to public statements describing their division's mission, goals, and values for each one of their individual departments. Both divisions have a critical focus on the student experience and academic success. In their own ways, the divisions each provide student success programs, as well as services and facilities that foster academic success, student development, and campus community. The goals of developing and mentoring the student body are deliberate, planned, and calculated into the daily practices of a student's everyday life at UC Davis.

III. A common definition of student academic success:

Academic success is vital to both Academic and Student Affairs Divisions; however, UC Davis should work toward a common definition of "academic success." Currently, both major divisions seem to have a different meaning for the term. According to the research project, academic affairs defines academic success as the focus of student achievement within the classroom; they do not include out-of-the-classroom learning. In contrast, student affairs defines

academic success as advancing the University's mission by providing programs, services, and facilities that foster academic success, student development and campus community. The two definitions should ideally be combined toward a more inclusive definition of academic success.

Despite that the two divisions' differing definitions of what "academic success" means, the researcher appreciates that both divisions prioritize their version of academic success.

On the other side of the spectrum, there are factors inhibiting collaboration including: (I) structural silos; (II) lack of communication; (III) lack of incentive; (IV) lack of leadership; and (V) holistic support for students both in-and-out-of-the-classroom:

I. Structural silos:

The research shows structural silos exist within both the Academic and Student Affairs Divisions at UC Davis. Both divisions recognize the silos exist and the employees within the two divisions know they are partially responsible for creating barriers. The silos create severe barriers between the two divisions, thus preventing collaboration and unfortunately impacting the holistic students' experiences, since the educational services operating within those silos are not as seamless to the student as they could be.

II. Lack of communication:

The key to providing a holistic student experience is consistent and frequent communication between the divisions. At times, participants from both divisions admit retreating to their own silos and do not create opportunities to connect as much as they ideally should. The barriers involved in the silo structure are so

great there is a considerable lack of communication between the divisions (or, one could argue, that the communication lack between the divisions has created the barriers and silos—it is something of a vicious circle). One of the major themes of the data was a lack of knowledge around the philosophy and purpose of each division and the services both divisions provide; many in each division are unaware that both divisions provide similar services to the students.

Communication should increase between the two divisions to benefit students and streamline services within the university.

### III. Incentive:

When examining the unsuccessful partnerships at UC Davis, one reason for unsuccessful partnerships seems to be that academic affairs faculty lack incentive to engage in out-of-the-classroom teaching or collaboration with students or with programs organized by another division that reach students, such as student affairs. Incentives became a large point of contention for participants in this research. The researcher found that most faculty requested or expected praise or compensation (either financially or through the leadership hierarchy) when involved with extra work (i.e., out-of-the-classroom teaching or collaboration). Consequently, collaborative barriers began to arise around issues of respect and regarding the political structure between academic and student affairs. There is a general perception that academic affairs faculty have little drive to participate in collaborative partnerships because there is a lack of an individual incentive or reward system. The researcher interprets this lack of incentive and the resulting lack of involvement as due to the executive leadership within academic affairs. If

executive leadership required faculty to engage in out-of-the-classroom learning, then faculty would be required to participate without incentive or reward, just as student affairs was perceived to be doing for years. Or, if an incentive or reward system is a vital component to the faculty, executive leadership should incorporate participation in collaborative partnerships into the incentive and reward system. Regardless, the ultimate incentive and reward should be UC Davis students' academic holistic success, not monetary or individual employee incentives.

IV. Leadership:

Both Academic and Student Affairs Division leaders need to ensure they are fulfilling the mission, goals, and values of their division, while always putting the student first. The leadership within both divisions holds an enormous amount of power and control over collaboration between academic faculty and student affairs professionals, as well as the deconstruction of the silos. Leadership could be more of a guiding force in the promotion of sustainable collaborative programs and partnerships that would benefit the student overall. However, for the leadership to pave the way for their divisions to collaborate, the leaders themselves need to collaborate, communicate, and engage each other.

V. Holistic support for students both in-and-out-of-the-classroom:

The ultimate goal is to provide holistic support for students both in- and out-of-the-classroom. In an ideal world, both academic and student affairs should be aware of all collaborative resources and experiences available to provide the students a seamless and holistic approach to the education; yet the barriers prevent



this from happening. The university's mission is to provide and support the students both in and out of the classroom; thus, the researcher believes the two biggest divisions on campus, academic and student affairs, need to start moving in that direction, collaboration is key.

3. What are the elements of collaboration between academic and student affairs divisions that would benefit student development?

A few elements of collaboration between academic and student affairs divisions would benefit student development. First and foremost, holistic students' experiences must be the priority for both academic and student affairs divisions. For students to have a holistic experience, students should be the primary focus of all the employees at UC Davis. Each learning outcome, program, class, activity, and educational opportunity provided by both Academic and Student Affairs Divisions must be assessed for how it will impact the individual student's experience and development.

Secondly, both divisions need to approach student development in a holistic way by creating an all-inclusive student experience. Student success should include academic and personal growth as well as psychological, emotional, and social development both in- and out-of-the-classroom. Both Academic and Student Affairs Divisions must attempt to go "above and beyond" to enhance such a holistic student experience. Finally, the student should be exposed to education both in- and-outside-the-classroom, and be exposed to a myriad of academic, transition, leadership, and citizenship support services.

