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Encouraging professional competency development of higher education administration graduate students through supervised student affairs practice

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ENCOURAGING PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCY DEVELOPMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION ADMINISTRATION GRADUATE STUDENTS THROUGH SUPERVISED STUDENT AFFAIRS PRACTICE

by

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Dedications

This dissertation is dedicated to the graduate students who are becoming the student affairs educators of tomorrow, and today's student affairs educators – their supervisors. My competency development is continually advanced by both passionate peers and colleagues whether across the office or the country, and the graduate students with whom I have the opportunity to support and learn from myself.

I also dedicate this work to my family. I am eternally grateful for your unconditional love and support. I thank my parents for showing me the value and transformative potential of education. I was always accompanied in my writing process by Lily, Otis, and Coco, and appreciate their unwavering companionship – even when laying on the laptop. And with love, I share this achievement with Michael because of his support and understanding throughout this arduous process.

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Abstract

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Professional preparation and socialization of student affairs educators and their competency development is increasingly important in today's higher education environment (ACPA & NASPA, 2015; Janosik, Creamer, Hirt, Winston, Saunders, & Cooper, 2003; Schuh, Jones, & Harper, 2010). This professional preparation often occurs during graduate programs in higher education administration, and features a supervised practice component (CAS, 2012; Janosik, Cooper, Sauders, & Hirt, 2015). The purpose of this grounded theory study is to explore the process of competency development of higher education administration graduate students as part of their professional socialization into the student affairs profession. The intent of the study is to derive a grounded theory of how site supervisors contribute to professional socialization and competency development of student affairs graduate students. Nine graduate students and eight supervisors from three campuses with higher education administration graduate programs in the Philadelphia region participated in interviews describing supervisor support, professional socialization, and significant learning moments as contributors to competency development.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Higher education remains an important catalyst for upward mobility in United States society (Cohen & Kisker, 2010). College and university students and their families commit extensive time and monetary resources toward the promise of a better future through higher education (Cohen & Kisker, 2010; Slaughter & Rhoades, 2004). Specific outcomes in education, research and innovation, leadership, employment, and future earnings are expected by students, their families, policy makers, and the broader American society (Cohen & Kisker, 2010; Kezar, 2004; Slaughter & Rhoades, 2004). In today's high-stakes higher education environment, a variety of skilled professional educators who foster student learning, growth, and development are needed (Harper & Quaye, 2009). Many professionals, including faculty and student affairs staff, need to work in tandem towards educational outcomes in order for the American higher education system to remain relevant for today's students (Kezar, 2004; Slaughter & Rhoades, 2004).

The faculty facilitates primary classroom education, however students spend the majority of their time outside of class. Student affairs educators contribute to college student learning, growth, and development through numerous programs and services (Harper & Quaye, 2009; Patton, Renn, Guido, & Quaye, 2016; Schuh, Jones, & Harper, 2010; Zhang, 2011). As student affairs staff have assumed active roles in college student development and daily administration of campus life at colleges and universities, a profession has emerged (Janosik, Creamer, Hirt, Winston, Saunders, & Cooper, 2003; Schuh et al., 2010). The student affairs profession has developed to have core

professional standards, competencies, and a process of professional socialization for future student affairs educators through graduate preparation programs (ACPA & NASPA, 2015; ACPA & NASPA, 2010; Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education [CAS], 2012; Schuh et al., 2010).

Student Affairs and Professional Competencies

The status of student affairs as a profession and the professional socialization of new student affairs educators through both formal training and ongoing professional development continue to be social and research issues within American higher education (NASPA, 2011). The process of developing a professional identity occurs through a professional socialization process of learning the skills, knowledge, and values integral to professional practice (Liddell, Wilson, Pasquesi, Hirschy, & Boyle, 2014; Weidman, Twale, & Stein, 2001). Formal education through graduate preparation programs and concurrent supervised practice are common for professional socialization in many professions such as medicine, law, education, and student affairs (Weidman et al., 2001). This professional preparation is one of the hallmarks of any profession and elevates new practitioners to full status as a professional in their chosen field (Young & Janosik, 2007).

An essential skill-set for a profession that frames what practitioners should know and be able to demonstrate is often described as professional competencies (ACPA, 2007). Professional competencies in higher education can be developed through reflective daily practice, graduate preparation programs, and intentional professional development (ACPA & NASPA, 2015). One way that student affairs educators can impact student learning is by fostering graduate student competency development for student affairs practice (Janosik, Cooper, Sauders, & Hirt, 2015). Professional

socialization and competency development are crucial for a new professionals entering student affairs practice (Janosik et al., 2015), and the process by which this occurs is an area for continued research (NASPA, 2011).

Student Affairs' Role in American Higher Education

Through early American higher education history, a need for greater oversight of students outside of the classroom grew, mainly focused on controlling student behavior (Cohen & Kisker, 2010; Schuh et al., 2010). Faculty members were originally tasked with oversight of what would become student affairs functions. This included Professor Ephraim Gurney being appointed the first Dean of Men at Harvard University in 1870; his responsibilities were primarily related to student discipline (Zhang, 2011). *In loco parentis* oversight of students was one of the first responsibilities for student affairs professionals, focusing on controlling student behavior and providing home away from home services (Zhang, 2011). The distance from home to early colleges and universities took students away from their families, and the (primarily Christian) values that parents and community leaders hoped to instill in youth led to the need to regulate student conduct on campus (Zhang, 2011).

Three additional factors that spurred the growth of student affairs were the enrollment of women and students of color, the rise of athletics and other extracurricular activities, and research on human development (Schuh et al., 2010). When colleges began enrolling women, separate housing needs and the desire to manage the women's behavior as previously shown with college men arose. This often led to the appointment of a Dean of Women, an administrative position working with students which would spur the burgeoning student affairs field (Schuh et al., 2010).

The addition of gymnasiums and athletic competitions between colleges in the 1860s also called for professionals interested in how students spent their time outside of class (Schuh et al., 2010). These administrative and co-curricular student development roles were delegated from faculty to professional administrators. Not simply caretakers of these young adult students, these early student affairs staff often applied studies in the expanding social sciences, namely psychology and sociology (Zhang, 2011).

As the scientific study of human development progressed, colleges and universities responded in kind by hiring vocational guidance professionals. The vocational guidance movement began in the 1920s, and continued to focus on job placement for students and graduates through the Great Depression of the 1930s (Patton et al., 2016; Zhang, 2011). The vocational placement staff was called appointment secretaries, and the National Association of Appointment Secretaries, an organization that would ultimately become College Student Educators International or ACPA, began in 1924 (Schuh et al., 2010).

These early student affairs educators began professional meetings to discuss their work with students and the higher education environment. In 1937 the American Council on Education released the *Student Personnel Point of View* that reminded the larger higher education community of these professional's contributions to research and scholarship and that educating the whole student (not just intellectually) was a worthy and noble goal to be pursued (Cohen & Kisker, 2010; Patton et al., 2016; Rentz, 1994). The Council revised the statement in 1949 to reflect the expanding scope of student affairs work, recognize additional individual differences in students, and call for more democratic processes within higher education and activities to promote socially

responsible graduates (Patton et al., 2016; Rentz, 1994). Students were now seen as active participants responsible for their own learning, growth, and development rather than passive recipients (Rentz, 1994; Zhang, 2011). The 1949 revision also provided more detail about the administration of student services, including how resources were allocated, what common structures and processes were like, and how students and staff from other campus units interacted with these student services functions (Rentz, 1994; Zhang, 2011).

The enrollment growth for American colleges and universities led to more complex management structures (Cohen & Kisker, 2010). From 1945-1975, divisional management structures such as Academic Affairs, Business Affairs, and Student Affairs became common (Cohen & Kisker, 2010). The various types of specialized administrative positions within the student affairs divisions continued to increase in order to address the changing needs of students and the college or university. The 1937 *Student Personnel Point of View* described 23 student personnel services or functional areas and called on the various units of a college or university to coordinate efforts to improve services for students (Rentz, 1994; Zhang, 2011). Today, much student affairs work occurs within the traditional functional areas described in the 1937 *Student Personnel Point of View* and remain "organized in hierarchical, functional structures, with units that provide highly differentiated programs and services to students," (Tull & Kuk, 2012, p. 7). This demonstrates student affairs' history, its evolution as a profession, and its established place as a recognized division in American higher education organizations.

Development of Student Affairs as a Profession

Student development has been a main focus for student affairs work for decades. Sanford (1967) defined development as a positive growth process that allows students to integrate and act on various life experiences. Growth involves building complexity, which may be favorable or unfavorable to overall functioning, whereas change is more simply an altered condition (Sanford, 1967). Thus, student development describes ways in which late adolescents and adults learn, develop, and grow personal capabilities as a result of an educational intervention (Patton et al., 2016). Student affairs educators and scholars identify and explore factors that help or hinder development and specific types of growth through student development theories (Patton et al., 2016). Student affairs educators are tasked with translating theory into practice – applying student development theory in their work settings with college students. An advanced stage of practice would be contributing to the knowledge of student development by reflecting on one's application of student development theory and then furthering research and scholarly discourse about student affairs within higher education literature.

In the 1960s and 70s student affairs professional organizations began to work towards a common statement of the philosophy of the profession. ACPA's *Tomorrow's Higher Education Project* positioned student development as a guiding theory of the profession and student affairs educators' work as ensuring that the development of the whole student remained an institutional priority (Patton et al., 2016; Rentz, 1994). Organizations such as the Council of Student Personnel Associations (the organization that would become CAS – the Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education) and scholars began examining links and gaps between theory and practice,

introduced instruments to measure student development outcomes, and assessed the impact of different educational environments on students (Patton et al., 2016). Many of these topics remain contemporary areas of research in student affairs.

Higher Education in America Today

Common pressures in early 21st century student affairs work have been expanding enrollments, changing demographics, and a call for demonstrable student learning outcomes from within the institution, students, parents, and governmental bodies (Andres & Finlay, 2004). Expanding enrollments not only refers to the increased numbers of students attending higher education, but also a greater percentage of all students who are utilizing student affairs services such as counseling, student health, and recreation facilities (Tull & Kuk, 2012). To respond to changing demographics, functional units have added staff positions dedicated to, or more familiar with, the various populations served (Andres & Finlay, 2004; Hirt, 2006). This could be a career counselor or academic advisor assigned to or embedded in a particular college, or a transfer or non-traditional student specialist within an admissions or housing office for instance. Learning outcome assessment is now a core competency for all student affairs educators (ACPA & NASPA, 2015; ACPA & NASPA, 2010), and some institutions have assessment specialists within the student affairs division to coordinate efforts and disseminate results (Tull & Kuk, 2012).

Changes in Higher Education Policy and Practice

The current higher education environment is increasingly focused on accountability, often assessed as demonstrated student learning in both classroom and co-curricular settings (ACPA & NASPA, 2004; ACPA, 2007; Blimling & Whit, 1999;

Boyer, 1987; Bresciani, Gardner, & Hickmott, 2010; Keeling, 2006; Upcraft & Schuh, 1996). The outcomes frequently assessed for accountability purposes include instructional inputs, instructional processes, instructional outcomes, efficiency, condition, access and equity, articulation, and relations to State (Cohen & Kisker, 2010). Inputs may describe placement test scores, and processes include time to degree, for example. Instructional outcomes include student performance as measured through grades or graduation rates. Efficiency describes factors such as program cost or the number of students served. Condition can describe a campus' research activity or facilities. Access and equity deals with enrollment, persistence, and graduation rates of diverse segments of the student population. Articulation describes an institution's transfer process and rates. Relation to the state in accountability terms describes the institution's graduate's employment rates and salaries (Cohen & Kisker, 2010).

These accountability measures are gradually being codified into American higher education policy (Cohen & Kisker, 2010). Data to demonstrate higher education reform as applied to these outcome measures are sparse (Cohen & Kisker, 2010). This focus on outcomes has forced student affairs educators to further examine and explicitly define their contributions to student learning and development. Professionals with competencies to meet these policy challenges are needed.

Other policies impacting student affairs work include affordability, access, and student safety. Increased requirements for higher education affordability are often in conflict with student demands for more amenities, programs, and services. Access policies to increase enrollment and retention of diverse students call for support services led by professionals with high levels of cultural competence (Harper & Quaye, 2009).

More policies such as the Jeanne Clery Disclosure of Campus Security Policy and Campus Crime Statistics Act (2011) and its Campus Sexual Violence Elimination (SaVE) amendments (Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act, 2013), and Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (34 C.F.R. Part 106) call for student support services to support students in distress, manage thorough investigations and adjudication of incidents, provide preventative education and primary prevention and awareness programs regarding sexual misconduct and related offenses (which include the challenging issues of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault and stalking), and work toward safe campus environments all call for professionals with a high degree of competency.

Competency Development in Student Affairs

There has long been debate over what skills and abilities needed for professional practice in college student affairs administration should be learned by new professionals through graduate study (Cuyjet, Longwell-Grice, & Molina, 2009). There are a myriad of skills needed to work with college students in a higher education setting, but which comprise the core of the student affairs profession? Many researchers have examined competencies developed through graduate preparation programs and demonstrated by new professionals (Burkard, Cole, Ott, & Stoflet, 2005; Cuyjet et al., 2009; Dickerson et al., 2011; Ely, 2009; Hephner LaBanc, 2010; Herdlein, 2004; Janosik, Carpenter, & Creamer, 2006; Kretovics, 2002; Kuk, Cobb, & Forrest, 2007; Palmer, 1995; Renn & Jessup-Anger, 2008; Reynolds, 2011; Waple, 2006). Many are narrowly focused, examining only graduate students' preparation for collaboration (Ely, 2009), for example. Waple's (2006) study focused on developing a set of professional competencies by

surveying new professionals on skills needed for their entry-level work. This may set a baseline for what is needed immediately upon entering the field, but did not ask the professionals how or when these skills were or should be developed. Burkard et al. (2005), Dickerson et al. (2011), Herdlein (2004), Kretovics (2002), and Kuk et al. (2007) surveyed only faculty or professional supervisors and had them assess their graduate students' competence. Palmer (1995) notes that there are so many skills needed for student affairs roles, that perhaps no graduate preparation program could cover them all.

Where other researchers have narrowly focused on segments of professional competency development, Janosik et al. (2006) were able to broaden the scope and examine competency development as a core professional responsibility that happens over time. In this seminal study, Janosik et al. (2006) present a model acknowledging that competency development is a process that student affairs practitioners undertake across the span of an entire career, and they advocate for an organized way for student affairs educators to improve competencies over time through continuing professional education and development within professional organizations. This important study set the stage for competency development as a focus of the two leading professional organizations in student affairs, College Student Educators International (ACPA) and Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education (NASPA).

As a result of the considerable research in the field on student affairs competencies, ACPA and NASPA, which are the primary professional organizations for over 13,000 student affairs educators in higher education, first developed and published a joint set of *Professional Competency Areas for Student Affairs Practitioners* in 2010. These were recently revised and are currently: Advising and Supporting; Assessment,

Evaluation, and Research; Ethical Professional Practice and Personal Foundations; History, Philosophy and Values; Human and Organizational Resources; Law, Policy and Governance; Leadership; Social Justice; Student Learning and Development; and Technology (ACPA & NASPA, 2015). These competencies describe the broad professional knowledge, skills, and dispositions expected of student affairs professionals working in American higher education. Competencies are applicable to all student affairs educators, regardless of their area of specialization or positional role within the field. All student affairs professionals should be able to demonstrate their ability in these areas regardless of their professional preparation and background. They are developed through graduate professional preparation programs, on the job experience and mentoring, and ongoing professional development (ACPA & NASPA, 2015). Sriram (2014) has developed a psychometric instrument, the 122-item Likert-type scale National Survey of Student Affairs Professionals, to measure student affairs competencies. With these being adopted rather recently, there is a lack of scholarly literature that examines the new professional competencies, and even less specifically focusing on graduate student competency development.

Professional Preparation

Many student affairs educators begin their professional journey through a graduate preparation program. The first higher education administration/college student personnel graduate preparation program began at Columbia University Teachers College (Schuh et al., 2010). The first Master of Arts degree for an Advisor of Women was awarded there in 1914. Teachers College also granted the first doctorate in the field in 1929 (Schuh et al., 2010). The first men were admitted in 1932 (Schuh et al., 2010). Early

graduate preparation curriculums were based in counseling and testing techniques (Schuh et al., 2010).

Today's graduate programs in student affairs are generally classified as administrative, counseling, or student development focused (CAS, 2012). The NASPA website lists over 287 student affairs graduate programs: 96 administrative, 16 counseling, and 76 student development focused (with others being a combination or another type). The local greater Philadelphia region is representative of this national sample, with many local institutions offering a student affairs graduate preparation program, and most of those being administrative in focus. These programs focus on preparing student affairs professionals who are savvy navigating and working in a higher education environment. This includes understanding common cultures, functions, and processes of American colleges and universities and the organization, implementation, and methods of inquiry common in student affairs work.

Standards for graduate preparation programs were first developed by the Council of Student Personnel Associations beginning in 1964 (CAS, 2012). These discussions ultimately led to the inter-association entity that would become the Council for Advancement of Standards in Higher Education or CAS (Schuh et al., 2010). CAS now publishes standards for master's-level student affairs professional preparation programs, which help socialize students into the field and include the curriculum areas of foundation studies, professional studies, and supervised practice (CAS, 2012). Foundation studies convey the profession's history and philosophy, while professional studies cover student development, student characteristics, educational outcomes, educational interventions, organization and administration, and assessment, evaluation,

and research aspects of student affairs (CAS, 2012). Supervised practice includes graduate assistantships, internships, and externships under work conditions supervised by faculty and an on-site professional (CAS, 2012).

Herdlein, Kline, Boquard, and Haddad (2010) found that faculty in professional preparation programs strongly support aligning their academic programs to CAS standards. Faculty also described the importance of competency development as critical or very important to their programs, as these are key skills for the student affairs profession (Herdlein et al., 2010). In the 2012 standards, CAS calls for programs to use the ACPA and NASPA *Professional Competency Areas for Student Affairs Practitioners* (2010) as "a useful guide for professional preparation and professional development," (p. 2). This reinforces the importance of the role of competency development in professional preparation programs, and specifically recognizes the ACPA and NASPA competencies as standards for the student affairs field.

Reynolds (2011) discusses the importance of graduate coursework, assistantships, internships, and externships in developing critical helping skills used when working with college students such as listening, relationship building, educating, asking questions, and providing challenge and support. This describes the great potential that student affairs graduate preparation programs have to set the foundation for life-long professional practice, and as such intentionally assist in competency development through a blend of rigorous academic coursework and supervised practice within a higher education setting. Graduate students need to be aware of what knowledge and skills are expected of professionals in their chosen field of study and practice early on, so they can intentionally focus on these important competencies inside and outside of the classroom as preparation

for future employment and important work with students. Of all of the aspects of professional socialization, the supervised practice experience is where many students make sense and meaning of their foundation and professional studies, and are first able to observe and apply student development theories in practice (Janosik et al., 2015). Similar clinical experiences are found in other professions such as law, medicine, and teaching (Weidman et al., 2001).

Janosik et al. (2015) discuss at length the role of the student in the supervised practice environment and strategies for their learning and success. However, much less information is provided about the other two participants in the supervised environment: the faculty supervisor and site supervisor. The process by which the student, faculty supervisor, and site supervisor work together to expose the student to a variety of practical situations a student affairs professional is likely to encounter, then discuss and make meaning of these experiences is a core aspect of learning through supervised practice, and yet little empirical research on this process exists (Janosik et al., 2015).

Professional Socialization through Competency Development

The establishment of student affairs as a profession of educators calls for in depth study of its professional socialization process, describing how new professionals will learn the requisite competencies. The Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (CAS) has updated its standards for master's-level student affairs professional preparation programs based on the 2010 ACPA and NASPA *Professional Competency Areas for Student Affairs Practitioners* (CAS, 2012). While this firmly situates the professional competencies into graduate preparation program curriculum,

there is a lack of scholarly research examining how graduate students are developing competence in these areas, particularly through supervised practice.

The compelling interest in a narrow focus on competency development through graduate students' supervised practice is to gain a better understanding of the contributions site supervisors make in developing future student affairs professionals. Student affairs scholars and professionals often discuss the combination of theory and practice (ACPA & NASPA, 2004; ACPA, 2007; Blimling & Whit, 1999) and learning inside and outside of the classroom (Boyer, 1987; Keeling, 2006; Upcraft & Schuh, 1996), but little empirical research has focused specifically on the contributions of the site supervisor, particularly within the context of the *Professional Competency Areas for Student Affairs Practitioners* (ACPA & NASPA, 2010) or the recently updated *Professional Competency Areas for Student Affairs Educators* (ACPA & NASPA, 2015). Without an empirical understanding of the process student affairs site supervisors use to support graduate student competency development, we are acting on our personal and professional instincts, hoping that student learning and development occur through our efforts.

Problem Statement

It is important for student affairs to be viewed as a profession capable of addressing contemporary issues in American higher education (Harper & Quaye, 2009; Patton et al., 2016; Schuh et al., 2010; Zhang, 2011). The American higher education landscape is fraught with multiple challenges and economic realities requiring professional intervention (Harper & Quaye, 2009; Helm, 2004; Tull & Kuk, 2012). It is appropriate to study the student affairs profession itself as well as the students we serve

(Herdlein, Riefler, & Mrowka, 2013; Lovell & Kosten, 2000; NASPA, 2011). Professional socialization describes the process of acclimating new practitioners into the field and is a subject of research (CAS, 2012; Liddell et al., 2014; Janosik et al., 2015; Schuh et al., 2010; Weidman et al., 2001). Graduate preparation programs are a major aspect of professional socialization, and previous research has examined outcomes of graduate preparation programs (Cuyjet et al., 2009; Ely, 2009; Hephner LaBanc, 2010; Herdlein, 2004; Janosik et al., 2006; Kretovics, 2002; Kuk et al., 2007; Palmer, 1995; Renn & Jessup-Anger, 2008; Reynolds, 2011; Waple, 2006) and professional socialization into the student affairs work culture within higher education (Bureau, 2011; Crim, 2006; Fried, 2014; Helm, 2004; Liddell et al., 2014; Lombardi, 2013; Oblander, 1990).

However, specialized competency development is also a critical part of professional socialization (ACPA & NASPA, 2015; ACPA & NASPA, 2010; Janosik et al., 2015; Weidman et al., 2001). While other studies have reviewed general outcomes of supervised practice in student affairs graduate preparation programs, none describe a process of competency development. Competencies for professional practice in student affairs have recently been defined by the leading professional organizations, and CAS then adopted the competencies as a desired outcome of graduate preparation (ACPA & NASPA, 2015; ACPA & NASPA, 2010; CAS, 2012). This solidifies competency development as a key component necessary for professional socialization in student affairs, yet the process of site supervisors supporting graduate student competency development in student affairs supervised practice settings has not been examined through empirical research. CAS standards for student affairs preparation programs call

for the ACPA and NASPA competencies to be utilized as a guide in graduate education and professional development (CAS, 2012). As supervised practice is one of three main components of a student affairs graduate education, it should have demonstrable competency development outcomes though there is no research describing this process.

Research describing specific aspects of the supervised practice experience that supports graduate student competency development is needed to demonstrate this new, important educational outcome. Without a better understanding of this process, supervisors, graduate preparation program faculty, and even graduate students themselves cannot be certain of what conditions actually contribute to the competency development aspect of professional socialization for future student affairs educators. The lack of scholarly research in the field about how these competencies can be developed through supervised practice in student affairs also does a disservice to the efforts of student affairs educators, many of whom take very seriously the mentoring and developmental relationship they have with graduate students entering our profession. Graduate student competency development is an important concern for the student affairs field, as it will impact the future of the profession and the students we serve for years to come.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this grounded theory study is to explore the process of competency development of higher education administration graduate students as part of their professional socialization into the student affairs profession. This study explores whether site supervisors contribute to competency development during the supervised practice component of graduate education, and if so, how this process occurs. Themes indicating potential relationships between site supervisor support and competency

development of graduate students is be examined. The intent of the study is to derive a grounded theory of how site supervisors contribute to professional socialization and competency development of student affairs graduate students. The setting for this study is three administrative-focused graduate preparation programs located within the greater Philadelphia region. The study also adds to the literature on the ACPA and NASPA *Professional Competency Areas for Student Affairs Educators* (2015).

Research Questions

The research described here is driven by one overarching research question: Can theory describe the process by which graduate students develop competency as part of the professional socialization process in student affairs?

Sub-questions include the following:

1. How do supervisors support the competency development of graduate students preparing to be student affairs practitioners?
2. How do supervisors discuss and demonstrate student development theory and practice, professional values, and other aspects of professional socialization with higher education graduate students?
3. What specific aspects of supervised practice experiences support graduate student competency development?

Definitions of Terms

The following terms are commonly used in the fields of student affairs and graduate preparation programs, but are also defined here for the purposes of this study:

- Assistantship - a paraprofessional position in which a graduate student commonly earns full or partial tuition, a stipend, and/or other benefits such as room and board.
- Competency - Competencies for professional student affairs practice are generally defined as ACPA and NASPA's *Professional Competency Areas for Student Affairs Educators* (2015).
- Externship - a practicum experience at another campus location other than the one a graduate student is attending.
- Graduate preparation program - a program of graduate study that prepares future student affairs educators for professional practice. Programs are typically counseling, administration, and/or student development based. This may include doctoral programs, but for the purposes of this study, only administration-focused programs leading to a master's degree are being reviewed.
- Internship - a practicum experience, typically for academic credit and without compensation, often at a graduate student's "home" institution.
- Student affairs educator, practitioner, or professional - these terms may be used interchangeably in this study to refer to a full time staff member, typically with a master's degree in higher education or a related field, who provides administrative support and contributes to student engagement, learning, growth, and development at a college or university.

- Supervisor support - teaching, coaching, mentoring, modeling, and other behaviors exhibited by professional supervisors to encourage graduate student learning and development.

Significance of the Study

This study builds theory that describes the process of competency development as part of the professional socialization process in student affairs. The research illuminates specific aspects of the supervised practice experience that support student competency development, and how supervisors may support graduate student competency development. This contributes to policy, practice, and research around this important topic.

Policy

Socialization of a new generation of student affairs educators helps the profession rise to the policy challenges facing American higher education. Skilled student affairs educators with assessment, evaluation, and research competence will be able to assess educational outcomes to demonstrate accountability (ACPA & NASPA, 2010). Professionals able to manage human and organizational resources will help address affordability of higher education. Student affairs educators knowledgeable about equity, diversity, and inclusion can help champion access to and success in college. Advising and helping competence is crucial to student safety needs. This level of competence will help policy makers view student affairs educators as professionals who take an active role in shared governance of higher education institutions, effectively implement and evaluate policy, and are part of professional organizations who are active in policy communities.

Locally, professional student affairs educators savvy in law, policy, and governance will play important roles in their institution's accreditation process. Application of the ACPA and NASPA competency areas and suggestions of how supervisors might incorporate them into their work with the graduate students may be included in the internship curriculum. The Student Life staff, where the majority of assistantships and internships are offered, may consider policies that promote these supervisor/graduate student relationships that support competency development. A policy and procedure for assistantship/internship placement could be adopted that considers competency development, matching a student who needs or desires more equity, diversity, and inclusion experience with a department or supervisor who could best develop that competency for example.

Practice

This study has the potential to positively influence professional practice. Armed with research on the supervisor's role in graduate student competency development, supervisors, graduate preparation program faculty, and graduate students can craft intentional competency development plans that optimize learning inside and outside of the classroom. This research will be useful for graduate preparation program faculty in crafting supervised practice experiences in which students will discuss and develop professional competencies, working with current professionals in the field to bridge academic learning and application of real world issues. Supervisors will be reminded of the important role that they play in the competency development process, and may alter their practice to devote more time and effort towards supporting their graduate students' learning and development. This research will also aide supervisors of graduate students in

being intentional about focusing on students' competency development and also help them bring academic knowledge to life through their daily work with students. An enhanced focus on graduate student competency development will ultimately improve student affairs practice as a whole, and hopefully multiply student learning and development throughout the many students served by the profession.

Research

The research focus on supervisors' contributions to competency development through supervised practice in student affairs will combine several of the concepts presented in the existing scholarly literature. This study will also contribute to the research examining the current ACPA and NASPA competency areas for student affairs professionals. The background literature has generally discussed outcomes, assessing skills and knowledge needed for student affairs practice, and was conducted before the joint ACPA and NASPA competencies were disseminated to the profession and graduate preparation programs in 2010.

Examining this issue through qualitative interviews also fills a methodological gap in research about student affairs competency development. Currently, qualitative research is lacking as only one other related qualitative study was found for this literature review. That study focused on new practitioners reflecting on their competency development in general to derive a grounded theory without using a predefined set of professional competencies (Renn & Jessup-Anger, 2008). Hephner LaBanc (2010) recommended a qualitative study of graduate student competency development in order to "discern a deeper and more contextualized understanding of the use and development of competencies through the graduate assistantship experience," (p. 119) than resulted

from her quantitative dissertation research. Hephner LaBanc (2010) also recommended examining supervisor's perspectives and initiatives designed to develop competencies.

Future areas of research may also be spawned from this study. For example, a quantitative or mixed-methods follow up study to assess the effectiveness of various supervisor approaches or the level of growth demonstrated by graduate students participating in various supervised practice experiences may follow. Further research in competency development and professional socialization at counseling and student development-focused graduate preparation programs may also be conducted.

Scope of the Study

As is the case with all research, the work described here is limited in some ways. Here, I describe those limitations and efforts taken to address them through certain research strategies. As this study focuses on the supervised practice aspect of graduate preparation programs, it will not address the foundational and professional studies classroom experiences that may contribute to graduate student competency development, as it is not within the scope of this study. It will also not assess graduate students' level of competency development in this study, as other studies have explored outcomes of graduate education and that level of detail does not contribute data that would contribute to answering the research questions.

This study is not a debate or review of ACPA and NASPA's professional competency areas for student affairs educators, as the competencies have been implemented by these professional organizations and adopted by CAS, they are important for our field to acknowledge and are used as a starting point and common language for competency development in this study. I also acknowledge the multiple causes of

competency development and cannot detail other professional development and skill-building graduate students might engage in outside of the supervised practice relationship. This study examines administrative-focused graduate programs as they are the most common type of student affairs preparation programs. Additionally, counseling-focused graduate programs may introduce other professional socialization factors unique to counseling fields. These limitations are designed to bound the study, and may be considered for areas of future research.

Overview of Dissertation Organization

Chapter One has detailed background about higher education, student affairs, and competency development; described the problem to be addressed by this research; presented the purpose and significance of this study; and bound the scope of the study through delimitations. Chapter Two presents initial sources comprising the conceptual framework for the study, including: professional socialization, professional practice in student affairs, and competency development in student affairs. Chapter Three, Methodology, details planned research procedures. The selected methodological approach, related literature, research questions, reflexivity, participants and sampling criteria, site, data collection techniques, data analysis approach, and quality of this study will be described. Chapter Four provides an overview of the findings. Chapters Five and Six will be presented in the form of manuscripts that will be submitted for publication to peer-reviewed journals.

Chapter 2

Literature Review and Setting of the Study

Literature has significance at all stages of a grounded theory study, though use of a formal literature review in the initial stages of grounded theory research has been subject to debate (Birks & Mills, 2015). Grounded theory purists are wary of extensive literature reviews as they may contribute to novice researchers imposing existing theories on the study and outcomes (Birks & Mills, 2015). However, no one enters the field as a truly blank slate, and a brief review of topical literature may serve to demonstrate need for further research and otherwise support grounded theory studies (Birks & Mills, 2015). Charmaz (2014) notes that literature review and theoretical frameworks for grounded theory studies demonstrate why certain arguments and evidence are relevant to the study, what earlier ideas the researcher accepts or rejects, and how the researcher made conceptual decisions. The constant comparison method in grounded theory often requires theoretician-researchers to return to the literature during and after data analysis (Birks & Mills, 2015; Charmaz, 2014). Below I present a possible literature-based conceptual framework for my study (Figure 1), in keeping with the ground theory approach to reviewing literature prior to entering the field. As the last two chapters of this dissertation will function as manuscripts for publication, I will review literature again, and may present and critique additional literature, in those chapters after analysis of the data collected.

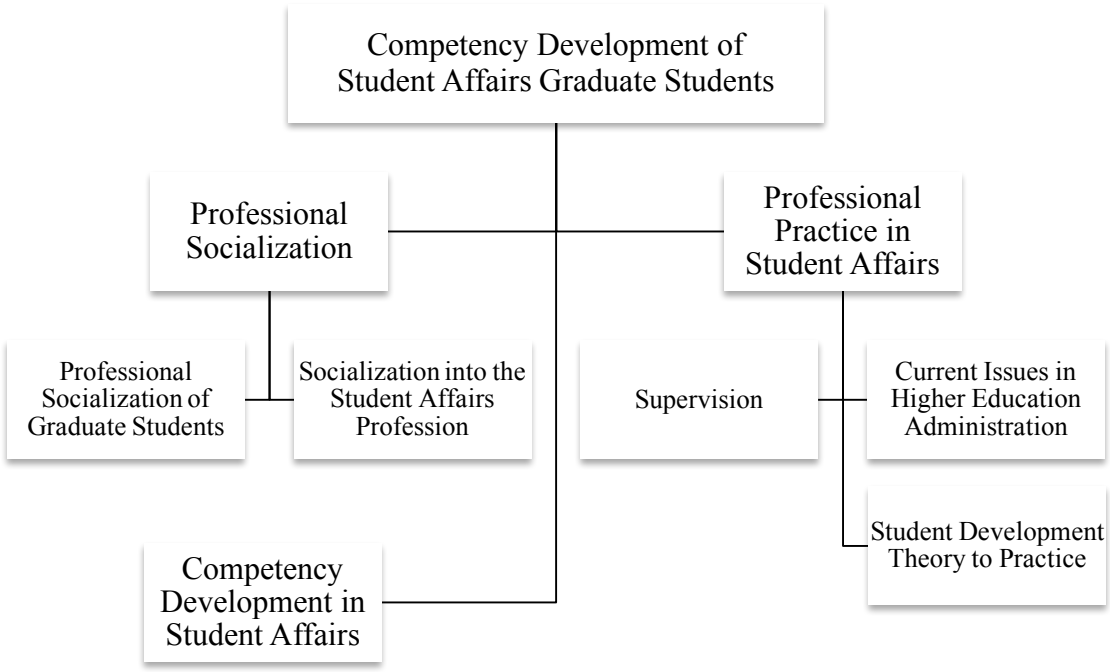

Figure 1. Literature Map (based on Maxwell, 2013).

The process by which graduate students develop competency as part of the professional socialization process in student affairs may be informed by literature around professional socialization and professional practice in student affairs. Specific aspects of professional socialization include the socialization of graduate students, socialization to student affairs values, and methods of socialization to the student affairs profession used in higher education. Competency development is the link between professional socialization and professional practice and is an emergent area of research in student affairs. Literature about professional practice in student affairs focuses on supervision, current issues in higher education administration, and student development theory to practice. These topics establish a system of concepts, assumptions, expectations, beliefs,

and theories that inform my research as an initial conceptual framework (Maxwell, 2013; Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2014).