### **Recommendations**

The researcher offers eight recommendations based on the findings, analysis, and conclusions of this study:

1. Increase collaboration between Academic and Student Affairs Divisions;
2. Deconstruct preexisting silos;
3. Define “academic success” for UC Davis;
4. Increase sharing of information and knowledge between Academic and Student Affairs;
5. Focus on the student experience;
6. Increase involvement of division leaders;
7. Define “holistic student experience” for UC Davis, and
8. Future research.

### **1. Increase collaboration between Academic and Student Affairs Divisions**

Collaboration between Academic and Student Affairs Divisions at UC Davis is vital. Currently, there is some level of collaboration occurring between the two divisions, but the researcher’s recommendation is to increase this partnership. This recommendation comes from many research participants who stated that such a collaborative environment would serve the UC Davis undergraduate population much better. There need to be strong relationships, open communication, and solid collaboration to provide seamless services to the student body. Increasing collaboration is critical between Academic and Student Affairs Divisions through meetings, programs, educational opportunities, seminars, workshops, and conversations. Increased collaboration between the Academic and Student Affairs Divisions will pave the way for the deconstruction of preexisting silos.

## **2. Deconstruct the Preexisting Silos**

With an increase in collaboration, a related effort toward deconstructing preexisting silos in the two divisions is required. By moving toward a holistic collaborative environment, the silo walls need to come down, which will result in positive collaborative partnerships impacting the holistic students' experiences for the better. Furthermore, to deconstruct the silos, there needs to be direction coming from the upper administration. The silos have continued to be present largely due to the lack of upper administration cross-collaborating themselves. Though the university has made progressive steps to increase collaboration and deconstruct silos, especially as noted during the 2010-2011 academic year with the creation of the UC Davis Shared Service Center and the Organizational Excellence Initiative, there is more that could be done. The silos, both real and imagined, will lessen as collaboration increases.

## **3. Define "Academic Success" for UC Davis**

The researcher found through this research that not one participant defined the term "Academic Success" the same way. That is likely part of the problem and the disconnect between the two divisions and could be a problem for an institution that prides itself on academic success. Both Academic and Student Affairs Divisions have a different definition for what academic success means; furthermore, employees within the same division/department defined academic success differently. There is no consensus on the campus regarding this definition. A more universal definition of how UC Davis defines "academic success" for the students, divisions, and the university as a whole would help strategic planning processes for all parties involved. By understanding how

their institution defines this term, students will have a richer understanding of a seamless and holistic approach to their education.

#### **4. Increase sharing of information and knowledge between the Academic and Student Affairs Divisions**

There is a clear need to increase the sharing of information and knowledge between the Academic and Student Affairs Divisions about the philosophy of each division and the services it provides to students. Student affairs professionals believe they need to speak more “academically” in order to be understood by the faculty; in other words, they need to learn and speak the language of the faculty. Though the researcher believes this would be a good step toward collaboration, the faculty also need to step up and begin understanding student affairs. Throughout this research, both academic and student affairs have made it clear the Student Affairs Division has been the primary division to reach out to the faculty to create collaborative partnerships while also sharing knowledge and information. At the same time, both academic and student affairs have also made it clear academic affairs has not put in much effort toward the collaborative process and sharing information. It is encouraging that both sides are aware of the issue; however, there needs to be more momentum from academic affairs to share information and knowledge.

#### **5. Focus on the student experience**

Student experience should be the primary focus of the employees at UC Davis. Most of UC Davis student affairs professionals make it a priority to focus on the student experience; however, improvements can always be made. For example, the Student Affairs Division could examine in more depth each of their learning outcomes, programs,

activities, and educational opportunities while thinking about how it will impact the individual student experience and development. The Student Affairs Division could also be more intentional with in-the-classroom student experiences.

The Academic Affairs Division could be more intentional in providing a student experience from the faculty side. Most academic affairs faculty members provide academic programs and define student learning outcomes; however, the researcher recommends academic affairs faculty step out of the classroom and work to provide a well-rounded co-curricular student experience as well. This could include increasing collaborative experiences with student affairs or simply being more aware of the student's out-of-the-classroom life and incorporate that, along with other university resources, into the classroom experience.

## **6. Increase involvement by division leaders**

If the student experience is to be the primary focus of the employees at UC Davis, then it must be a priority explicitly stated by and enacted from leadership at the top of each division. The research data show the Student Affairs Division is greatly invested in collaborative partnerships to ensure the success of the student. However, the data also showed academic affairs has less of a drive to establish collaborative partnerships because there is no incentive or reward system for the faculty to be involved. This lack of involvement is due to the top-level leadership. For example, if upper administration required faculty to engage in out-of-the-classroom learning, faculty would be required to participate without incentive or reward, just as student affairs has been doing for years. The incentive and reward should be the students' holistic success, not monetary or individual employee success. Yet if the faculty requires monetary compensation, then the

leadership at the top need to examine the values around making the student experiences a priority and provide the incentive. This could open a Pandora's Box, however, as student affairs professionals may also request an incentive, and in a time of budgetary restraints, monetary incentives may be impossible to provide.