Professional Socialization

The concept of professionalism grew out of society's view that formal knowledge yields power (Freidson, 1986). In the 1800s, *intelligentsia* was a term coined in Poland and Russia to describe a higher academic and intellectual strata of society (Freidson, 1986). The *intelligentsia* initially referred to a heterogeneous group of white-collar workers who shared a common value system, mostly grounded in the ideals of the landed nobility, and committed to serving their nations and leading social change (Freidson, 1986). Also in the 1800s in France, Jacques Ellul and Michel Foucault introduced *technician* as those who are experts in the techniques of a specific discipline (Freidson, 1986). This view ultimately transferred to today's notion of professionals - those who learn a specialized trade through formal training, applying "their knowledge to practical affairs without dissenting from the status quo or being consciously preoccupied with transcendent issues," (Freidson, 1986, p. 13) unlike the initial *intelligentsia* who led Central and Eastern Europe through sociopolitical revolution.

The technician-experts whose fields ultimately were classified as a profession were those originating from the gymnasium or university system such as medicine, law, and clergy (Freidson, 1986). In contrast to amateurs, professionals complete some formalized training to practice their vocational craft (Friedson, 1986). Professionals are often credentialed through occupational licensing, certification, and accreditation in higher education (Friedson, 1986).

Friedson (1986) details how the term *professional* has been a social category that has had numerous contextual meanings over many centuries. There are currently many trait-based definitions of professionals, including those having mastered a specific body of knowledge, representation by a professional association, and shared competencies and ethical standards (Carpenter & Stimpson, 2007; Friedson, 1986). Friedson (1986) ultimately defines professional as a folk concept that has different meanings in different societies and contexts (Friedson, 1986). In context of student affairs practitioners, ACPA and NASPA position themselves as professional organizations for a class of professional educators who are credentialed through training and advanced degrees at accredited higher education institutions. This meets many of the concepts Friedson (1986) discusses, but as a folk concept, some may not define these practitioners as professionals as there is not licensing or certification such as a medical doctor or lawyer would receive upon entry to their profession.

The socialization process for student affairs practitioners and graduate students is much more loosely organized. Carpenter and Stimpson (2007) find that student affairs meets many of the trait-based definitions of a profession, but ultimately prefer Friedson's view of professionalism as a social construct. Because student affairs educators have defined themselves as professionals, they are mostly considered as such (Carpenter & Stimpson, 2007). To continue to be identified as a profession, professionalism, professional socialization, and professional development become important factors to maintain this social construct (Carpenter & Stimpson, 2007).

Professional Socialization of Graduate Students

Weidman et al. (2001) define professional socialization as "the process through which individuals gain the knowledge, skills, and values necessary for successful entry into a professional career requiring an advanced level of specialized knowledge and skills," (p. iii). They outline four stages of socialization for graduate students: anticipatory, formal, informal, and personal (Weidman et al., 2001). Each stage involves mentoring and supervision of the students' work (Weidman et al., 2001). Students ultimately adopt the norms of those who train them (Hirt, 2006). This supervised practice as part of the professional socialization process is one of the hallmarks of any profession and elevates new practitioners to full status as a professional in their chosen field (Young & Janosik, 2007).

Socialization into the Student Affairs Profession

Several researchers have also examined the professional socialization process in student affairs (Bureau, 2011; Crim, 2006; Fried, 2014; Helm, 2004; Liddell et al., 2014; Lombardi, 2013; Magolda & Carnaghi, 2014; Oblander, 1990; Tierney, 1997). Tierney (1997) finds that socialization is fundamentally important to maintaining and improving high-quality higher education organizations. One aspect of professional socialization which has been widely studied is anticipatory socialization, which describes how new members develop expectations and beliefs about joining a particular occupation and/or organization (Lombardi, 2013; Oblander, 1990). Magolda and Carnaghi (2014) provide personal stories to describe several different new professionals' transition to their first student affairs position. Lombardi (2013) discusses the impact of expectations versus reality in anticipatory socialization as it relates to turnover, with new professionals

leaving their first job more frequently when incongruences are found. In other words, if new professionals are not prepared to face the realities of work in student affairs, and the day-to-day work does not meet their personal expectations, they are more likely to leave the profession.

Commitment, or attachment to the field of student affairs as a profession, is another aspect of professional socialization reviewed in the literature (Fried, 2014; Liddell et al., 2014; Oblander, 1990). Generally, a lack of commitment negatively impacts socialization and a high degree of attachment enhances and eases the socialization process. Others described specific aspects of organizational culture related to professional socialization (Helm, 2004; Oblander, 1990; Weidman et al., 2001). Significant cultural factors impacting the professional socialization process include diversity, academic cohort climate, and employer engagement.

Helm (2004) studied the impact of marketization of the student affairs profession on new professionals and whether preparation programs addressed academic capitalism. Academic capitalism is viewing education as a commodity rather than a public good, commonly demonstrated through new managerial practices and seeking efficiencies, cost-savings, and even revenue through educational endeavors (Slaughter & Rhoades, 2004). Helm (2004) found that new student affairs educators were not familiar with or prepared for this new market reality in higher education, even though it was hidden in plain view throughout their previous student experiences. Academic capitalism, specifically university expectations for doing more with less efficiencies, may be one reason for early attrition in student affairs professionals (Helm, 2004).

Bureau (2011) focused on congruence of personal and professional values. Crim (2006) categorized factors that contribute to typical (purposeful pursuit through a graduate preparation program and professional organization involvement) or atypical (formal education and training outside of student affairs, socialization exclusively through work experience) professional identities in student affairs. As standards and values are a considered a key factor in defining a profession, the next section will review literature relating to student affairs' values.

Professional standards and values in student affairs. Standards and values in student affairs were developed by meetings of professionals in the field over many decades of professional practice (Rentz, 1994). The first formal meetings of deans of women, the student affairs professionals of the time, began in the early 1900s (Rentz, 1994; Schuh et al., 2010; Zhang, 2011). By 1916 a National Association of Deans of Women was organized, a forerunner of ACPA and NASPA (Schuh et al., 2010). In 1919 the National Association of Deans and Advisers of Men was organized at a meeting at the University of Wisconsin (Schuh et al., 2010). This organization would eventually become NASPA, admitting women in 1926 (Schuh et al., 2010). ACPA traces its history to the National Association of Appointment Secretaries, which began in 1924 (Schuh et al., 2010). Today, ACPA and NASPA provide communities of practice for over 13,000 student affairs educators and scholars, and have firmly established student affairs as a profession central to American higher education (Caple, 1998).

Values of the student affairs profession have been codified in organizational reports beginning with the *Student Personnel Point of View* through numerous other seminal documents that will be briefly reviewed here (Rentz, 1994). The *Joint Statement*

on Rights and Freedoms of Students (American Association of University Professors, 1967 & 1991) outlines ways in which students and student governments participate in higher education governance and enumerates individual rights of students inside and outside of the classroom. The Hazen Foundation's *The Student in Higher Education* (Kauffman, 1968) report describes various influences that shape student development and is one of the first studies to encourage special attention to new student transitions. *Student Development in Tomorrow's Higher Education: A Return to the Academy* prepares for rapid and extensive changes expected in American higher education and positions student affairs to humanize the experience by taking on a variety of support roles (Brown, 1972) and *A Student Development Model for Student Affairs in Tomorrow's Higher Education* (ACPA, 1975) continues the research and defines competencies that student affairs educators will need for anticipated roles. *Student Development Services in Post Secondary Education* (Council of Student Personnel Associations, 1975) lists roles for student development specialists, situates their process-orientated work in human relationships, and enumerates student outcomes that specialists can contribute toward. In *A Perspective on Student Affairs*, NASPA (1987) clearly stated that student affairs should complement the academic mission of colleges and universities by enhancing and supporting learning rather than substituting for or competing with it. *The Student Learning Imperative* calls student affairs to focus on student learning and personal development as a complement to academic productivity (ACPA, 1994). *Principles of Good Practice for Student Affairs* defines specific principles for student affairs practice that lead to improved student learning outcomes (Blimling & Whit, 1999). *Powerful Partnerships: A Shared Responsibility for Learning* outlines ten principles regarding

learning and collegial, collaborative action across the whole institution (AAHE, ACPA & NASPA, 1998). *Learning Reconsidered: A Campus-Wide Focus on the Student Experience* encourages collaboration among student affairs units and across the academe to promote student learning and engagement (ACPA & NASPA, 2004), while *Learning Reconsidered 2: Implementing a Campus-wide Focus on the Student Experience* provides concrete promising practices for these cross-campus collaborations that best support student learning (Keeling, 2006). Finally, *Professional Competency Areas for Student Affairs Practitioners* (ACPA & NASPA, 2010) defined ten competency areas for student affairs educators, which were recently updated as *Professional Competency Areas for Student Affairs Educators* (ACPA & NASPA, 2015).

Some common themes throughout these documents are the primacy of students as individuals who should be considered as whole beings (student affairs supports holistic approaches instead of compartmentalized intellectual, physical, social aspects), unique, responsible participants in their education, and taken as they currently are (past knowledge, current needs, and future desires should be explored). A focus on community building is a secondary value, as a collegiate learning community can empower its members through meaningful relationships. The educational environment is also considered as an aspect of community (Schuh et al., 2010; Strange & Banning, 2015). Many of the works above focus on collaboration among and across units and the need to engage the whole institution in student learning, growth, and development. Equality and justice are also student affairs value themes that can be considered as components of individualism and community or on their own.

Another way in which the values of the student affairs profession can be described is through ethical standards. Professional ethical standards for student affairs are defined by College Student Educators International's Statement *of Ethical Principles and Standards* (ACPA, 2006) and the Council for the Advancement of Standards (2006). ACPA's standards include: professional responsibility and competence, student learning and development, responsibility to the institution, and responsibility to society (2006). ACPA then enumerates principles for each of the four standards. The CAS *Statement of Shared Ethical Principles* (2006) focuses on autonomy, non-malfeasance, beneficence, justice, fidelity, veracity, and affiliation.

These professional values inform the practice of a cadre of student affairs educators. The shared value of student learning, growth, and development firmly situates student affairs practitioners as college student educators. These values are passed on through job training, professional development opportunities, and through graduate preparation programs.

How student affairs professionals are socialized. Tull, Hirt, and Saunders (2009) define the socialization process of new student affairs administrators as "the process by which new members of an organization come to understand, appreciate, and adopt the customs, traditions, values, and goals for their profession and their new organization," (p. x). In student affairs organizations, this process often occurs through job training, professional development, and graduate preparation programs (Tull et al., 2009).

Job training may often seem unidirectional, but professional socialization to new organizations involves interaction between individual and organization cultures, mutually

influencing and adapting to include the new professional (Tierney, 1997; Tull et al., 2009). On the job, Tull et al. (2009) summarize that "new professionals need to know what level of performance is expected of them and how to accomplish their goals and assignments," (p. 33). This is an ongoing process involving mentoring, trust, guidance, feedback and the variable level of decision-making authority the new professional is granted by their supervisor (Tull et al., 2009).

Janosik et al. (2003) provide a comprehensive model for supervising new professionals in student affairs, describing components from recruitment and selection, orientation to the position, supervision, staff development and performance appraisal, to separation (Janosik et al., 2003). The authors describe the importance of socializing the new professional to the specific campus, department, and role while assessing their level of professional socialization from their previous position or graduate program in order to promote future success (Jasnosik et al., 2003). The chapter authored by Hirt and Creamer advocates for a professional development plan that is planned in advance to address specific socialization and performance concerns and regularly assessed (Janosik et al., 2003).

Professional development in student affairs has traditionally been focused on staff development (Bryan, Miller, & Winston, 1991; Bryan & Schwartz, 1998; Winston & Creamer, 1997). Winston and Creamer (1997) suggest staff members and supervisors agree on a staff development plan that consists of processes and products that is anchored in the daily work of the staff member. Their review of related literature and their own surveys found that this often takes the form of invited speakers or other short workshops (Winston & Creamer, 1997).

A strictly staff development approach can often lack systematic determination or assessment of staff needs connected to supervision and performance appraisal (Winston & Creamer, 1997). This has recently shifted to focus on competency development in an attempt to promote some degree of professional development connected to and assessed according to professional standards (Janosik, et al., 2006). ACPA (2007) defines professional competencies as an essential skill-set for a profession that frames what practitioners should know and be able to demonstrate.

Janosik et al. (2006) advocate for an organized way for student affairs educators to improve competencies over time through continuing professional education and development within professional organizations. Since the introduction of the ACPA and NASPA competencies (2010), the organizations have included references to competencies in annual convention program descriptions and indexes so attendees can find workshops dealing with specific competencies they are seeking to develop (ACPA & NASPA, 2015). While this is helpful for conference attendees, a comprehensive professional development plan should be created to help provide ongoing goals and direction (Tull et al., 2009). Ardoin (2014) describes other non-conference ways, such as a weekly student affairs Twitter chat, that professionals can use to seek development. Ardoin (2014) suggests that such a plan include competencies to be developed, learning options, new experiences to pursue on campus and within the broader professional community, and a plan for self-reflection.

Graduate preparation programs are the final way that student affairs educators are typically socialized. As previously discussed, graduate preparation programs in student affairs typically combine classroom learning with supervised professional practice. The

professional practice component provides exposure to theory in practice, ethical dilemmas, and experiences to engage students in direct work with students, programs, and services. Bruner and Moock (2012) suggest a primary role for supervisors of graduate students during the professional practice component is to make the competencies meaningful by highlighting how they contribute to the programs and services of the unit and are demonstrated by departmental staff. Graduate students often learn just how much they do not yet know (Tull et al., 2009). While the professional socialization process through a graduate preparation program may have a humbling effect on future practitioners, evidence suggests that this socialization process ultimately yields more successful and competent entry-level professionals (Tull et al., 2009).

Competency Development in Student Affairs

Research by scholar-practitioners (reviewed in chapter one: Burkard et al., 2005; Cuyjet et al., 2009; Dickerson et al., 2011; Ely, 2009; Hephner LaBanc, 2010; Herdlein, 2004; Janosik et al., 2006; Kretovics, 2002; Kuk et al., 2007; Palmer, 1995; Renn & Jessup-Anger, 2008; Reynolds, 2011; Waple, 2006) to clarify what competencies are needed for student affairs practice and what competencies are demonstrated by various levels of student affairs professionals contributed to the development of a joint set of *Professional Competency Areas for Student Affairs Practitioners* in 2010. ACPA began identifying these core competencies for student affairs professionals in 2007, proposing that "to be successful, practitioners require a set of established skill sets to frame what we need to know, and in turn, goals to accomplish," (2007, p. 2). The established skill sets were designed to be reflective of what student affairs practitioners' role in student learning was on many college campuses, acknowledging the many constituents these

professionals interact with, the diversity of the college student population, and increasing accountability and oversight (ACPA, 2007). ACPA also acknowledged the role of graduate programs in preparing practitioners for student affairs work, but recognized that graduate preparation programs alone cannot develop professionals for long-term careers in student affairs, rather "ongoing and continued professional development is necessary and the identification of a common knowledge and skill base allows for the intentional shaping of one's professional development," (2007, p. 3). The result of the initial 2007 study was that ACPA proposed advising and helping; assessment, evaluation, and research; ethics; leadership and administration/management; legal foundations; pluralism and inclusion; student learning and development; and teaching as eight common competency areas (ACPA, 2007).

One study by Hephner LaBanc (2010) did examine graduate student development using the 2007 competencies and found advising and helping and pluralism and inclusion to be the most used and developed competencies, and legal foundations and assessment, evaluation, and research to be the least used competencies by the graduate assistants who participated in the study. The 2007 competencies were further reviewed by the ACPA membership and later revised together with the NASPA professional organization. In 2010, ACPA and NASPA jointly adopted these ten competency areas: Advising and Helping; Assessment, Evaluation, and Research; Equity, Diversity and Inclusion; Ethical Professional Practice; History, Philosophy and Values; Human and Organizational Resources; Law, Policy and Governance; Leadership; Personal Foundations; Student Learning and Development (ACPA & NASPA, 2010).

Recently, ACPA and NASPA formed a task force to review and update the competencies as necessary. These current competencies, which I utilize in my study, include (asterisk denotes items that were updated from the 2010 competencies):

- Advising and Supporting*
- Assessment, Evaluation, and Research
- Ethical Professional Practice and Personal Foundations*
- History, Philosophy and Values
- Human and Organizational Resources
- Law, Policy and Governance
- Leadership
- Social Justice*
- Student Learning and Development
- Technology* (ACPA & NASPA, 2015).

The major changes in this revision include: change to supporting from helping and further clarification of supporting behaviors student affairs professionals without a counseling background should engage in versus those which should be performed only by professional counselors; combined ethics and foundational skills into one competency area; expanded equity, diversity, and inclusion to social justice; and specified that technology should be a standalone competency area rather than an aspect of all other competencies - elevating technical proficiency to its own skill rather than a tool to be used in the performance of other job duties (ACPA & NASPA, 2015). Additionally, descriptions of competence at basic, intermediate, and advanced levels are now included (ACPA & NASPA, 2015).

While the reviewed contextual research was conducted prior to dissemination of the current competencies jointly adopted by ACPA and NASPA in 2010 - let alone 2015, it provides background of the importance of knowledge and skill development for student affairs professionals and disparate views of competence between graduate students and professional supervisors. The ability to demonstrate competencies remains important, particularly for new professionals, as their ability and/or potential to perform these daily tasks are scrutinized as an indicator of whether they would be able to function in an entry-level position during job interviews (Kretovics, 2002). A quantitative study by Cuyjet et al. (2009) found that recent graduates of preparation programs felt confident about their knowledge and ability to use skills developed during their master's program, and reported that many competencies developed were important in their current jobs. Three competencies were identified that were not important to the respondents: grant writing, research writing for publication, and history of higher education (Cuyjet et al., 2009). The supervisors of these new professionals generally confirmed a high degree of skill, but there were statistical differences between the graduates, who reported a higher opinion of their level of knowledge and skill in historical foundations, student development, quantitative research methodology, and qualitative research methodology than reported by their supervisors (Cuyjet et al., 2009). Another study of new professionals by Renn and Hodges' (2007) found that they viewed their first job as a training ground for their career, that they questioned their competence more as a new professional than they did in graduate school, and they were more aware of their abilities and needs for training. Ongoing competency development is necessary for continued success as a student affairs educator.