### **7. Define" student holistic experience" for UC Davis**

In conducting the research, the researcher was unable to find a unified definition of "student experience" or "student holistic experience." Participants provided their own definition of the term "student experience," and each individual's perception varied from the others, though with some overlap. This can be a problem for an institution striving to provide a well-rounded student experience, or it could work to contribute to or compound the existing overarching problem of the siloed nature of the two divisions. The researcher believes a more universal definition of how UC Davis defines "student experience" will be productive for the students, divisions, and the university as a whole. Just as with defining "academic success," by defining this term, students will have a richer understanding of a seamless and holistic approach to their education.

### **8. Future Research**

The researcher recommends further studies on this topic to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the factors supporting or inhibiting academic affairs faculty and student affairs professionals from working collaboratively to better support holistic students' experiences. The researcher strongly believes the following should be considered:

1. Replicate this study from a student perspective to gain a better understanding from the "customer" or "client" view. By doing this, a researcher could gain

the student perspective of the factors supporting or inhibiting academic affairs faculty and student affairs professionals from working collaboratively to better support their holistic experience.

2. Based on the limitations of this study and to correct the researcher's bias, the study should be replicated with a larger interview sample at UC Davis to assess the extent to which the same or similar findings would be uncovered.
3. The study should be replicated at the University of California (UC) System-wide level to assess the extent to which the same or similar findings would be uncovered.
4. The study should be replicated at a California State University (CSU) System-wide level to assess the extent to which the same or similar findings would be uncovered.
5. The study should be replicated at a California Community College System-wide level to assess the extent to which the same or similar findings would be uncovered.
6. Conduct a comparative study from University of California (UC) System-wide view, the California State University (CSU) System-wide view, and the California Community College System-wide view to assess the extent to which the same or similar findings would be uncovered between each system.

### **Summary**

There are many factors supporting and inhibiting academic affairs and student affairs from working collaboratively to better support holistic students' experiences. It is evident silos exist between academic and student affairs at UC Davis. As a result of

these prevailing silos, there has been a disconnect in communication, available resources, student support, and collaboration between the two divisions. Though there have been a few minor silos deconstructed within the university, many still exist and are ingrained in the culture.

Increased collaboration and sharing of information between Academic and Student Affairs Divisions will assist in the deconstruction of preexisting silos; however, the leadership needs to be more forward thinking in collaborative partnerships. The Academic and Student Affairs Divisions leadership needs to be sure they are fulfilling the mission, goals, and values of their division, while always putting the student first. To accomplish this, the leadership must focus on the mission of the university by reaching across silos and focusing on holistic collaborative partnerships for the holistic students' experiences.

Every day across the United States, hundreds of thousands of academic affairs faculty members and student affairs professionals work diligently for their students. At UC Davis, many go "above and beyond." In spite of their efforts, barriers impact collaboration between the two largest divisions on campus. It is important they work to overcome these barriers and work collaboratively, because ultimately, the most important thing is students and, more specifically, those divisions' impact on the students' holistic educational experiences. Because students are unique and student populations and demographics are ever changing, academic and student affairs divisions must be flexible. Because the students have high expectations, academic and student affairs divisions must excel. Because of the students, academic and student affairs divisions exist.