Professional Practice in Student Affairs

Personal: Traits

Professional practice in student affairs manifests in four contexts: the personal, the institutional, the extra-institutional, and the professional (Hirt & Creamer, 1998). Personal dimensions include career prospects and mobility, family obligations, and quality of life (Hirt & Creamer, 1998). Personal dimensions of professional practice in student affairs can also be considered in the context of trait leadership (Drath, McCauley, Palus, Van Velsor, O'Connor, & McGuire, 2008). Professional practice in student affairs entails the personal interactions of both the professional and supervisor. Many researchers have studied the traits of successful student affairs educators (Arminio & Creamer, 2001; Herdlein, Riefler, & Mrowka, 2013; Lovell & Kosten, 2000; Tull et al., 2009).

Lovell and Kosten (2000) reviewed 30 years of research about student affairs administration and summarized that effective administration, management, and facilitation skills; knowledge of student development theory and functional responsibilities; and personal integrity and cooperation are key traits of successful student affairs administrators. Herdlein et al. (2013) updated Lovell and Kosten's (2000) work to include research published since the original study and found few changes. Notably, they found an increased importance of the ability to work with diverse student populations, but overall they indicated a developing consensus of student affairs competencies (Herdelein et al., 2013). Arminio and Creamer (2001) defined high quality supervision as "an educational endeavor demonstrated through principled practices with a dual focus on institutional and individual needs," (p. 35). They found the traits or behaviors practiced

by high quality supervisors included persistent and direct listening, role modeling, observing, setting the context, motivating, teaching, giving direction, and caring (Arminio & Creamer, 2001). Tull et al. (2009) also list 21 functions of supervisory and mentoring relationships that may impact professional practice. The similarities in these findings helped to inform the ACPA and NASPA professional competencies (ACPA & NASPA, 2010). A competency area that connects with the personal context is ethical professional practice and personal foundations (ACPA & NASPA, 2015).

Hoffman and Bresciani (2012) reviewed all 1,759 job postings at the 2008 Placement Exchange held during the NASPA conference to identify competencies listed as necessary for a variety of student affairs professional positions. The most frequently requested skills were programming; communication; assessment, evaluation, and research; teaching and training; leadership; budgeting and fiscal management; collaboration; law and policy; social justice; and technology (Hoffman & Bresciani, 2012). Although the job postings were conducted prior to the 2010 publication of the joint ACPA and NASPA *Professional Competencies for Student Affairs Practitioners*, there is a high degree of overlap with the competencies as they exist today (ACPA & NASPA, 2015). This shows professional competencies as desirable traits for student affairs educators seeking employment.

Institutional and Extra-Institutional: Current Issues in Higher Education Administration

The institutional differences among American colleges and universities are great, as the system has evolved over time to value academic freedom and individualism (Hirt, 2006; Cohen & Kisker, 2010). A major factor that may directly impact professional socialization is understanding differences due to institutional type (Hirt, 2006). Hirt

(2006) describes how liberal arts colleges, religiously affiliated institutions, comprehensive colleges and universities, research universities, Historically Black Colleges and Universities, community colleges, and Hispanic-serving institutions have different approaches to student affairs administration.

Similarly, Manning, Kinzie, and Schuh (2006) describe models of student affairs practice that new professionals may encounter at various institutions throughout their career, such as the degree of student-centeredness or connections with the academic curriculum. These institutional difference factors impact professional socialization through graduate preparation, recruiting and hiring, and professional development (Hirt, 2006). Most higher education graduate preparation programs are housed at research universities, so if students become use to this singular model of student affairs practice, they may encounter incongruences that could impact their job performance and satisfaction (Hirt, 2006). Institutions may also actively recruit or ultimately hire candidates with experience at similar institutional types only (Hirt, 2006). To ameliorate this, Hirt (2006) suggests that hiring committees and managers consider demonstrated candidate competencies and work-style preferences that match institutional and position needs rather than just examine the list of campuses on a résumé, and then address any gaps through professional development. Professionals will need to adapt their practice to these varied institutional approaches and norms to be successful within a new campus organizational culture.

Current institutional issues in higher education administration will certainly vary from campus to campus as well, but often entail grappling with changing demographics, enrollment management, assessment and accountability, technology, and diminishing

resources (Andres & Finlay, 2004; Harper & Quaye, 2009; Hirt & Creamer, 1998). Organizational change within student affairs divisions has primarily been planned adaptive change, rather than a transformational change to our work or approach to student development. In adaptive change, new roles and structures are created to address internal and external organizational pressures (Tull & Kuk, 2012). Kuk, Banning, and Amey (2010) describe how student affairs units are facing these challenges and suggest utilizing organizational change theories and practices to manage ongoing adaptation. The challenges faced in the institutional context support the notion that student affairs educators need to be competent in assessment, evaluation, and research; human and organizational resources; leadership; social justice; and technology (ACPA & NASPA, 2015).

Current extra-institutional issues in higher education administration include navigating governing boards, state and federal government agencies, and public sentiment (Hirt & Creamer, 1998). As previously discussed, regulations and policies are promulgated in American higher education with the goal of mandating a degree of accountability. Magolda and Baxter Magolda (2011) and Love and Estanek (2004) provide an overview of many recent hot topics in student affairs, including consumerism, access and equity, social media use, student codes of conduct, alcohol and other drug education, parental involvement, and accountability and assessment. While Magolda and Baxter Magolda (2011) provide more of an overview of these current events in the field through case study analysis, Love and Estanek (2004) discuss organizational change approaches and how student affairs leaders have adapted to meet these new educational challenges. Ultimately, student success remains paramount (Tinto, 2012) and the current

conditions that matter in student success and retention include expectation setting and feedback, structured support networks, and engagement with the campus community. Fostering this success requires professionals at ease with competencies ranging from advising and supporting to law, policy, and governance (ACPA & NASPA, 2015).

Professional: Student Development Theory and Practice

The professional realm includes the various international and functional professional organizations, standards promulgated by the Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education, and the overall current body of knowledge in use by practitioners (Hirt & Creamer, 1998). A key body of knowledge for student affairs is student development theory. Jaeger et al. (2013) discuss the importance of applying theory to professional practice in student affairs. This is a key competency for student affairs educators, which ACPA and NASPA (2015) include under history, philosophy, and values as well as student learning and development.

How student affairs educators positively impact student learning, development, and growth has been extensively explored through various theories. Many of these can be classified psychosocial (Chickering & Reisser, 1993), cognitive-structural (Kitchener & King, 1994; Kohlberg, 1981; Perry, 1970), person-environmental (Strange & Banning, 2015), or typology theories (Holland, 1985; Myers, 1980) which examine individual maturity, identity, and lifespan; changes in cognition (Baxter Magolda & King, 2004; Baxter Magolda, 2009); how students interact with educational environments (Strange & Banning, 2015); and worldview (Patton et al., 2016). More recent trends in student development theory consider the learning experiences of students and explore the impact and fostering of student engagement (Kuh, Kinzie, Schuh, & Whitt, 2005; Patton et al.,

2016). A widely used example of a recent learning experience theory is the self-authorship model presented by Baxter Magolda and King (2004).

Recent research has ultimately focused on supporting student success in college (Astin, 1993; Astin, 1984; Kuh et al., 2005; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005; Tinto, 2012). Though engagement, involvement, retention, and student success are interrelated, the various researchers have nuanced differences that Wolf-Wendel, Ward, and Kinzie (2009) explore. Astin (1993; 1984) explores involvement, or the time and effort a student devotes to the college experience (both curricular and co-curricular), and concludes that the degree of involvement in the college environment leads to various educational outcomes. The Cooperative Institutional Research Program surveys new college students at many campuses in the United States and is a common involvement measure (Wolf-Wendel, Ward, & Kinzie, 2009). Engagement pairs time and effort measures of involvement with how colleges invest resources to support student learning (Kuh et al., 2005). A widely used instrument to measure college student engagement is the National Survey of Student Engagement, which examines student satisfaction, learning and development, persistence, and other factors (Wolf-Wendel, Ward, & Kinzie, 2009). Tinto's (2012) theory of academic and social integration is a common lens used to examine retention efforts of colleges and universities. It explores both student-specific and institutional factors that impact student departure (Wolf-Wendel, Ward, & Kinzie, 2009). Pascarella and Terenzini (2005) have a scale of five measures of integration: Peer Group Interactions, Interaction with Faculty, Faculty Concern for Student Development and Teaching, Academic and Intellectual Development, and Goal and Institutional Commitment. Key differences in these models are that involvement is often a laundry list

of experiences and linked to CIRP findings, while engagement adds depth of the students' experience along with institutional investment and the NSSE was developed to assess these, while integration considers multiple institutional and individual student factors and is more theoretical (Wolf-Wendel, Ward, & Kenzie, 2009). Successful professionals in student affairs need to possess a thorough understanding of these theories to inform their work with college students and promote student success and retention (ACPA & NASPA, 2015).

Student development theory to practice. Applying one's professional competence by applying relevant theories to practice is a hallmark of a professional (Argyris & Schön, 1974; Love, 2012; Stage & Dannells, 2000). Stage and Dannells (2000) discuss challenges in the practical utilization of student development theory, including the transition of student affairs as a profession from being more apprenticeship based to focused on strong graduate preparation programs, which may reduce new professionals' experience working closely with seasoned professionals in supervised practice. This is not to say that supervised practice is not present in graduate preparation programs, rather that colleges and universities now expect more performance from new masters-level professionals with varying quality and quantity of supervision afforded them (Stage & Dannells, 2000).

The notion of personal theories-in-use are also championed as sometimes providing greater insight and application than formal student development theory (Argyris & Schön, 1974; Jaeger et al., 2013; Love, 2012; Reason & Kimball, 2012; Stage & Dannells, 2000). Love (2012) finds that informal theory can serve as a crucial bridge between theory and practice. Stage and Dannells (2000) provide a framework for student

affairs professionals to consider formal and informal theories in their work by analyzing of the problem and key actors involved; considering multiple perspectives, the campus environment, and policy and political constraints; identifying relevant theory and alternative solutions; and finally weighing advantages and disadvantages to select a course of action. Reason and Kimball (2012) present a similar model that encourage professionals to consider formal and informal theory, institutional context, and reflective practice in decision making. Jaeger et al. (2013) describe a model for testing personal theories-in-use through formal research designs, similar to grounded theory. Roberts and Banta (2011) simply state that "theory stimulates us to ask critical questions while proficiency in practice provides tools that allow us to be competent and effective," (p. 58). Whatever formal or informal methods are used, student affairs educators must translate theory to practice in their professional work.

Conclusion of Review

To summarize, the literature described above detail aspects of professional socialization, competency development in student affairs, and current professional practices in student affairs that together create an overview of the environment in which competency development of higher education administration graduate students occurs. This review generally described professional socialization and competency development in student affairs, yet few details on how supervisors contribute to graduate students' competency development were found. Major theories of college student development were introduced to provide the reader an overview of topics that are likely to be discussed by study participants. Much of the literature reviewed above was also dated. The lack of

recent literature about professional competency development in student affairs is partially due to the recent adoption of the ACPA and NASPA competency areas.

Missing from the literature reviewed above is recent research utilizing the ACPA and NASPA competency areas in the context of graduate student socialization. As a result, the student affairs profession lacks information about this important educational process, specifically how the skills necessary for competent student affairs practice are learned or demonstrated by future professionals. Further research describing the process of graduate student competency development and the factors that may contribute to competency development is needed. This study aims to fill this literature gap. Research about professional competency development of student affairs graduate students will contribute to supervisors', educators', and students' own understanding of this important professional socialization process, while adding to the literature applying the ACPA and NASPA *Professional Competency Areas for Student Affairs Educators* (2015).

Setting for the Study

The setting for this study is three administrative-focused graduate preparation programs located within the greater Philadelphia region. Specifically, the University of Pennsylvania's Higher Education M.S.Ed., Rowan University's M.A. in Higher Education, and Temple University's Educational Leadership M.Ed. with a Higher Education Concentration are administrative-focused graduate preparation programs that serve as the sites of the study. A brief description of each institution and preparation program will follow.

University of Pennsylvania

The University of Pennsylvania's Higher Education M.S.Ed. provides a better understanding of the structure, governance, financing, and management of higher education enterprises through 10 courses (UPenn, 2015). Full-time students may complete the program in one year, and a comprehensive exam is required to graduate (UPenn, 2015). The supervised practice component of this program is through EDUC 592: Professional Development in Higher Education, which may coincide with internship or assistantship work (UPenn, 2015). Typically, 25 students enroll in this program each year, and 98% hold an assistantship or fellowship (ACPA, 2015). This site is appropriate for the study as it is an administrative-focused graduate preparation program that provides supervised practice opportunities for its students.

Rowan University

Rowan University is a selective, mid-sized, public, four-year research university located in southern New Jersey which offers a Master of Arts in Higher Education (Rowan, 2015). This is my current professional setting, and I supervise a graduate assistant and a student completing her or his internship course in the Higher Education Administration graduate program each semester. I have access to this site, its students, and professionals through my academic affiliation as a student and as a professional staff member in Student Life. The Division of Student Life and other administrative units at Rowan hosts these student interns and offer a number of graduate assistantships. In the M.A. in Higher Education program, students must complete 36 academic credits (roughly 12 courses), six of which are awarded through participation in a 300-hour internship (Rowan, 2015). Students generally complete the program in two years and are required to

complete a thesis (Rowan, 2015). Typically, 16 students enroll in the program each year. This site is appropriate for the study as it is an administrative-focused graduate preparation program that provides many supervised practice opportunities for its students.

Temple University

Temple University's Educational Leadership M.Ed. with a Higher Education Concentration consists of 30 credit hours (10 courses) and a culminating comprehensive exam (Temple, 2015). Field work is through a required 3-credit internship course (Temple, 2015). Temple does not participate in ACPA's Commission for Professional Preparation graduate programs directory (ACPA, 2015). This site is appropriate for the study as it is an administrative-focused graduate preparation program that provides supervised practice opportunities for its students.

Site Summary

The three sites encompass administrative-focused graduate preparation programs in the greater Philadelphia region. Each of these programs combine classroom learning and supervised professional practice, which is the phenomenon I am studying. Ultimately, these sites provided ample research participants who met the study criteria that will be presented in the following chapter.

Chapter 3

Methodology

The purpose of this grounded theory study is to explore the process of competency development of higher education administration graduate students as part of their professional socialization into the student affairs profession. This study explores whether site supervisors contribute to competency development during the supervised practice component of graduate education, and if so, how this process occurs. Themes indicating potential relationships between site supervisor support and competency development of graduate students were examined. The intent of the study is to derive a grounded theory of how site supervisors contribute to professional socialization and competency development of student affairs graduate students. The setting for this study is three administrative-focused graduate preparation programs located within the greater Philadelphia region. The study also adds to the literature on the ACPA and NASPA Professional Competency Areas for Student Affairs Practitioners (2010).

Research Questions

The research described here is driven by one overarching research question: Can theory describe the process by which graduate students develop competency as part of the professional socialization process in student affairs?

Sub-questions include the following:

1. How do supervisors support the competency development of graduate students preparing to be student affairs practitioners?

2. How do supervisors discuss and demonstrate student development theory and practice, professional values, and other aspects of professional socialization with higher education graduate students?
3. What specific aspects of supervised practice experiences support graduate student competency development?

Assumptions of and Rationale for Qualitative Research

Qualitative research is a methodological approach that allows participants – those involved in the research – to fully express their voices and perspectives in order to ascertain a profound, deep understanding of a phenomenon (Manning, 1999). This is rooted in constructivist inquiry, which emphasizes multiple perspectives of respondents, the unique role of the researcher when closely engaged with participants in a natural setting, and rigorous criteria for research quality (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Guba & Lincoln, 1989). Data collection and analysis procedures seek to obtain an in-depth understanding about participants and the context in which the research is situated (Manning, 1999). Common data collection strategies for qualitative research are interviewing, observation, and document collection (Manning, 1999). Data analysis in qualitative research might involve coding commonalities into themes, constantly comparing data or individual voices to one another, developing a case study, and/or generating theory (Manning, 1999).

Qualitative research is less about enumerating data about a population and more about giving voice to an individual or specific group of participants (Creswell, 2014; Maxwell, 2013; Rossman & Rallis, 2012). This is because an overarching assumption of qualitative or narrative research is that individuals have their own truth about the world

(Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Guba & Lincoln, 1989). In exploring human behavior, the events, individuals, objects, groups, and structures participants encounter in their environment must also be considered. These social interactions and the meanings associated with them form the basis of symbolic interactionism (Sandstrom, Lively, Martin, & Fine, 2014). Symbolic interactionism is a pragmatic sociological perspective that explores how people make meaning through their interactions with objects within their environment (Sandstrom et al., 2014). Reactions to physical, social, and abstract objects are informed by social constructs with symbolic meaning conveyed to others (Sandstrom et al., 2014). Symbolic interactionism is a specific perspective used in this study to describe the social process of competency development.

Qualitative Methodology and Student Affairs Research

I have selected qualitative methodology specifically because of these assumptions, which match the purpose of the research, which is primarily describing how a process works through participants' voices. This method provides rich detail specific to lived phenomenon, and as such is a common and supported methodology within student affairs (Manning, 1999). Many qualitative studies have illuminated the lived experiences of specific college student populations and generated the student development theories in wide use today (Bauman, 2013; Baxter Magolda & King, 2004; Baxter Magolda, 2009; Capps, 2010; Chickering & Reisser, 1993; Edwards & Jones, 2009; Eich, 2007; Firmin, Angelini, Tse, & Foster, 2012; Flora & Hirt, 2008; Ford, 2014; Hebert & Popadiuk, 2008; Lambert, 2005; LePeau, 2012; Livingston, 2009; Osteen, Owen, Komives, Mainella, & Longerbeam, 2005; Renn & Hodges, 2007; Renn, 2007; Roderick, 2008; Stevens, 2004; Supple, 2007; Torres, 2003; Troiano, 2003). For example, interviews of Goddard College

students formed the basis for a common college student development theory, Chickering's vectors of identity development (Chickering & Reisser, 1993; Manning, 1999). Qualitative inquiry can readily provide a snapshot of campus life that many student affairs professionals need when considering educational interventions for student learning, growth, and development (Manning, 1999). There are many specialized forms of qualitative research, including case study, ethnography, grounded theory, phenomenology, etc. (Creswell, 2014; Maxwell, 2013; Rossman & Rallis, 2012). Grounded theory is the specific methodological approach for this study.

Grounded Theory

Grounded theory is a research methodology that generates theory from qualitative data and analysis (Birks & Mills, 2015; Charmaz, 2014; Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Glasner & Strauss, 1967). The method was introduced by Glasner and Strauss (1967) as a qualitative mode of inquiry for sociological research. Strauss, a seminal methodologist in grounded theory, also published many works with Corbin, including *Basics of Qualitative Research: Techniques and Procedures for Developing Grounded Theory* (Corbin & Strauss, 2008) that define grounded theory as a prime qualitative research methodology.

Strauss also applied symbolic interactionism in his foundational approaches to grounded theory (Birks & Mills, 2015). Grounded theory scholars continue to explore and describe this method. Charmaz (2014) is a current leading grounded theory researcher who situates the methodology primarily in constructivism. Charmaz (2000) also describes the role symbolic interactionism can play in grounded theory, as the process of how we construct reality in our minds through words and actions of ourselves and others. This is the primary approach to grounded theory in my study.

Grounded theory has several characteristics that match the purposes of this study. Grounded theory can examine influences on phenomena (Maxwell, 2013), and this study examines the phenomena of how supervisors support graduate student competency development. Grounded theory researchers constantly interact with study data (Charmaz, 2014; Maxwell, 2013), and readers will see my constant comparison research procedures below. Further, I am also situated within this research phenomenon, so it is also part of my own daily lived experience. Ultimately, grounded theory inductively generates new theories, which I plan to do through this research (Maxwell, 2013). These theories are not simply conceptual, but grounded with data and tested, in this case from and by participant interviews. Gordon-Finlayson (2010) summarizes that "grounded theory starts with the detail of individual cases and uses the logic of induction to move from there to developing a theory that holds true for those cases," (p. 155). Grounded theory must include constant comparison, use of concepts and their development, theoretical sampling, saturation, and develop a well-delineated theory (Corbin & Strauss, 2008), all of which are demonstrated in this study.

Role of the Researcher

Birks and Mills (2015) state that "pragmatism and symbolic interactionism underpin Strauss' iteration of grounded theory methods," (p. 5) and this also matches my personal worldview. Pragmatists subscribe to John Dewey and George Mead's views that all inquiry starts from a problematic situation that is best explored by reflection and testing new ideas (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). Pragmatists assume that truth is what we know at any given time, but may later be disproven, and knowledge should be useful to everyday practical affairs (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). Constructivist grounded theory is

aligned with this theoretical foundation as it is based on knowledge gained through participants during the current time of research (Charmaz, 2014). I subscribe to these assumptions as I am focused on understanding current practice and generating theory to explain and make meaning of my current truth (Creswell, 2014). Ultimately, I would like to better understand the space in which I live and work, and as such have selected a higher education setting, specifically student affairs and graduate competency development as I supervise a number of graduate students learning their student affairs craft. An assumption from this worldview is that meaning-making is a result of human interaction, an inductive process that is generated from interactive work with others (Crotty, 1998).

As supervisor support of graduate student competency development in student affairs is a complex interpersonal relationship, I have selected qualitative research to explore and understand the phenomenon further (Creswell, 2014). I am interested in hearing personal stories from students and professionals in the field about this process, but I also understand that these relationships are part of a larger professional context. The conceptual framework and literature previously reviewed informs my understanding of this current overarching context.

I also subscribe to Birks and Mills' (2015) notion that a grounded theory researcher is a "subjective active participant in data generation with participants," (p. 52) as I actively work within this professional context with graduate students and will bring my own experiences with this topic. May and Perry (2014) assert that this is central to reflexive understanding in qualitative research, acknowledging the researcher's own praxis, role, "and social position related to the product and process of their work," (p.

110). I am most interested in this research topic as it has been a key aspect of my career from when I was a graduate student in Bowling Green State University's college student personnel program from 1999 to 2001. Since then, I have supervised numerous graduate students, and am proud to see several as outstanding student affairs educators in the field of higher education today. I intuitively see the impact supervisors can have on graduate student competency development, and was surprised to find little extant research on this specific phenomenon.

I believe it is my role as a supervisor to help graduate students develop competencies needed for their future professional practice in student affairs. I do have a personal belief that the most effective learning is a blend of graduate classroom learning and work experience. This comes from my own graduate experience where I gained significant experience through outstanding hands-on assistantship and practicum experiences, as well as knowledge and strategies from excellent classroom instruction. I also have my own assumptions from my negative experiences in the field and perceived gaps in both classroom instruction and supervision of graduate students. I assume that graduate students in student affairs preparation programs should experience significant learning from both inside and outside of the classroom. I do not propose that learning occurs better or more frequently in either the classroom or workplace setting.

These experiences and beliefs are shared in order to clarify my reflexive stance, I do not intend or presume to fully hold my assumptions in abeyance, but rather to bracket by making these clear as part of my research context in a more designed or cultural manner (Gearing, 2004). Lincoln (1995) argues that positionality helps increase quality in qualitative inquiry by recognizing any and all truths that can contribute to further

understanding. In this study, I am seeking to understand how supervisors contribute to the graduate students' competency development.

Methods

This section will detail the specific methods to be used throughout this qualitative study. However, new concepts requiring further exploration may emerge while in the field and may necessitate changes to this research design. Maxwell states that procedures in qualitative research "may need to be reconsidered or modified during the study in response to new developments or to changes in some other component," (2013, p. 2). Methods will continually be informed by research goals, questions, the conceptual framework, and validity concerns (Maxwell, 2013). A research design map for this study is presented in Appendix A. A comprehensive visual representation of procedures for developing grounded theory is presented in Charmaz (2014, p. 18). The procedures for grounded theory research that Charmaz (2014) outlines include: data collection, initial coding, focused coding and categorizing; ongoing theoretical sampling to develop theoretical categories; ongoing utilization of a constant comparative method; and theory building.

Site

The setting for this study is three administrative-focused graduate preparation programs located within the greater Philadelphia region. Specifically, the University of Pennsylvania's Higher Education M.S.Ed., Rowan University's M.A. in Higher Education, and Temple University's Educational Leadership M.Ed. with a Higher Education Concentration are administrative-focused graduate preparation programs that serve as the sites of the study. The site selection is appropriate and purposeful as these

institutions offer student affairs graduate preparation programs in which students must complete an internship in a professional setting and may also complete an assistantship. The internship component is designed for students to further develop competencies needed for professional practice in college student affairs. Administrative-focused graduate programs were selected as they are the most prevalent type of student affairs preparation program.

The number of students and professional supervisors at these sites was sufficient to develop a working grounded theory of how supervisors contribute to graduate student competency development. Multiple sites offered ample opportunities to identify participants who meet the sampling criteria below. Each site had access and research approval procedures that I carefully adhered to as I moved through the research process.

Participants and Sampling Criteria

Purposeful sampling was used to select information-rich cases (Patton, 2002; Rapley, 2014). Specifically, I selected participants using a blend of snowball and criterion sampling. Criterion sampling involves reviewing all cases that meet study criteria (Patton, 2002). For my study, the criteria is 1) professionals working full-time in a student affairs unit (such as campus activities programs, college unions, housing and residential life programs, and recreational sports programs) who currently supervise one or more students who are in a student affairs graduate preparation program or who aspire to a future full-time position in student affairs at a college or university; 2) graduate students enrolled in the student affairs preparation programs offered at the site or who are currently completing an internship or hold an assistantship within the site's student affairs unit; and/or 3) higher education administration graduate program faculty. Faculty are

included as participants as they often participate in the graduate student/supervisor relationship through an internship or practicum course in which the student reports and reflects upon their experiences with the supervised practice component of the graduate program.

Snowball, chain, or opportunistic sampling relies on asking participants to assist in identifying other informants (Patton, 2002). In this study, I asked participants to help identify other students in graduate preparation programs and professionals who met the criterion for sampling above as one of my interview protocol questions. This sampling method provided the number of participants needed to reach saturation. Saturation occurs when gathering additional data does not result in any new insights or categories (Charmaz, 2014; Gordon-Finlayson, 2010).

Depending on site permissions, I also had access to rosters of graduate students, staff, or was permitted to send e-mail invitations to participate to potential participants through a gatekeeper. These methods were selected in order to provide a firm basis for participant interviews. Criterion sampling can increase quality by being open to all possible cases that meet the predetermined qualifications for interview (Patton, 2002). Snowball sampling was also selected as it contributes to inductive, theory-building analysis (Miles et al., 2014).

Finally, an additional theoretical sample was determined later in the study. Theoretical sampling is a technique used in grounded theory studies to further explore working theories (Charmaz, 2014; Gordon-Finlayson, 2010; Miles et al., 2014; Rapley, 2014). These participants included previous interview participants and new participants to meet the needs described in the Data Collection: Theoretical sample section below.

The theoretical sampling strategy was used to get input on proposed theories and findings.

All participants completed an informed consent to participate in the research study. The informed consent document can be found in Appendix B. This was sent to participants prior to our first meeting, reviewed with them personally, signed and retained by the researcher. Participants may withdraw from the study at any time.

Maxwell (2013) suggests that researchers discuss relationships as an aspect of data collection. I interviewed people with whom I have existing relationships during this study. These relationships have been developed through my professional work at Rowan University since 2010. I view many potential participants in this study as my professional peers and colleagues, however within the administrative framework at Rowan University, I am a senior manager in the Division of Student Life and need to acknowledge the real or perceived power and privilege of my position. Interviews with colleagues who I already have worked closely with, and those whom I do not know as well, may only enhance professional and personal relationships due to the sharing of common experiences. However, the goal of the interview interactions is not to impact these relationships but rather to focus on the supervisor's role related to graduate competency development.

Data Collection Techniques

Intensive interviewing. Qualitative data was collected through intensive interviews (Charmaz, 2014; Rubin & Rubin, 2012). Intensive interviews explore participants' perspectives in-depth in order to obtain rich, detailed responses and an increased understanding of their lived experiences (Charmaz, 2014). This method

features open-ended questions and a semi-structured, responsive format that allows follow up on unanticipated areas of inquiry (Charmaz, 2014; Rubin & Rubin, 2012). During the interview, the researcher's perspectives stay in the background to fully explore participants' experience and concerns, particularly their views and actions around the research questions (Charmaz, 2014). This method is most appropriate for grounded theory, and will generate the level of detail I am seeking in participant perspectives about this research topic. For this study, I conducted and audio-recorded semi structured, one-on-one, in-person interviews. Interviewer perceptions may also enter the foreground during theoretical sampling interviews (Charmaz, 2014).

Symbolic interactionism is an approach that can raise theoretical questions about data in grounded theory research (Charmaz, 2014; Sandstrom et al., 2014). Specific interview strategies than can help lead to explorations of symbolic interactionism during data analysis are defining the situation, dramaturgical analysis, and the critical incident technique (Charmaz, 2014; Flanagan, 1954). Defining the situation asks participants to clearly define, label, and name situations and their actions in relation to one another (Charmaz, 2014). The critical incident technique involves interrogating a key incident, any event, activity, or role behavior that made a memorable impact to those involved (Flanagan, 1954). The researcher should seek out accurate and detailed behavioral descriptions (Flanagan, 1954). Probes that may elicit this level of detail include: what happened, what did you do or not do that impacted the result, what was the outcome, and what made this situation effective or ineffective (Rous & McCormack, 2006). This can work in tandem with a dramaturgical approach. A dramaturgical approach focuses on

meaning through action or inaction, scrutinizing details of decision-making and explanations of the actions of participants (Charmaz, 2014).

Applying these techniques as specific interview strategies to further probe participant responses will allow me to focus on a key example in rich detail when appropriate (Miles et al., 2014). This is also an inductive method and was selected to match the inductive qualities of this grounded theory study. This will shift the interview from more generic, open-ended questions to specific probes designed to completely detail an incident to the extent the participant is able. This will allow further exploration about a specific situation that might be most demonstrative of a discussed concept.

Theoretical sampling seeks pertinent data to develop an emerging theory (Charmaz, 2014). Gordon-Finlayson, (2010) explains that "this is a gradual sampling strategy in which participants are selected to further explore ideas that the researcher is developing from data already collected," (p.156). Theoretical sampling may also uncover variations and relationships between concepts (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). In my research, this entailed asking participants questions about a tentative category or proposed theory generated from prior data collection. Participants who have already been interviewed are often included in the theoretical sample to confirm and test understandings (Charmaz, 2014). Theoretical sampling may also be a seamless part of the iterative data collection and analysis process, particularly in later interviews (Charmaz, 2014). For example, I may tell a participant that a response is interesting and to explore it further because previous interviews featured similar or disparate themes. This will help to refine and elaborate upon emergent theory (Charmaz, 2014).

Document collection. The participants in this research produce multiple document artifacts that may provide valuable data to consider as part of this study. Examples of self-documentation that are likely to be encountered are official records, position descriptions, evaluation rubrics, training manuals, memoranda, notes, electronic mail, photographs, and websites (Coffey, 2014). Documents that are likely to discuss the professional socialization of graduate students or their competency development was collected when possible by the researcher at each site. Some document collection and review, such as visiting student affairs departmental and graduate program websites, was obtained prior to entering the field. I also asked for copies of position descriptions, training materials, and evaluation forms/rubrics to be sent electronically prior to interviews when possible. Other items were discussed during interviews or visibly displayed in the field and obtained with permission of the participants.

Observation. Crotty (1998) assumes that contextual understanding can be more fully explored by visiting participants in the field and gathering information personally. In my study I apply this in two ways: first by conducting on-site interviews and then by observing the setting in detail. I requested that the interviews be conducted in person at the participant's workplace whenever possible in order to collect additional observational data; observation was a secondary data collection strategy. During interview visits, I observed the workplace environment and look for specific items such as student development theory and/or social justice texts, the presence of graduate students, and other artifacts (such as photos or notes) from students. These environmental cues may demonstrate interest or past experience with areas of student affairs competency development. For instance, presence of student development or social justice theory texts

may indicate that the participant has read or intends to read about those subjects, and may have an understanding or at least value of theory. The presence and number of graduate students in the office may confirm that the supervisor does indeed work with students, and may also support the frequency or level of involvement the participant has with them. Other artifacts may represent relationships developed with supervisees.

Instrumentation

A possible combined interview and observation protocol that reminded me to look for these environmental indicators can be found in Appendix C and D. Interview questions that relate to each research question are included. A document review protocol is also found in Appendix E. Relationships between protocol items and research questions are listed in Table 1. Prior to completing my dissertation proposal, I piloted the protocols with trusted colleagues who met study criteria. I gauged the level of detail the protocols are able to elicit, asked the pilot participants for feedback, and assessed potential improvements to the instruments with my committee members.

Table 1

Interview Protocol Mix

Research sub-questions	Informed by protocols
1. How do supervisors support the competency development of graduate students preparing to be student affairs practitioners?	Student interview 3, a, b, c, h, i, j Supervisor interview: 1e; 2, a, b, c; 3, b, f, g, h Document collection Observations

Table 1 (continued)

Research sub-questions	Informed by protocols
2. How do supervisors discuss and demonstrate student development theory and practice, professional values, and other aspects of professional socialization with higher education graduate students?	Student interview 3d, e, f, g Supervisor interview: 2b; 3a, b, c, d, f; 5, a, b, c Document collection Observations
3. What specific aspects of supervised practice experiences support graduate student competency development?	Student interview: 2a, b; 3g, i, j; 4b, c, d, e, f, g Supervisor interview: 1e; 3e, g, h; 5, a, b, c Document collection

Interview protocol. A responsive interview protocol with main questions to introduce each aspect of the research question; follow-up questions to seek detailed thematic, conceptual, or behaviors that the participant discusses; and probes to manage the depth and flow of the conversation was used (Rubin & Rubin, 2012). While I am very interested in how participants make meaning of their environment and experiences and generally provide open-ended prompts to allow them to fully define their situations or describe a critical incident, I have also included a number of specific probes and follow up questions specific to research questions to ensure these topics are covered during our conversation.

Different protocols for students (Appendix C) and supervisors (Appendix D) have been established. The student protocol covers their graduate coursework and supervised practice experiences; asks the participant to describe their supervisor, working environment, and relationship; and inquires about their understanding of professional

competency areas for student affairs educators. The supervisor protocol asks about the graduate students the professional supervises; how the supervisor approaches work with graduate students; and inquires about their understanding of professional competency areas for student affairs educators. Both protocols close by asking for additional contacts to serve as possible participants as part of the defined sampling criteria, and an open-ended question to discuss anything else that may be helpful for my study.

Document collection protocol. Both the process of document creation and consumption and the meaning or information conveyed via the document can be of interest (Coffey, 2014). Prompts about both factors comprise the document collection protocol in Appendix E. This protocol may be completed during document collection, such as when visiting a website or found while waiting for an interview, or later after a document was sent by e-mail or provided at an interview for future review.

This protocol is in place to provide consistency when reviewing documents obtained from multiple research sites. It prompts for the site, a description of the artifact, and where it is found. Questions about the origin and purpose of the document and intended audience are included. To get a sense of the timeliness of the document, the researcher attempted to ascertain when the document was created and when it was typically used.

Observation protocol. Observations were documented using prompts from the interview/observation protocols in Appendix C and D. Observation notes described the physical setting, the ambiance, and details about artifacts (Marvasti, 2014). As observation notes are socially constructed by the researcher/observer, this somewhat blends data collection and inductive analysis (Marvasti, 2014). This provided another

opportunity to reflect on symbolic interactionism in this study, through generalizations about plausible relationships among concepts and items within the research setting and how the participants make meaning of their environment (Marvasti, 2014).