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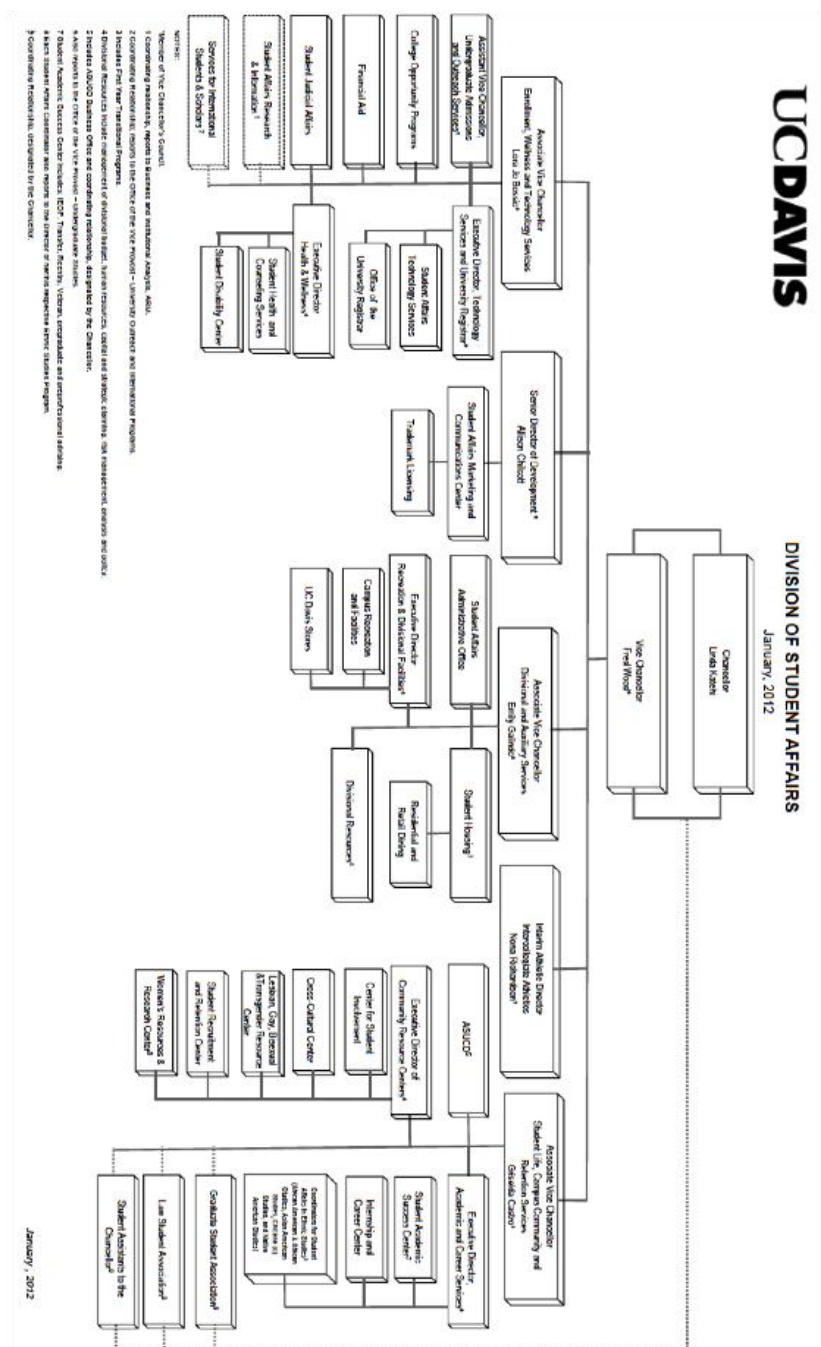
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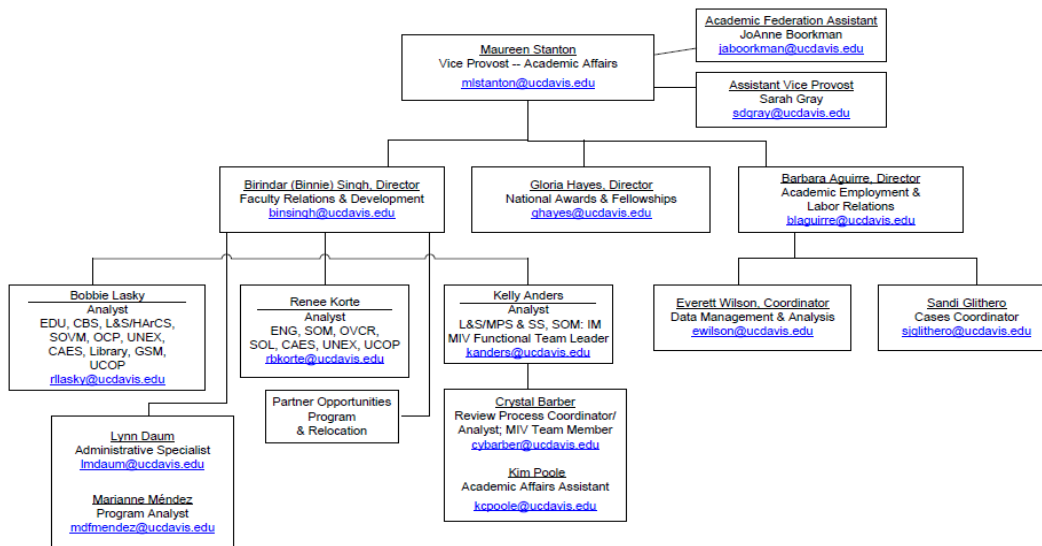
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## Appendix A: Affairs Divisions Organizational Charts

### UC Davis Division of Student Affairs Organizational Chart



## UC Davis Division of Academic Affairs Organizational Chart



## Appendix B: Invitation Letter

Date

Dear \_\_\_\_\_:

My name is Josh O'Connor; I am a doctoral candidate in the Educational Leadership and Management program at Drexel University, Center for Graduate Studies, Cohort #2. I am conducting a study that is in partial fulfillment of the requirements for a Doctorate in Education.

This letter invites you to participate in a phenomenological research study examining the collaborative partnership between academic and student affairs at the University of California, Davis.

The purpose of this qualitative study is to identify the factors that support or inhibit academic affairs faculty and student affairs professionals from working collaboratively to better support Students' Holistic Experience at the University of California, Davis, a four year higher educational institution.

Based upon historical writings, peer reviewed journals and research, it seems as if a disconnect does exist between academic affairs and student affairs divisions. Academic affairs and student affairs divisions have been working independently of each other for decades now, resulting in a complicated process for the students to gather information and resources. It is my intention to explore and further examine the similarities and differences among academic and student affairs services, their structural barriers and the impact it has on students' holistic needs. The focus and site of this research study at the University of California Davis, in Davis California.

Your participation in this research study is strictly voluntary. Participants in this study should be full time staff or tenured faculty. Should you consent to participate, you will engage in a semi-structured interview. The duration of the interview will last up to an hour and will take place either on site at The University of California Davis or electronically via Skype. The open-ended questions that will be asked during the interview session are those questions that will allow me as the researcher to comprehend your thinking, your worldviews, and your assumptions as well as perceptions towards collaboration between academic and student affairs.

During the interview, an electronic device will be used to capture and record your unique stories. I will also be taking notes capturing your responses to the questions asked. Your volunteering in this interview will be your consent to participate in the study. You may opt out of this study at any time. If you have any concerns or questions about this study please feel free to ask at any time. The recording of your conversation will be handled with the utmost discretion. Your privacy is very important to me; all conversations will be kept in strict confidence. Data recorded on the electronic device will be secured during the research. After the research, the electronic data will be destroyed.