Data Analysis

Data management. Interviews were digitally recorded using a Livescribe Smartpen and the iOS Livescribe+ mobile application. Supporting written notes were taken using the Smartpen, which matches when written comments were made in the audio recording using time logging. The Smartpen also digitally transfers the written notes to the Livescribe+ mobile and desktop applications, which offer handwriting recognition, search, and export functions. The audio recordings from Livescribe+ were then transcribed as Microsoft® Word and MAXQDA documents.

Digital audio files and handwritten notes were stored on an encrypted and fingerprint secured mobile phone (iPhone) and on the local drive of an encrypted and password-protected laptop computer. Consent documents and any other artifacts from the field were scanned and also stored electronically on the local drive of the computer. All digital files may also be accessed on an encrypted and fingerprint secured iPad mobile device. Field notes, memos, and written dissertation work was composed on the local drive of the computer and/or on the iPad. All digital files were backed up to a password and two-factor random number authenticator-secured backup service, Dropbox.

Following approval of the dissertation and publication of study results, all digital files were saved to a password protected compressed (ZIP file) archive on the local drive of the computer, which may also be backed up to Dropbox. Other than the dissertation archive file, any and all original digital files (including but not limited to audio

recordings, Livescribe+ notes, transcripts, MAXQDA files, etc.) will then be deleted from all devices (including but not limited to computer, iPad, and iPhone).

Data analysis approach. The data analysis approach for this study is diagrammed in Appendix F. Analytic memo writing occurs throughout data analysis as a central method of the constant comparison approach in grounded theory (Charmaz, 2014; Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Gordon-Finlayson, 2010; Saldaña, 2013). Interview transcripts, documents, and observation notes were coded using open, focused, and axial coding methods (Charmaz, 2014; Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Gordon-Finlayson, 2010; Saldaña, 2013). Codes informed theory building, and a theoretical sample will engage tentative theories until a grounded theory is reached for dissemination in the dissertation findings (Charmaz, 2014; Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Gordon-Finlayson, 2010; Saldaña, 2013). This data analysis approach is further detailed in this section.

Transcripts. Interviews were transcribed and reviewed as the first step in data analysis (Kowal & O'Connell, 2014). The data was organized for analysis digitally. Digital audio files were transcribed from Livescribe+ software to Microsoft® Word or MAXQDA by a transcriptionist. After transcription, I listened to the original audio recording and viewed handwritten interview notes while reviewing the interview transcript. This served to confirm the transcription and also to brought me back closer to the data in preparation for coding. I imported the transcribed document into MAXQDA and assigned participant aliases. This preparation led to exploring the data further during a memoing process.

Analytic memo writing. Memo writing occurs throughout the process research process in grounded theory studies (Charmaz, 2014; Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Gordon-

Finlayson, 2010; Saldaña, 2013). I kept a digital methodological journal throughout the research process that allowed me to document my thoughts and rationale for decisions and approaches for later review and reflection (Charmaz, 2014). Memos are tentative works in progress written throughout grounded theory studies and reflectively flesh out the conceptual content of the developing grounded theory (Gordon-Finlayson, 2010). Specifically, grounded theory researchers often memo about emerging concepts, ask reflexive questions, explain ideas, diagram processes, define codes and conceptual categories, compare participants' responses to one another, or advance tentative ideas about emergent theories (Gordon-Finlayson, 2010), or as Saldaña (2013) states simply "a place to dump your brain," (p. 41). Gordon-Finlayson (2010) describes memo writing as the engine of grounded theory, where the "interpretive and theory-generating processes happen in a grounded theory project," (p. 164).

Early memos recorded what I saw emerging in the data, explained codes as they were established, and was a reflective tool to focus and further direct data collection (Charmaz, 2014). Memos also describe processes described and the conditions (contributing to supervisor support, for example) in which they occurred, and what the participants reported as the consequences of the behavior (Charmaz, 2014). Memos took the form of brief informal narratives, brainstormed word clouds, and graphic representations of a process (Charmaz, 2014; Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Gordon-Finlayson, 2010; Saldaña, 2013). Memos were also used to acknowledge and discuss any disjuncture between interviews, documents collected, and observations.

Gordon-Finlayson (2010) describes the constant comparison approach as "cycling back and forth between the data and analysis until a substantive theory is developed," (p.

175). Memos and coding are two of the primary techniques that were iterative in the data analysis approach to this study. An analytic memo described each code, and review of memos led to additional codes to watch for, necessitating another review of transcript data, and so on. The iterative constant comparison process repeated until categories emerged that offer considerable understanding about a phenomenon, relationships to other categories are clear (Corbin & Strauss, 2008), and a credible, original, and useful grounded theory was emergent that resonated with the researcher and participants (Charmaz, 2014).

Coding. Coding is both a data reduction and data analysis approach (Saldaña, 2013). Coding in grounded theory seeks not only to reduce data, but ultimately to develop theory by induction (Gordon-Finlayson, 2010). Gordon-Finlayson (2010) presents three steps in grounded theory coding: 1) open and focused coding to generate a structure of concepts; 2) move related concepts into conceptual categories that are more general and explanatory, eventually becoming theoretical; and 3) a statement of a proposed grounded theory. However, Gordon-Finlayson (2010) also reminds grounded theory researchers that "coding is simply a structure on which reflection (via memo-writing) happens. It is the memo writing that is the engine of grounded theory, not coding," (p. 164). Transcripts, audio files, observation notes, and document analyses were imported to MAXQDA computer assisted qualitative data analysis software for coding. This study utilized open, focused, axial, and theoretical coding methods (Saldaña, 2013).

Pre-coding. Pre-coding was conducted during the transcription process (Saldaña, 2013). Kowal and O'Connell (2014) recommend that researchers define specific guidelines for formatting and notating transcripts before transcription begins. For this

study, a specific format for interview transcripts was established with line numbers and participant and observer identifiers prior to each quotation passage. Background information, such as noise, laughter, pauses, etc. was noted in brackets. Transcription passages were bolded or highlighted for review to ensure clarity or to denote an item of potential importance to the study.

Initial open coding. Open and focused coding develops a structure of conceptual categories and, as Gordon-Finlayson (2010) states, "a theory is developed that emerges from the relationship between the core categories and other major concepts," (p. 175). The coding process looks for examples present within the data or from new data (Charmaz, 2014). Open coding involves labeling a section of interview transcript with a code title, which may be in-vivo or constructed (Gordon-Finlayson, 2010; Saldaña, 2013). In-vivo coding is using participant's own phrasing as a categorical theme, whereas constructed codes are a researcher's summarization of the text (Charmaz, 2014; Saldaña, 2013). Charmaz (2014) encourages researchers to code for actions, which may be richer when analyzing processes or events that can contribute to theory building. Coding decisions are a ripe topic for analytic memoing (Charmaz, 2014; Saldaña, 2013).

Focused coding. Focused coding selects some of the most useful open codes to apply them to larger sections of text (Gordon-Finlayson, 2010). This uses earlier codes to make decisions about themes that make the most analytic sense to categorize data incisively and completely (Charmaz, 2014, p. 138). This allows the researcher to examine large batches of data and directs the analysis towards possible theoretical codes (Charmaz, 2014). Memos may be used to raise focused codes to conceptual categories, and are useful for theory building (Charmaz, 2014). After open and focused coding, these

conceptual categories and incomplete understandings raised can be used as future interview topics or subjects for analytic memos (Charmaz, 2014).

Axial coding. Axial coding relates categories to subcategories by utilizing the constant comparison method to relate concepts to one another (Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Gordon-Finlayson, 2010). Open and axial coding are related and may occur simultaneously, particularly as the research progresses and the researcher becomes more familiar analyzing data for existing categories (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). Axial coding helps researchers apply an analytic frame to the data, which is essential for moving toward theory building (Charmaz, 2014). Corbin and Strauss (2008) suggest that axial codes should both link and elaborate categorical data, again with the goal of honing in on possible theory. Gordon-Finlayson (2010) suggests that researchers write a memo for each axial code or when an insight between axial codes is revealed. Grounded theory researchers again use the constant comparison method here to check their hunches, in this case axial codes, with interview and analytic memo data (Corbin & Strauss, 2008).

Theoretical coding. Reoccurring interview statements should be regarded as theoretically plausible when building theory (Charmaz, 2014; Thornberg & Charmaz, 2014). Theoretical coding interrelated previous themes and descriptions, adding precision and clarity (Charmaz, 2014; Creswell, 2014; Thornberg & Charmaz, 2014). Thornberg and Charmaz (2014) provide examples of data analyzed through initial/open, focused, and theoretical coding steps. The initial basis for interpretation is the conceptual framework presented in Chapter Two along with other participant insights as the study progresses. This is a selective coding process, resulting in a core category to be used for theory building. I then interpreted and suggested meanings through a grounded theory.

Data interpretation. Data in grounded theory studies is primarily interpreted through analytic memos (Gordon-Finlayson, 2010). A specific way that findings could be represented is in a code map (Anfara, Brown, & Mangione, 2002). This would visually represent codes and how they relate to one another. Other interpretation exercises may entail memoing about alternative core categories or displaying a word frequency count or graphic (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). Ultimately, data was constructed into a proposed theory and interpreted by both the researcher and the theoretical sample participants during theory generation.

Theory generation. The proposed outcome of this study is a grounded theory of how student affairs educators support competency development among the graduate students whom they supervise. Charmaz (2014) lists that grounded theory might entail: "1) an empirical generalization, 2) a category or core variable, 3) a predisposition, 4) an explication of the process, 5) a relationship between variables, 6) an explanation, 7) an abstract understanding, and/or 8) a description," (p. 241). Theory-building in study is likely to explicate the process of graduate student competency development. Corbin and Strauss (2008) remind grounded theory researchers to look for gaps or breaks in logic throughout the data analysis process, and particularly when proposing theory. In this study, analytic memoing, constant comparison via returning to the data, and the theoretical sample are primary ways that the researcher looked for these gaps in the data.

Alternate explanations and methods to control for alternatives are considered during theory generation. Ultimately, the proposed theory was firmly grounded in the relationships and data gathered during the study, the data analysis and interpretation process that informed the theory, and is thoroughly described in the findings. Transcripts,

coding decisions, and memos were regularly reviewed throughout the constant comparison process in an effort to reduce drift. Theoretical sampling was also a primary method of investigating alternatives by checking proposed theory and asking participants to suggest alternatives. The theoretical sampling process also uncovered participants whose perspectives did not resonate with the proposed theory. Identifying participants where theory does and does not fit is a method of controlling for alternatives as well as honestly describing research process, which also contributes to quality.

Credibility and Quality

Corbin and Strauss (2008) debate of the appropriateness of applying more scientific or postpositivist concepts of validity or truth to creative grounded theory research. They propose being more concerned with quality in grounded theory research rather than validity, and define quality as innovative, thoughtful, and creative research (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). This study is creative as it is based on some conceptual literature but is ultimately be grounded in new participant/practitioner data. Arminio and Hultgren (2002) discuss the increasing prevalence of qualitative research in student affairs and question what criteria of quality are best for student affairs researchers and their professional journals. They find that goodness in qualitative research in student affairs is making meaning of a phenomenon for the purpose of practical action (Arminio & Hultgren, 2002). Meaning-making leading to recommendations with implication for professional practice match the goals of this study.

Charmaz (2014) believes that in grounded theory research "theoretical plausibility trumps the accuracy to which many qualitative researchers aspire," (p. 89). Charmaz (2014) encourages grounded theory researchers to address credibility, originality,

resonance, and usefulness. These quality issues were considered and addressed throughout the research process. The degree to which the researcher follows through to implement the methods and procedures as designed also contributes to quality (Corbin & Strauss, 2008).

Credibility

Credibility in grounded theory may be demonstrated by rich, thick descriptions in sufficient detail that readers can feel as if they were in the field with the researcher, evidence about how the data was gathered and analyzed is presented, and the kinds of data that interpretations are based on are specified (Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Glasner & Strauss, 1967). Specifically in my study, I utilize actual quotes from participants to describe the setting and serve as evidence to support interpretations. I may show quotations as examples of how codes were selected and developed along with my memos. I have detailed my data collection and analysis plans here, and describe how these were actually implemented in Chapter 4. Charmaz (2014) equates the theoretical sampling in grounded theory with member-checking, a more accepted positivist term that describes confirming findings with your participants, which also contributes to credibility. Grounded theory researchers should also have feeling and sensitivity for the topic, participants, and researchers (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). As this study deals with the researcher's own site and a topic and participants of interest, I feel this also lends itself to credibility due to this sensitivity factor.

Originality

Originality is inherent in inductive grounded theory research. Self-awareness is important for quality grounded theory research as researchers serve as interpreters

translating data into theory (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). I utilized memoing as a main strategy to check my self-awareness throughout the process. Charmaz (2014) also specifies that researchers should question the insights offered by categories, whether the analysis provides a new conceptual rendering of the data, what the significance of the study is, and how the grounded theory challenges, extends, or refines current ideas, concepts, and practices (p. 337). These criteria for originality are assessed in the findings and discussion of the final study.

Resonance

Quality research should be innovative, thoughtful, and creative in that it "resonates with readers' and participants' life experiences", (Corbin & Strauss, 2008, p. 302). Resonance deals with the applicability of how a theory fits the setting (Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Glasner & Strauss, 1967). This study addresses resonance by situating the research and researcher within the current professional work setting, similar to a prolonged engagement approach (Rossman & Rallis, 2012). A major criterion for this study's ultimate grounded theory was how it resonated with theoretical sample participants.

Usefulness

A theory should be accessible to be understood by common practitioners in the field, and provide the user tools to bring about change (Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Glasner & Strauss, 1967). In my study, I worked to frame the resulting theory so it can be understood and applied by graduate students and their supervisors. Again, this was tested during the theoretical sample.

Ethical Considerations

An ultimate ethical consideration in qualitative research is to be true to participant voices while acknowledging that the final product is always the researcher's interpretation of participant data (Manning, 1999). In addition, this study is also bound by professional ethical standards and research oversight. The professional ethical standards that are most applicable to my practice in a higher education setting are those of College Student Educators International (ACPA, 2006) and the Council for the Advancement of Standards (2006). ACPA has a detailed *Statement of Ethical Principles and Standards* (2006). These standards include: professional responsibility and competence, student learning and development, responsibility to the institution, and responsibility to society (ACPA, 2006). ACPA then enumerates principles for each of the four standards. The CAS *Statement of Shared Ethical Principles* (2006) focuses on autonomy, non-malfeasance, beneficence, justice, fidelity, veracity, and affiliation. Related to research, the CAS principle of autonomy specifically includes "we study, discuss, investigate, teach, conduct research, and publish freely within the academic community," (p. 1), however all principles are closely related to ethical research practice. ACPA (2006) details that researchers should "possess the knowledge, skills, emotional stability, and maturity" (p. 2) necessary for their role, "inform students about the purpose of assessment and research; make explicit the planned use of results prior to assessment requesting participation in either" (p. 3), "gain approval of research plans involving human subjects from the institutional committee with oversight responsibility prior to the initiation of the study" (p. 3), "conduct and report research studies accurately. Researchers will not engage in fraudulent research nor will they distort or misrepresent

their data or deliberately bias their results" (p. 4), "acknowledge major contributions to research projects and professional writings through joint author- ships with the principal contributor listed first. They will acknowledge minor technical or professional contributions in notes or introductory statements" (p. 4), "Share original research data with qualified others upon request" (p. 4), and "communicate the results of any research judged to be of value to other professionals and not withhold results reflecting unfavorably on specific institutions, programs, services, or prevailing opinion" (p. 4). This study strived to abide by these professional ethical standards, mainly through institutional review board and informed consent processes.

Additional oversight for ethical considerations of this study was supervised through the Rowan University's Office of Research Glassboro Campus Institutional Review Board for the social, behavioral, and educational sciences. The primary researcher completed the CITI human subjects training program. After the dissertation proposal was accepted by committee members, an eIRB application was completed along with research protocols, consent forms, and other required information. A similar process was completed as needed with the institutional review boards or equivalent at each research site.

Throughout the research process, I openly disclosed the purpose of my research. This is also included in all consent and protocols. I also made efforts to respect the research setting and disrupt regular operations as little as possible. I strived to respect the privacy and maintain the confidentiality of participants through the use of aliases and/or composite participant profiles (Creswell, 2014).

Conclusion

This is an exciting study that elucidates the vital role of the supervisor in developing graduate students' competency for student affairs practice. It has the potential to inform supervisor best practices to encourage competency development through a theoretical explanation of current methods. A grounded theory study is most interesting to give voice to graduate students' and supervisors' lived experiences while yielding a theoretical understanding of their important work. I conducted this study in part to improve my professional practice, both as a researcher and as a supervisor of higher education graduate students. Results have the potential to support graduate student learning and development outside of the classroom, in turn helping to yield more prepared, competent, and successful student affairs educators.

The described methods were implemented at each site after approval was obtained there. Findings are described in Chapter Four. Chapters Five and Six are presented in the form of manuscripts to be submitted for publication to peer-reviewed journals.

Chapter 4

Findings

This chapter discusses the methodological changes that occurred during the study and introduces the findings. This serves as an overview of the findings, which are further discussed in Chapters Five and Six, which are written as scholarly articles. Descriptions of these articles and the publications targeted for publication conclude the chapter.

Methodological Changes

Data collection for this study included document collection, intensive interviews, and observation. While the findings below were informed by each of these data collection strategies, intensive interviews were certainly the most fruitful. The documents provided for analysis were most often job descriptions and occasional rubrics from the graduate program faculty for the supervisor to complete. The job descriptions really did not illuminate the scope of supervisor support for graduate student competency development as much as the interviews, and the rubrics provided examples of formal feedback and evaluation protocols, but they were often developed by faculty rather than supervisors. One participant provided a detailed co-curricular learning plan for his graduate students that was grounded in the ACPA and NASPA (2015) competencies. This was a great example of intentional supervisor support and professional socialization. Observation also uncovered artifacts in both supervisor and student environments such as student affairs texts, but was not significant to draw conclusions beyond self-reported utilization.