I thank you in advance for your participation in this research. Should you be willing to participate in this research project, please contact me at your earliest convenience. I thank you again for your voluntary time in assisting me in this qualitative research study.

Sincerely

Josh O'Connor



## Appendix C: Consent to Take Part in a Research Study

1. **Subject name** \_\_\_\_\_
2. **Title of Research:** Factors that Support or Inhibit Academic Affairs and Student Affairs from Working Collaboratively to Better Support Students' Holistic Experience: A Phenomenological Study
3. **Primary Investigator:** W. Edward Bureau, PhD  
**Co-Investigator's Name:** Joshua S O'Connor
4. **Research Entity:** This research is being done by Drexel University
5. **Consenting for the Research Study:**  
This is a long and an important document. If you sign it, you will be authorizing Drexel University and its researchers to perform research studies on you. You should take your time and carefully read it. You can also take a copy of this consent form to discuss it with your family member, physician, attorney or anyone else you would like before you sign it. Do not sign it unless you are comfortable in participating in this study.
6. **Purpose of Research**  
The purpose of this qualitative study is to identify the factors that support or inhibit academic affairs faculty and student affairs professionals from working collaboratively to better support Students' Holistic Experience at the University of California, Davis.  
Based upon historical writings, peer reviewed journals and research, it seems as if a disconnect does exist between academic affairs and student affairs divisions. Academic affairs and student affairs divisions have been working independently of each other for decades now, resulting in a complicated process for the students to gather information and resources. It is my intention to explore and further examine the similarities and differences among academic and student affairs services, their structural barriers and the impact it has on students' holistic needs. The focus and site of this research study at the University of California Davis, in Davis California.
7. **Procedures and Duration**  
You are asked to participate in an interview that seeks your descriptions of your perceptions of the collaboration between academic and student affairs at the University of California, Davis. The interview will last approximately one hour. Protocols will use a combination of focused and semi-focused questions, the former to draw out responses to known program features and the latter to open up possibilities for your interpretation and expressions of experiences with the program. Interviews will be captured digitally as audio or video files.  
During your interview I will be taking anecdotal notes to capture details of the interview experience environment and your responses to the questions. Notes will be

taken on the left side of a “T” chart page so that subsequent reflections can be noted on the right side of the page.

**8. Risks and Discomfort/Constraints**

Risks for a protocol of this nature are minimal; however, should you feel at any point reservations, you should contact the researcher immediately. What you choose to share with the researcher during the survey, interview, or observation phases are entirely at your discretion. The researcher has in place and can describe to you means for protecting your identity and shared data.

**9. Unforeseen Risks**

Participation in this study may involve unforeseen risks. If an unforeseen risk should occur, they will be reported to the Office of Regulatory Research Compliance.

**10. Benefits**

There are no foreseen direct benefits to you from participating in the interview. However, your voluntary participation has the potential to benefit the student development experience at the University of California Davis and the Divisions of Student and Academic Affairs.

**11. Listening closely to and analyzing how you and your fellow colleagues describe your experiences sheds light on collaboration as a phenomenon. Understanding it through hearing your voices and experiences enriches the lives of those who have been, are, and will be employed in either division of student or academic affairs. Descriptions of it as a phenomenon, for utilitarian purposes, become powerful resources for the promotion of effective change to benefit the Students’ Holistic Experience.**

**12. Alternative Procedures**

This is not a treatment study. The alternative is not to participate in this study.

**13. Reasons for Removal from Study**

You may be required to stop the study before the end for any of the following reasons:

- If all or part of the study is discontinued for any reason by the sponsor, investigator, university authorities, or government agencies; or
- Other reasons, including new information available to the investigator or harmful unforeseen reactions experienced by the subject or other subjects in this study.

**14. Voluntary Participation**

Participation in this study is voluntary. You may refuse to be in the study or you may stop at any time during the study without the loss of the care benefits to which you are entitled. However, you will be expected to follow the instructions provided by the research staff in order to ensure your safety and privacy at the level you wish.

**15. Responsibility of Cost**

There is no cost to you for participating in this study.

**16. Confidentiality and Privacy**

Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can be identified with you will remain confidential. Your name will not be associated with the research findings in any way and only the researcher will know your identity. The

researcher will store all digital data in password protected electronic files accessible to only the researcher. Any hard-copy materials with identifying information will be stored in a locked fireproof safe. Once the study is complete, all transcripts and recordings will be destroyed. The anticipated end of the program is July 2013. As per Drexel university guidelines, a copy of this informed consent form will be kept with the PI for three years following the completion of the study.

#### **17. New Information**

If new information becomes known that will affect you or might change your decision to be in this study the investigator will inform you.

#### **18. Questions**

If you have any questions about this study or your participation in this study, contact:

- W. Edward Bureau, PhD, Principal Investigator, at [REDACTED].
- Josh O'Connor, Co- Principal Investigator, at [REDACTED].
- Office of Regulatory Research Compliance at 215-255-7857.

Do not sign this consent form unless you have had a chance to ask questions and have received satisfactory answers to all of your questions. If you agree to participate in this study, you will receive a signed and dated copy of this consent form for your records.

#### **19. Other Considerations**

If you wish further information regarding your rights as a research subject or if you have problems with a research-related injury, for medical problems please contact the Institution's Office of Regulatory Research Compliance by telephoning 215-255-7857.

#### **20. Consent**

- I have been informed of the reasons for this study.
- I have had the study explained to me.
- I have had all of my questions answered.
- I have carefully read this consent form, have initialed each page, and have received a signed copy.
- I give consent voluntarily.

I freely consent to participate in this research study.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Subject

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

#### **List of Individuals Authorized to Obtain Consent**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Day Phone #</b>	<b>24 Hr Phone #</b>
W. Edward Bureau	Principal Investigator	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]
Joshua O'Connor	Co- Principal Investigator	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]

**ONLY THOSE INDIVIDUALS NAMED ABOVE MAY CONDUCT THE CONSENT PROCESS AND SIGN THE CONSENT FORM.**

### Appendix D: Interview Questions

Interview Protocol: Please provide your personal thoughts and opinions on collaboration between Academic Affairs and Student Affairs at the University of California, Davis.

**Time of Interview:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Location of Interview:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Interviewer:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Interviewee:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Position of Interviewee:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Consent form on file: YES / NO**

**Questions:**

**Short Questions:**

Before we begin, I'd like to get some background information about your experiences

1. Which department on campus do you report too?
  - Academic Affairs
  - Student Affairs
  
2. How many years of experience do you have in the academic affairs/student affairs? (this should only include your professional years)

**Long Questions:**

Before I continue with the other questions, I first would like to give you context for the term Collaboration. Collaboration defined as “a process in which a group of autonomous stakeholders [academic and student affairs] of an issue domain engage in an interactive process, using shared rules, norms, and structures to act or decide on issues related to that domain” (Wood and Gray, 1991 p. 437).

3. Based upon your years in the field, please tell me about your collaborative experience in working with academic affairs/student affairs. (The other division – for example, if you are working for academic affairs, then the question is asking what is your experience working with student affairs?)
  
4. Do you believe there is a need for collaboration between academic affairs faculty and student affairs professionals at the University of California, Davis? Why?
  
5. Would you please explain if you believe that there needs to be **increased** collaboration between academic affairs faculty and student affairs professionals at the University of California, Davis?



6. Based upon your experience, please describe your current level of collaboration with academic affairs faculty and student affairs professionals at the University of California, Davis.
7. Please describe a successful collaborative partnership that you have seen or participated in between academic and student affairs at the University of California, Davis. What makes it successful?
8. Please describe an unsuccessfully collaborative partnership that you have seen or participated in between academic and student affairs at the University of California, Davis. What makes it unsuccessful?
9. Please describe your opinions on whether you believe that if academic affairs faculty and student affairs professionals collaborate more, then it would increase the overall student's development and experience. Why do you believe this?
10. Describe the barriers, whether real or imaginative, that prevent collaboration between academic affairs faculty and student affairs professionals at the University of California, Davis.
11. In your opinion, how severe are the barriers between academic affairs faculty and student affairs professionals at the University of California, Davis?
12. How might collaboration between academic affairs faculty and student affairs professionals have a positive or negative impact on the individual student at the University of California, Davis?
13. How do you think that student affairs professionals help students and faculty intentionally connect academic work with out-of-the-classroom experiences? Please explain.
14. How do you think that academic affairs faculty help students and student affairs professionals intentionally connect out-of-the-classroom experiences with academic work? Please explain.
15. What suggestions do you have to better the collaboration on campus between academic and student affairs?
16. Additional Comments:

### Appendix E: Interview Questions in Relation to the Research Questions

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS	Research Question 1 How do higher education professionals describe the interaction between the silos of academic affairs and student affairs divisions?	Research Question 2 From inhibiting to supporting, what is the spectrum of factors that impact how academic affairs faculty and student affairs professionals work collaboratively?	Research Question 3 What are the elements of collaboration between academic and student affairs divisions that would benefit student development?	Just Information Gathering
1. Which department on campus do you report too? <input type="checkbox"/> Academic Affairs <input type="checkbox"/> Student Affairs				X
2. How many years of experience do you have in the academic affairs/student affairs? (this should only include your professional years)				X
3. Based upon your years in the field, what has been your experience in working with academic affairs/student affairs? (the other division – for example, if you are working for academic affairs, then the question is asking what is your experience working with student affairs?)	X		X	
4. Do you believe there is a need for collaboration between academic affairs faculty and student affairs professionals at the University of California, Davis? Why?	X	X		
5. Would you please explain if you believe that there needs to be increased collaboration between academic affairs faculty and student affairs professionals at the University of California, Davis?	X	X	X	

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS	Research Question 1 How do higher education professionals describe the interaction between the silos of academic affairs and student affairs divisions?	Research Question 2 From inhibiting to supporting, what is the spectrum of factors that impact how academic affairs faculty and student affairs professionals work collaboratively?	Research Question 3 What are the elements of collaboration between academic and student affairs divisions that would benefit student development?	Just Information Gathering
6. Based upon your experience, please describe your current level of collaboration with academic affairs faculty and student affairs professionals at the University of California, Davis.	X		X	
7. Please describe a successful collaborative partnership that you have seen or participated in between academic and student affairs at the University of California, Davis. What makes is successful?	X		X	
8. Please describe an unsuccessfully collaborative partnership that you have seen or participated in between academic and student affairs at the University of California, Davis. What makes is unsuccessful?	X	X	X	
9. Please describe your opinions on whether you believe that if academic affairs faculty and student affairs professionals collaborate more, then it would increase the overall student's development and experience. Why do you believe this?	X	X	X	