Another methodological change occurred during the theoretical sample stage of the study. During interviews, many participants expressed interest in this research topic and a desire for further opportunities to discuss it with others. Based on that feedback, it

was decided to conduct the theoretical sample interviews in a group environment, structured similarly to a focus group (see Birks & Mills, 2015, p. 74 & 75 for a discussion of focus groups in grounded theory research). This allowed the participants (N=6) an opportunity to review the proposed findings and tentative theory together and comment on each other's thoughts and reactions. This format provided significant, rich input that led to the findings briefly described below. Two faculty were also interviewed individually as part of the theoretical sample. Table 2 lists the breakdown of type of participants across the research sites.

Table 2

Participants

Site	Student	Supervisor	Faculty	Total	Theoretical
Penn	1	2	1	4	2
Rowan	5	5	-	10	5
Temple	3	1	1	5	1
Totals	9	8	2	19	8

Discussion of Findings

This study sought to generate theory to explicate the process by which graduate students develop competency as part of the professional socialization process in student affairs. The three sub-research questions are: 1) How do supervisors support the competency development of graduate students preparing to be student affairs practitioners? 2) How do supervisors discuss and demonstrate student development

theory and practice, professional values, and other aspects of professional socialization with higher education graduate students? and 3) What specific aspects of supervised practice experiences support graduate student competency development? An overview of findings is displayed in Table 2. Table 2 presents a code map that shows the progression of data from the open and focused codes listed in Table 3 to conceptual categories, answers to the sub-research questions, and ultimately the grounded theory. A code map visually represents codes and how they relate to one another through each iteration of data analysis (Anfara et al., 2002). Code maps are meant to be read from the bottom, showing initial codes, to the top, which displays answers to the research questions (Anfara et al., 2002).

Supervisor Support

How supervisors support the competency development of graduate students preparing to be student affairs practitioners was a key question examined in this study. This question explored the conceptual realm of how students perceive supervisor support and was examined through symbolic interactionalism and meaning-making lenses, including how graduate students define supervisor support and construct meaning of supervisor actions in the context of competency development. Participants described supervisor support through: A) supervisory style, B) relationship structure, C) ongoing feedback, and the D) achievement of specific desired outcomes. Figure 2 displays a weighted word cloud for the open and focused codes related to supervisor support (also listed in Table 3 as items 1A, 1B, 1C, and 1D). The size of the codes in Figure 2 are larger depending on how often they occurred among participants in the data, and the color of the codes correspond to what conceptual category (from Table 2) that they are associated with. Supervisors described by the participants in this study carefully balanced

Table 3

Code Mapping for Professional Competency Development

Statement of Proposed Grounded Theory *A proposed theory to describe the process by which graduate students develop competency as part of the professional socialization process in student affairs is:* Higher education administration graduate students are exposed to professional competencies for student affairs practice and socialized to the profession inside and outside of the classroom. Significant learning moments and supervisor support during supervised practice allow students to develop skill in professional competency areas.		
SQ #1: How do supervisors support the competency development of graduate students preparing to be student affairs practitioners?	SQ #2: How do supervisors discuss and demonstrate student development theory and practice, professional values, and other aspects of professional socialization with higher education graduate students?	SQ #3: What specific aspects of supervised practice experiences support graduate student competency development?
Supervisors balance autonomy and hands-on coaching to provide the level of support needed for graduate students based on individual needs, the progression through their graduate experience, or the assigned project/task.	Supervisors often discussed (and sometimes demonstrated) theory-to-practice, professionalism, and other realities of student affairs work when socializing graduate students.	Graduate students benefit from significant learning moments of hands-on/direct application that blend their classroom knowledge with real-world experience in an environment that supports reflective practice and continuous improvement of professional competencies.
Conceptual Categories		
1A. Supervisory style 1B. Relationship structure 1C. Ongoing feedback 1D. Desired outcomes	2A. Connecting theory and practice 2B. Job preparation 2C. Work/life balance 2D. Institutional culture and politics 2E. Case studies	3A. Hands-on experiences 3B. Opportunity for reflection 3C. Trial and error in a learning laboratory 3D. Professional development and training 3E. Direct exposure to ACPA/NASPA competency areas

Note. Based on code maps presented in Anfara et al. (2002) and Flora and Hirt (2008).

Table 4

Open and Focused Codes

1A. Autonomy	2A. Discussing student development theories	3A. Broad experience across functional areas
1A. Mentor	2A. Reflective practice/ explaining why	3A. Specialized expertise in one functional area or role
1A. Hands-on	2A. Recognizing/discussing disconnects between classroom learning and supervised practice	3A. Direct work with students
1A. Intrusive	2A. Discussing/applying ACPA/NASPA competencies	3A. Liaison between undergraduates and staff
1A. Coach	2A. Explaining/clarifying decision-making process	3A. Responsibility for a project, program, or publication
1B. Formal/structured	2B. Discussing future career goals	3A. Collaboration (with other staff/units)
1B. Flexible	2B. The reality of student affairs work – not always glamorous	3B. Connect classroom learning (knowledge/ theories) with supervised practice
1B. Individual student-centered approaches	2B. Reviewing résumés/ cover letters	3B. Debriefing after events
1B. Emotional support	2B. Professional attire/ manners	3B. Guided meaning-making discussions
1B. Included in departmental/campus activities	2B. Networking	3B. Classroom assigned supervised practice reflections
1B. Individual attention/ facetime	2B. Transition from undergraduate to graduate roles	3B. Weekly reports
1B. Role clarification	2C. Time management	3C. Failure is accepted as an option
1C. Direct feedback	2C. Balancing academic and supervised practice demands	3C. Trial and error
1C. Formal performance appraisals	2C. Personal health and wellness	3C. Attempts to replicate others' observed success
1C. Assessments/reflections of the graduate student for faculty/coursework	2D. Discussing organizational cultures	3C. Observation then repetition (see, do, get)
1C. Inspiration/motivation	2D. Political savvy	3D. Formal training programs
1C. Reciprocity/seek input	2E. Discussing what-if scenarios	3D. Attending conferences and workshops
1C. Open/honest communication	2E. Reviewing best practices/benchmarking	3D. Professional organization publications/ involvement
1C. Reality check		3D. Asking for more responsibility
1C. Appreciation/ recognition		3D. Self-initiative
1D. Skill-building		
1D. Intentionality		
1D. Opportunities to explore different offices, programs, services		
1D. "Window to the world": other institutions/ types		
1D. Formal expectations/ accountability		

autonomy and hands-on coaching to provide the level of support needed for graduate students. This is based on individual needs, the progression through their graduate experience, or the assigned project/task.

Figure 2. Weighted word cloud for supervisor support codes.

Supervisors are expected to support graduate student learning and development of professional competencies for student affairs practice. Participants expressed a desire for direct feedback, concrete skill-building opportunities, and mentorship. Direct feedback, whether constructive feedback or appreciation/recognition, was described as a supportive supervisor behavior. Participants also described skill-building as an indicator of supervisor support, from behaviors ranging from intentionality, providing opportunities to be involved in campus life outside of the internship/assistantship site, approval to explore other offices, and serving as a "window to the world" of other institutional types and campus experiences. Mentorship was mentioned many times as a way supervisors demonstrated support, by providing advice and encouragement to students.

Professional Socialization

Another topic explored in the research was how supervisors discuss and demonstrate student development theory and practice, professional values, and other aspects of professional socialization with higher education graduate students. This is question is rooted in practice, specifically supervisor behaviors in the supervised practice environment that contribute to professional socialization of graduate students. The research finds that supervisors often discussed (and sometimes demonstrated) theory-to-practice, professionalism, and other realities of student affairs work when socializing graduate students. Participants' responses related to professional socialization can be categorized as A) connecting theory and practice, B) job preparation, C) work/life balance, D) institutional culture and politics, and E) case studies. The open and focused codes relating to these conceptual categories are displayed as a weighted word cloud in Figure 3. Discussing and applying the ACPA/NASPA (2015) competencies, student development theories, and future career goals were the most frequent topics of professional socialization conversations reported among supervisors and students. Another aspect of professional socialization that was frequently mentioned by participants was the importance of understanding institutional politics and organizational culture.

Figure 3. Weighted word cloud for professional socialization codes.

Significant Learning Moments

The final sub-research question also deals with practice in the supervised practice environment, but is inclusive of all aspects: supervisor, student, and organizational/ culture factors. When examining what specific aspects of supervised practice experiences support graduate student competency development, participants' responses can be categorized into these five concepts: A) hands-on experiences, B) opportunity for reflection, C) trial and error in a learning laboratory, D) professional development and training, and E) direct exposure to the ACPA/NASPA (2015) competency areas. Figure 4 displays the open and focused codes relating to these conceptual categories are displayed as a weighted word cloud.

Graduate students benefit from significant learning moments of hands-on/direct application that blend their classroom knowledge with real-world experience in an environment that supports reflective practice and continuous improvement of professional competencies. By providing real-world experiences that relate to their classroom learning, students can improve skills in the competency areas for student affairs educators through reflective professional practice. Many students and supervisors

reported the safety of being able to try and fail under the support and guidance of a supervisor was a key factor in their ability to have learning moments. Involvement in professional organizations, participation in webinars, formal training programs, and reading professional publications were also reported as significant opportunities for learning in the supervised practice environment. A suggested approach for supervisors to utilize in order to maximize significant learning experiences, engaged learning, is described in Chapter 6.

Figure 4. Weighted word cloud for significant learning moments codes.

A Grounded Theory

Applying these findings, a grounded theory to describe the process by which graduate students develop competency as part of the professional socialization process in student affairs is: Higher education administration graduate students are exposed to professional competencies for student affairs practice and socialized to the profession inside and outside of the classroom. Significant learning moments and supervisor support during supervised practice allow students to develop skill in professional competency areas.

The level of exposure to the *Professional Competency Areas for Student Affairs Educators* (ACPA & NASPA, 2015) varied greatly among the participants in this study. Both students and supervisors ranged from no knowledge of the competencies before being interviewed for this study, having exposure in either the classroom or supervised practice environment but not both, to advanced knowledge and application. Most interesting was that participants from the same site often demonstrated this continuum of knowledge as well, suggesting that some professors or supervisors place more emphasis on including and discussing the competencies in their work than others. Whether explicitly naming or having prior exposure to the ACPA and NASPA (2015) competency areas or not, all participants were able to describe their knowledge and ability in multiple competency areas however.

The role of the supervisor of a higher education administration graduate student is certainly multifaceted and important to the learning and development of professional competencies. Professional socialization, supervisor support, and providing significant learning opportunities were key factors that supervisors contribute to in developing higher education administration graduate students' competency. The research also uncovered both the intentionality and care supervisors used in their approaches to working with graduate students and the rich learning experiences described by the graduate students. The process by which graduate students develop competency is important to the future of the student affairs profession.

These findings are discussed further in Chapters 5 and 6 which are presented as manuscripts to be submitted for publication. Chapter 5 is a report of my original research targeted for publication in NASPA - Student Affairs Administrators in Higher

Education's *Journal of Student Affairs Research and Practice.* This chapter further explores the findings introduced here and includes participant data supporting each finding. Chapter 6 is a reflection on supervisor support as a leadership practice to be submitted to ACPA - College Student Educators International's *About Campus*. This chapter provides a reflection of my own professional practice as it relates to the findings and leadership concepts presented in Rowan University's Educational Leadership doctoral program and recommendations for professionals to best support and socialize higher education administration graduate students in a supervised practice environment to create significant learning moments by using engaged learning (Fried, 2016; Fried, 2012; Mezirow & Taylor, 2009).

Chapter 5

Encouraging Professional Competency Development of Higher Education Administration Graduate Students Through Supervised Student Affairs Practice: A Grounded Theory

Abstract

Professional preparation and competency development of future student affairs educators is increasingly important in today's higher education environment. This study presents a grounded theory describing the process by which graduate students develop competency as part of the supervised practice component of their graduate program. Graduate students and supervisors described support, professional socialization, and significant learning moments as contributors to competency development.

An essential skill-set for a profession that frames what practitioners should know and be able to demonstrate are often described as professional competencies (ACPA, 2007). Professional competencies in higher education can be developed through reflective daily practice, graduate preparation programs, and intentional professional development (ACPA & NASPA, 2015). One way that student affairs educators can impact student learning is by fostering graduate student competency development for student affairs practice (Janosik, Cooper, Saunders, & Hirt, 2015). Professional socialization and competency development are crucial for a new professionals entering student affairs practice (Janosik et al., 2015), and the process by which this occurs is an area for continued research (NASPA, 2011). The intent of this study was to derive a grounded theory of how site supervisors contribute to professional socialization and competency development of student affairs graduate students.

Background

As student affairs staff have assumed active roles in college student development and daily administration of campus life at colleges and universities, a profession has emerged (Janosik, Creamer, Hirt, Winston, Saunders, & Cooper, 2003; Schuh, Jones, & Harper, 2010). The process of developing a professional identity occurs through a professional socialization process of learning the skills, knowledge, and values integral to professional practice (Liddell, Wilson, Pasquesi, Hirschy, & Boyle, 2014; Weidman, Twale, & Stein, 2001). Formal education through graduate preparation programs and concurrent supervised practice are common for professional socialization in many professions such as medicine, law, education, and student affairs (Weidman et al., 2001).

The student affairs profession has developed core professional standards, competencies, and a process of professional socialization for future student affairs educators through graduate preparation programs (ACPA & NASPA, 2015; CAS, 2012; Schuh et al., 2010). This professional preparation often occurs during graduate programs in higher education administration, and features a supervised practice component in which graduate students gain practical experience working in various college and university administrative offices under the supervision of higher education professionals (CAS, 2012; Janosik et al., 2015). Professional preparation is one of the hallmarks of any profession and elevates new practitioners to full status as professionals in their chosen field (Young & Janosik, 2007). Professional preparation and socialization of student affairs educators, and their competency development, is increasingly important in today's higher education environment in order to ensure future practitioners have the skills and experiences needed to face modern challenges and help educate diverse student populations (ACPA & NASPA, 2015; Janosik et al., 2003; Schuh et al., 2010).

Competency Development in Student Affairs

There has long been debate over what skills and abilities needed for professional practice in college student affairs administration should be learned by new professionals through graduate study (Cuyjet, Longwell-Grice, & Molina, 2009). Many have examined competencies developed through graduate preparation programs and demonstrated by new professionals working in student affairs within a higher education setting (Burkard, Cole, Ott, & Stoflet, 2005; Cuyjet et al., 2009; Dickerson et al., 2011; Hephner LaBanc, 2010; Herdlein, 2004; Janosik, Carpenter, & Creamer, 2006; Kretovics, 2002; Kuk, Cobb, & Forrest, 2007; Palmer, 1995; Renn & Jessup-Anger, 2008; Waple, 2006), yet it

was Janosik et al. (2006) who examined competency development as a core professional responsibility that happens over time, presented a model acknowledging competency development as a process that student affairs practitioners undertake across the span of an entire career, and advocated for an organized way for student affairs educators to improve competencies over time through continuing professional education and development within professional organizations. This important study set the stage for competency development as a focus of the two leading professional organizations in student affairs, College Student Educators International (ACPA) and Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education (NASPA).

As a result of the considerable research in the field on student affairs competencies, ACPA and NASPA first developed and published a joint set of *Professional Competency Areas for Student Affairs Practitioners* in 2010. These were the first comprehensive listing of the knowledge, skills, and dispositions needed for the variety of student affairs roles adopted by their leading professional organizations. The 2010 version consisted of 10 competency areas (ACPA & NASPA, 2010). These were recently revised and are currently: Advising and Supporting; Assessment, Evaluation, and Research; Ethical Professional Practice and Personal Foundations; History, Philosophy, and Values; Human and Organizational Resources; Law, Policy, and Governance; Leadership; Social Justice; Student Learning and Development; and Technology (ACPA & NASPA, 2015). These competencies are applicable to all student affairs educators, regardless of their area of specialization or positional role within the field. All student affairs professionals should be able to demonstrate their ability in these areas regardless of their professional preparation and background. They are developed through graduate

professional preparation programs, on the job experience and mentoring, and/or ongoing professional development (ACPA & NASPA, 2015). With these being recently adopted, scholars and professionals alike know little about the new professional competencies and how they are enacted in graduate student competency development.

Professional Preparation

Many student affairs educators begin their professional journey through a graduate preparation program. Today's graduate programs in student affairs are generally classified as administrative, counseling, or student development focused (CAS, 2012). The NASPA website lists over 287 student affairs graduate programs: 96 administrative, 16 counseling, and 76 student development focused (with others being a combination or another type). Administrative-based graduate programs focus on preparing student affairs professionals who are savvy navigating and working in a higher education environment; understand common cultures, functions, and processes of American colleges and universities; and the organization, implementation, and methods of inquiry common in student affairs work.

The Council for Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (CAS) standards for master's-level student affairs professional preparation programs include the curriculum areas of foundation studies, professional studies, and supervised practice (CAS, 2012). Foundation studies convey the profession's history and philosophy, while professional studies covers student development, student characteristics, educational outcomes, educational interventions, organization and administration, and assessment, evaluation, and research aspects of student affairs (CAS, 2012). Supervised practice includes graduate assistantships, internships, and externships under work conditions

supervised by faculty and an on-site professional (CAS, 2012). In the 2012 standards, CAS recognizes the ACPA and NASPA *Professional Competency Areas for Student Affairs Practitioners* (2010) as "a useful guide for professional preparation and professional development," (p. 2). This reinforces the importance of the role of competency development in professional preparation programs, and specifically recognizes the ACPA and NASPA competencies as standards for the student affairs field.