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS	Research Question 1 How do higher education professionals describe the interaction between the silos of academic affairs and student affairs divisions?	Research Question 2 From inhibiting to supporting, what is the spectrum of factors that impact how academic affairs faculty and student affairs professionals work collaboratively?	Research Question 3 What are the elements of collaboration between academic and student affairs divisions that would benefit student development?	Just Information Gathering
10. Describe the barriers, whether real or imaginative, that prevent collaboration between academic affairs faculty and student affairs professionals at the University of California, Davis.	X	X		
11. In your opinion, how severe are the barriers between academic affairs faculty and student affairs professionals at the University of California, Davis?	X	X		
12. How might collaboration between academic affairs faculty and student affairs professionals have a positive or negative impact the individual student at the University of California, Davis?	X	X	X	
13. How do you think that student affairs professionals help students and faculty intentionally connect academic work with out-of-the-classroom experiences? Please explain.	X	X	X	
14. How do you think that academic affairs faculty help students and student affairs professionals intentionally connect out-of-the-classroom experiences with academic work? Please explain.	X	X	X	

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS	Research Question 1 How do higher education professionals describe the interaction between the silos of academic affairs and student affairs divisions?	Research Question 2 From inhibiting to supporting, what is the spectrum of factors that impact how academic affairs faculty and student affairs professionals work collaboratively?	Research Question 3 What are the elements of collaboration between academic and student affairs divisions that would benefit student development?	Just Information Gathering
15. What suggestions do you have to better the collaboration on campus between academic and student affairs?		X		
16. Additional Comments:				X
<b>TOTAL</b>	12	10	9	3

## Appendix F: Focus Group Questions

**Time of Focus Group:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Location of Focus Group:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Interviewer/Observer:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Participants:**  
**(Name/Department)** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Consent form on file: YES / NO**

**Questions:**

### **Short Questions:**

Before we begin, I'd like to get some background information about your experiences

1. Which department on campus do you report too?

Academic Affairs

Student Affairs

### **Long Questions:**

Before I continue with the other questions, I first would like to give you context for the term Collaboration. Collaboration defined as “a process in which a group of autonomous stakeholders [academic and student affairs] of an issue domain engage in an interactive process, using shared rules, norms, and structures to act or decide on issues related to that domain” (Wood and Gray, 1991 p. 437).

2. Do you believe there is a need for collaboration between academic affairs faculty and student affairs professionals at the University of California, Davis? Why?

3. Would you please explain if you believe that there needs to be **increased** collaboration between academic affairs faculty and student affairs professionals at the University of California, Davis?

4. Based upon your experience, please describe your current level of collaboration with academic affairs faculty and student affairs professionals at the University of California, Davis.
5. Please describe a successful collaborative partnership that you have seen or participated in between academic and student affairs at the University of California, Davis. What makes it successful?
6. Please describe an unsuccessfully collaborative partnership that you have seen or participated in between academic and student affairs at the University of California, Davis. What makes it unsuccessful?
7. Please describe your opinions on whether you believe that if academic affairs faculty and student affairs professionals collaborate more, then it would increase the overall student's development and experience. Why do you believe this?
8. Describe the barriers, whether real or imaginative, that prevent collaboration between academic affairs faculty and student affairs professionals at the University of California, Davis.
9. In your opinion, how severe are the barriers between academic affairs faculty and student affairs professionals at the University of California, Davis?
10. How might collaboration between academic affairs faculty and student affairs professionals have a positive or negative impact on the individual student at the University of California, Davis?
11. How do you think that student affairs professionals help students and faculty intentionally connect academic work with out-of-the-classroom experiences? Please explain.
12. How do you think that academic affairs faculty help students and student affairs professionals intentionally connect out-of-the-classroom experiences with academic work? Please explain.
13. What suggestions do you have to better the collaboration on campus between academic and student affairs?
14. Additional Comments:

### Appendix G: Focus Group Questions in Relation to the Research Questions

FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS	Research Question 1 How do higher education professionals describe the interaction between the silos of academic affairs and student affairs divisions?	Research Question 2 From inhibiting to supporting, what is the spectrum of factors that impact how academic affairs faculty and student affairs professionals work collaboratively?	Research Question 3 What are the elements of collaboration between academic and student affairs divisions that would benefit student development?	Just Information Gathering
1. Which department on campus do you report too? <input type="checkbox"/> Academic Affairs <input type="checkbox"/> Student Affairs				X
2. Do you believe there is a need for collaboration between academic affairs faculty and student affairs professionals at the University of California, Davis? Why?	X	X		
3. Would you please explain if you believe that there needs to be increased collaboration between academic affairs faculty and student affairs professionals at the University of California, Davis?	X	X	X	
4. Based upon your experience, please describe your current level of collaboration with academic affairs faculty and student affairs professionals at the University of California, Davis.	X		X	
5. Please describe a successful collaborative partnership that you have seen or participated in between academic and student affairs at the University of California, Davis. What makes is successful?	X		X	



FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS	Research Question 1 How do higher education professionals describe the interaction between the silos of academic affairs and student affairs divisions?	Research Question 2 From inhibiting to supporting, what is the spectrum of factors that impact how academic affairs faculty and student affairs professionals work collaboratively?	Research Question 3 What are the elements of collaboration between academic and student affairs divisions that would benefit student development?	Just Information Gathering
6. Please describe an unsuccessfully collaborative partnership that you have seen or participated in between academic and student affairs at the University of California, Davis. What makes is unsuccessful?	X	X	X	
7. Please describe your opinions on whether you believe that if academic affairs faculty and student affairs professionals collaborate more, then it would increase the overall student's development and experience. Why do you believe this?	X	X	X	
8. Describe the barriers, whether real or imaginative, that prevent collaboration between academic affairs faculty and student affairs professionals at the University of California, Davis.	X	X		
9. In your opinion, how severe are the barriers between academic affairs faculty and student affairs professionals at the University of California, Davis?	X	X		
10. How might collaboration between academic affairs faculty and student affairs professionals have a positive or negative impact the individual student at the University of California, Davis?	X	X	X	

FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS	Research Question 1 How do higher education professionals describe the interaction between the silos of academic affairs and student affairs divisions?	Research Question 2 From inhibiting to supporting, what is the spectrum of factors that impact how academic affairs faculty and student affairs professionals work collaboratively?	Research Question 3 What are the elements of collaboration between academic and student affairs divisions that would benefit student development?	Just Information Gathering
11. How do you think that student affairs professionals help students and faculty intentionally connect academic work with out-of-the-classroom experiences? Please explain.	X	X	X	
12. How do you think that academic affairs faculty help students and student affairs professionals intentionally connect out-of-the-classroom experiences with academic work? Please explain.	X	X	X	
13. What suggestions do you have to better the collaboration on campus between academic and student affairs?		X		
14. Additional Comments:				X
<b>TOTAL</b>	12	10	9	3

**Appendix H: Observation of a Focus Group Meeting**

**Time of Focus Group:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Location of Focus Group:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Interviewer/Observer:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Participants:**  
**(Name/Department)** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Departments Involved:**  
\_\_\_\_\_  
**(list all departments)**  
\_\_\_\_\_

Instructions: For the following statements, please indicate how much you **agree** or **disagree** with each of them.

**KEY:**

- |      |                   |
|------|-------------------|
| 5.   | Strongly Agree    |
| 4.   | Agree             |
| 3.   | Neutral           |
| 2.   | Disagree          |
| 1.   | Strongly disagree |
| N/A. | Does not apply    |

**On Time and Prepared**

- |  |     |   |   |   |   |   |
|--|-----|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Arrives to meetings on time                           | N/A | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 2. Brings necessary materials                            | N/A | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 3. Are all parties willing to participate in the meeting | N/A | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 4. If not, what/who was not willing to participate?      |     |   |   |   |   |   |
| 5. Additional Comments/Concerns/Observations             |     |   |   |   |   |   |

**Respects Peers**

- |  |     |   |   |   |   |   |
|--|-----|---|---|---|---|---|
| 6. Respects others                             | N/A | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 7. Listens to their colleagues ideas           | N/A | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 8. Responds appropriately to peers             | N/A | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 9. Respects others' opinions                   | N/A | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 10. Refrains from siloed behavior              | N/A | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 11. Additional Comments/Concerns/Observations: |     |   |   |   |   |   |

**Works Collaboratively**

- |  |     |   |   |   |   |   |
|--|-----|---|---|---|---|---|
| 12. Was there a clear objective to the meeting           | N/A | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 13. Both sides have equal time to discuss their idea     | N/A | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 14. Incorporates all ideas presents                      | N/A | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 15. Actively listens to the other department's ideas     | N/A | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 16. Makes suggestions that serve both parties well       | N/A | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 17. Accepts responsibility for actions (past or present) | N/A | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 18. Additional Comments/Concerns/Observations:           |     |   |   |   |   |   |

**Demonstrates Appropriate Character Traits**

- |   |     |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|-----|---|---|---|---|---|
| 19. A willingness to collaborates with<br>other departments on this project           | N/A | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 20. Demonstrates positive character traits<br>(i.e.: kind, trustworthy, honest)       | N/A | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 21. Demonstrates productive charter traits<br>(i.e.: patience, thorough, hardworking) | N/A | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 22. Demonstrates a level of professional<br>concerns for others                       | N/A | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 23. Additional Comments/Concerns/Observations:  |     |   |   |   |   |   |

**Demonstrates a Level of Concern for Student Learning**

- |  |     |   |   |   |   |   |
|--|-----|---|---|---|---|---|
| 24. Purpose of the collaboration is to better<br>support the student           | N/A | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 25. Students' academic success is kept in the<br>forefront of the conversation | N/A | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 26. Was the meeting student focused?   | N/A | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 27. Additional Comments/Concerns/Observations:                                 |     |   |   |   |   |   |

**Conflict**

- |  |     |   |   |   |   |   |
|--|-----|---|---|---|---|---|
| 28. Did any conflict arise?                    | N/A | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 29. If so, how were they resolved?             |     |   |   |   |   |   |
| 30. Additional Comments/Concerns/Observations: |     |   |   |   |   |   |

**Overall Observations****Positives:****Areas of Growth:**

### Appendix I: Emergent Themes