Graduate students need to be aware of what knowledge and skills are expected of professionals in their chosen field of study and practice early on, so they can intentionally focus on these important competencies inside and outside of the classroom as preparation for future employment and important work with students. Of all of the aspects of professional socialization, the supervised practice experience is where many students make sense and meaning of their foundation and professional studies, and are first able to observe and apply student development theories in practice (Janosik et al., 2015). This describes the great potential that student affairs graduate preparation programs have to set the foundation for life-long professional practice, and as such intentionally assist in competency development through a blend of rigorous academic coursework and supervised practice within a higher education setting.

While much is known about the role of the student in the supervised practice environment and strategies for their learning and success (Janosik et al., 2015), much less information is provided about the other two participants in the supervised environment: the faculty and site supervisor. The process by which the student, faculty, and site supervisor work together to expose the student to a variety of practical situations a student affairs professional is likely to encounter, then discuss and make meaning of

these experiences is a core aspect of learning through supervised practice, and yet little empirical research on this process exists, particularly within the context of the *Professional Competency Areas for Student Affairs Educators* (ACPA & NASPA, 2015).

Purpose and Significance

The purpose of this qualitative, grounded theory study is to explore the process of competency development of higher education administration graduate students as part of their professional socialization into the student affairs profession. While other studies have reviewed general outcomes of supervised practice in student affairs graduate preparation programs, few describe a process of how graduate students' competency development is supported by site supervisors in student affairs supervised practice settings. As supervised practice is one of three main components of a student affairs graduate education (CAS, 2012), it should have demonstrable competency development outcomes though there is little research describing this process.

This study builds theory that describes the process of competency development as part of the professional socialization process in student affairs. The research illuminates specific aspects of the supervised practice experience that support student competency development, and how supervisors may support graduate student competency development. Examining this issue through qualitative interviews also fills a methodological gap in research about student affairs competency development. Hephner LaBanc (2010) recommended a qualitative study of graduate student competency development in order to "discern a deeper and more contextualized understanding of the use and development of competencies through the graduate assistantship experience," (p. 119) than resulted from her quantitative dissertation research. Hephner LaBanc (2010)

also recommended examining supervisor's perspectives and initiatives designed to develop competencies. The study also adds to the literature on the ACPA and NASPA *Professional Competency Areas for Student Affairs Educators* (2015).

The research described here is driven by one overarching research question: Can theory describe the process by which graduate students develop competency as part of the professional socialization process in student affairs? Sub-questions include the following:

1. How do supervisors support the competency development of graduate students preparing to be student affairs practitioners?
2. How do supervisors discuss and demonstrate student development theory and practice, professional values, and other aspects of professional socialization with higher education graduate students?
3. What specific aspects of supervised practice experiences support graduate student competency development?

Method

Research Design

The research described here was qualitative in nature. Qualitative methods allow for participants to fully express their perspectives in order to ascertain a profound, deep understanding of a phenomenon: in this study, describing how a process works through participants' voices (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). This method provides rich detail specific to lived phenomenon, and is a common and supported methodology within student affairs research (Manning, 1999). Within the qualitative methodology employed, grounded theory was used to generate new theory to explicate the process of graduate student competency development from qualitative data collection and analysis (Birks & Mills,

2015; Charmaz, 2014; Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Glasner & Strauss, 1967). This study was particularly influenced by Charmaz's constructivist approach to grounded theory (2014). This methodological approach allowed in-depth understanding of this process of competency development through exploring participants lived experiences and the personal meanings they ascribe to the various aspects of the supervised practice experience.

Participants and Sampling Criteria

The setting for this study was three administrative-focused graduate preparation programs in which students must complete an internship in a professional setting and may also complete an assistantship. The internship component is designed for students to further develop competencies needed for professional practice in college student affairs. The number of students and professional supervisors at these sites was sufficient to develop a working grounded theory of how supervisors contribute to graduate student competency development. Multiple sites offered ample opportunities to identify participants who met the sampling criteria.

Purposeful sampling was used to select information-rich cases (Patton, 2002; Rapley, 2014). Specifically, participants were selected using a blend of criterion and snowball sampling. Criterion sampling involves reviewing all cases that meet study criteria (Patton, 2002). For this study, the criteria was 1) professionals working full-time in a student affairs unit who currently supervise one or more students who are in a student affairs graduate preparation program or who aspire to a future full-time position in student affairs at a college or university; 2) graduate students enrolled in the student affairs preparation programs offered at the site or who are currently completing an

internship or hold an assistantship within the site's student affairs unit; and/or 3) higher education administration graduate program faculty.

Faculty were included as participants as they often participate in the graduate student/supervisor relationship through an internship or practicum course in which the student reports and reflects upon their experiences with the supervised practice component of the graduate program. Snowball sampling relies on asking participants to assist in identifying other informants (Patton, 2002). In this study, participants were asked to help identify others who met the criterion for sampling as one of the interview protocol questions. Ultimately, 19 participants were interviewed to saturation, when gathering additional data did not result in any new insights or categories (Charmaz, 2014; Gordon-Finlayson, 2010). This included eight supervisors, nine graduate students, and two faculty members.

Data Collection

Data were collected through intensive interviews exploring participants' perspectives in-depth in order to obtain rich, detailed responses and an increased understanding of their lived experiences (Charmaz, 2014; Rubin & Rubin, 2012). The responsive interview protocol included main questions to introduce each aspect of the research question; follow-up questions to seek detailed thematic, conceptual, or behaviors that the participant discusses; and probes to manage the depth and flow of the conversation (Rubin & Rubin, 2012). Prompts asked participants how they make meaning of their environment and experiences and allowed them to fully define their situations or describe a critical incident. Different protocols for students and supervisors were used. Faculty were not included in the initial data collection; they were added

during the theoretical sample. The student protocol covered their graduate coursework and supervised practice experiences; asked the participant to describe their supervisor, working environment, and relationship; and inquired about their understanding of professional competency areas for student affairs educators. The supervisor protocol asked about the graduate students the professional supervises; how the supervisor approaches work with graduate students; and inquired about their understanding of professional competency areas for student affairs educators.

Data Analysis

A constant comparison approach defined by Gordon-Finlayson (2010) as "cycling back and forth between the data and analysis until a substantive theory is developed," (p. 175) was the overarching method of data analysis and included open, focused, axial, and theoretical coding methods. Analytic memo writing and coding were two of the primary techniques that were iterative in this data analysis approach to the study. Grounded theory researchers often memo about emerging concepts, ask reflexive questions, explain ideas, diagram processes, define codes and conceptual categories, compare participants' responses to one another, or advance tentative ideas about emergent theories (Gordon-Finlayson, 2010), or as Saldaña (2013) states simply "a place to dump your brain," (p. 41). Gordon-Finlayson (2010) describes memo writing as the engine of grounded theory, where the "interpretive and theory-generating processes happen in a grounded theory project," (p. 164). Memo writing occurred throughout the research process, where I recorded thoughts, rationale for decisions, and approaches for later review and reflection (Charmaz, 2014; Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Gordon-Finlayson, 2010; Saldaña, 2013). Charmaz (2014) lists that grounded theory might entail: "1) an empirical generalization,

2) a category or core variable, 3) a predisposition, 4) an explication of the process, 5) a relationship between variables, 6) an explanation, 7) an abstract understanding, and/or 8) a description," (p. 241). Theory-building in this study was primarily to explicate the process of graduate student competency development.

Ultimately, data were constructed into a proposed theory and interpreted by both the researcher and the theoretical sample participants during theory generation. Theoretical sampling is a technique used in grounded theory studies to further explore working theories (Charmaz, 2014; Gordon-Finlayson, 2010; Miles et al., 2014; Rapley, 2014). These participants included previous interview participants and new participants (two faculty members). Participants who have already been interviewed are often included in the theoretical sample to confirm and test understandings (Charmaz, 2014).

Credibility and Quality

Arminio and Hultgren (2002) discuss the increasing prevalence of qualitative research in student affairs and question what criteria of quality are best for student affairs researchers and their professional journals. They find that goodness in qualitative research in student affairs is making meaning of a phenomenon for the purpose of practical action (Arminio & Hultgren, 2002). Meaning-making leading to recommendations with implication for professional practice match the goals of this study. Quality research should be innovative, thoughtful, and creative in that it "resonates with readers' and participants' life experiences", (Corbin & Strauss, 2008, p. 302). Resonance deals with the applicability of how a theory fits the setting (Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Glasner & Strauss, 1967). This study addresses resonance by situating the research and researcher within the current professional work setting, similar to a prolonged

engagement approach (Rossman & Rallis, 2012). A major criterion for this study's ultimate grounded theory was how it resonated with theoretical sample participants. A theory should be accessible to be understood by common practitioners in the field, and provide the user tools to bring about change (Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Glasner & Strauss, 1967). In this study, I worked to frame the resulting theory so it can be understood and applied by graduate students and their supervisors. Again, this was tested during the theoretical sample.

Findings

This study sought to generate theory to explicate the process by which graduate students develop competency as part of the professional socialization process in student affairs. Three components of this process were examined: 1) supervisor support, 2) professional socialization, and 3) significant learning moments. Conceptual categories drawn from coding the interviews are described below.

Supervisor Support

How supervisors support the competency development of graduate students preparing to be student affairs practitioners was a key question examined in this study. This question explored the conceptual realm of how students perceive supervisor support and was examined through symbolic interactionalism and meaning-making lenses. Participants described supervisor support through: A) supervisory style, B) relationship structure, C) ongoing feedback, and the D) achievement of specific desired outcomes. Supervisors described by the participants in this study balanced autonomy and hands-on coaching to provide the level of support needed for graduate students. This is based on

individual needs, the progression through their graduate experience, or the assigned project/task.

Supervisory style. Supervisory style describes the graduate student's perception of the supervisory relationship, the way in which a supervisor approaches interactions with the graduate student. Graduate students interviewed found supportive supervisory styles to be a careful balance of hands-on, intrusive coaching, and autonomy from their mentors. Students often sought attention and feedback from their supervisors, but also desired autonomy and independence. For example, Tom said, "I think my supervisors… are sort of not there when I don't need them and there when I need them. It's a nice balance." Supervisors must pivot between providing instructive coaching on skills to improve and providing the space and autonomy for graduate students to explore and learn new concepts on their own. The attitude supervisors have around correcting and coaching the graduate students was also important. Kiara's describes this as: "I guess I just really love that everything's coachable. Obviously I'm going to make mistakes and she makes that okay. She helps it be more of a learning experience instead of just like, 'You did this wrong,' and then end of story. Instead it's like, 'Oh maybe we could do it this way next time,' or 'Maybe we can improve on this.' Everything is coachable instead of just right or wrong." This is one of many examples that were shared of a coaching approach, one type of supportive supervisory frequently discussed by participants.

The supervisors interviewed also described their efforts to take on a supportive supervisory style. José described his approach to supervision as "I try to keep them inspired and motivated while also teaching them the realities of it all." Similarly, Amy said, "we try to find a nice balance so you don't feel like a total fish out of water with

everything you do, but we still want to challenge you with plenty of support in the background. If you have never managed something large scale, we are going to give you something big. If you have never done anything for a specific community of students, maybe we will have you work with that identity just to brush up those skills." Supervisory style can be indicative of support through the frequency and degree of attention given graduate students, and how the professional motivates, challenges, and encourages graduate students in an intentional way.

Relationship structure. Often the balance of hands-on involvement and autonomy was described in the context of a formal, structured relationship that was also flexible to individual student-centered approaches. This frequently involved individual meetings with the student and supervisor, participation in departmental staff meetings, role clarification, and emotional support. Tom described the importance of specific expectations of his role to guide his autonomy: "The thing I like the most is that I'm pretty autonomous in what I do. I like how I can have my autonomy and set the priorities for myself based on the wide, firm expectations." A relationship structure that allowed graduate student autonomy under clear guiding expectations was often described as being supportive.

Regularly scheduled individual supervisory meetings often provided a relationship structure in which supervisors could support graduate student learning. Mary describes how she structures her relationship with her graduate students as: "I think it's a lot of in-the-moment management, like if I see something going off course and redirecting it in the moment. Then, following up in that one on one saying, 'What happened here?' I think it's a lot of hands-on. It's a lot of making sure that we're just

checking in every day. There's not a day that I think goes by that I don't touch base with my grad student, and see what they are working on, where they need assistance, and what we have to reprioritize." This provides an example of a supervisory relationship in which formal scheduled supervisory meetings are regularly used to debrief and correct behavior in addition to the organic daily interactions.

Ongoing feedback. Participants expressed a desire for direct feedback, concrete skill-building opportunities, and mentorship. This ongoing feedback provides opportunities for supervisors to provide tangible input about a graduate student's performance. Direct feedback, whether constructive feedback or appreciation/recognition, was described as a supportive supervisor behavior as both types of ongoing feedback can increase graduate student learning. Feedback can also be reciprocal, as many supervisors described how they seek input from their students and learn from them as well. Ehrai says, "there is a lot of benefit to bringing these students on, not just for them, but for us too. The world is changing so quickly; I can't keep up." Roger said, "I learn a lot from them too. They're learning the things in their classes that I'm not learning anymore." These examples from supervisors show that they are also open to feedback and learning from their graduate students as well.

Achievement of specific desired outcomes. Participants also described skill-building in various areas as an indicator of supervisor support. The degree to which supervisors assisted graduate students toward achievement of specific outcomes that the graduate student had desired to achieve within the supervised practice environment was the final indicator of supervisor support mentioned by participants. Supervisors are expected to support graduate student learning and development of professional

competencies for student affairs practice. Additional behaviors ranging from intentionality, providing opportunities to be involved in campus life outside of the internship/assistantship site, approval to explore other offices, and serving as a "window to the world" (from Olivia's interview) of other institutional types and campus experiences were also mentioned as other specific desired outcomes. Interviews detailed these learning goals that the graduate students and supervisors had for their relationships, and how their specific desired outcomes were achieved.

Professional Socialization

Another topic explored in the research was how supervisors discuss and demonstrate student development theory and practice, professional values, and other aspects of professional socialization with higher education graduate students. This question is rooted in practice, specifically supervisor behaviors in the supervised practice environment that contribute to professional socialization of graduate students. The research finds that supervisors often discussed (and sometimes demonstrated) theory-to-practice, professionalism, and other realities of student affairs work when socializing graduate students. Discussing and applying the ACPA/NASPA (2015) competencies, student development theories, and future career goals were the most frequent topics of professional socialization conversations reported among supervisors and students. Participants' responses related to professional socialization can be categorized as A) connecting theory and practice, B) job preparation, C) work/life balance, D) institutional culture and politics, and E) case studies. These findings are congruent with Tull et al.'s (2009) meta-analysis of literature on the functions, processes, and tasks of supervision and mentoring relationships.

Connecting theory and practice. Connecting student development theory to practice was frequently described as a key aspect of professional socialization. This often provided graduate students with opportunities for making meaning of their classroom knowledge, in this instance student development theories, with events from their supervised practice environment. Anna describes her reflections on theory in practice and planning ahead as:

> I think last year it was a lot more looking back. My first year in the program, all these classes were brand new to me was the first time I'm hearing about a lot of it. So it would be 'oh that makes sense, that's what we've been doing.' But now in my second year it's a lot more of 'all right now that I've heard this in class how can I bring that to work?'

This exemplifies connecting theory and practice in two ways: first identifying aspects of practice that are congruent with or exemplars of theory, and second by using theory as a starting point to inform and design practice.

The intentionality in connecting theory and practice can also be championed by the supervisor. Sophia reports that "my supervisor made it a point early on to meet with the program advisor to see what their working relationship would be like, but also to be upfront about his intentions to work with me to develop the skills I need." This example established a partnership between the faculty, graduate student, and supervisor to enhance student learning by developing specific skills in the supervised practice environment.

Sometimes disconnects between theory and practice arise. Virtually all interviews discussed theory-to-practice, but this was only sometimes demonstrated within the supervised practice environment. This was occasionally due to disconnects, which were also identified and discussed. As José describes, "in the classroom they're learning about Chickering, and they're learning about organizational administration, and then they see

that we don't always do it that way." This incongruence can also be an important aspect of professional socialization by helping students identify disconnects, they may learn how to resolve them in the future by modifying practice to more clearly connect theory, or they may determine that current practice simply does not match a theory that may no longer be applicable to today's college students or environment.

Job preparation. Supervisors share the realities of student affairs work with graduate students to help prepare them for their own professional practice. Job preparation deals with the specific logistics of managing a student affairs job search and career progression. This includes dealing with transition to new roles and institutions, discussing career plans, what is acceptable within the profession for attire and manners, networking with others, and having supervisors review graduate students' application materials and facilitating mock interviews. For example, participants discussed preparing for placement conferences, navigating phone and on-campus interviews, and highlighting transferable skills for different functional areas. Sam describes how her supervisor has used their meetings to help with the job preparation aspect of professional socialization:

> With [a placement conference] coming up, he has sent me so many materials, like email templates, things I should be getting ready for. In our one-on-ones, I feel it's all about me, but we talk about the jobs that I have applied for. He looks over my cover letters, my résumé. I'll ask, "Should I email this person back? How should I email them back?" Like the appropriate etiquette and stuff, yeah, he's extremely supportive.

The supervisor's role in job preparation helps socialize graduate students into the student affairs profession by continuing traditions and norms, and can be an important supportive relationship for the student to utilize during their transition from graduate preparation programs to full-time work (Renn & Jessup-Anger, 2008).

Work/life balance. Balancing the competing demands of a graduate program and a supervised practice experience is often challenging for graduate students. Dakota was thankful that his supervisor recognizes these demands, "They understand that working two jobs, doing graduate school, and trying to find a job is a lot." This expresses the demands of the graduate student, but time management continues to be an important consideration throughout professional student affairs practice as well, balancing student needs, institutional priorities, and one's own personal life and wellness. These demands are frequently identified and discussed as part of socialization to the student affairs profession. This is significant to professional socialization as work/life balance has a direct impact on job satisfaction and morale (Rosser & Javinar, 2003).

Institutional culture and politics. One aspect of professional socialization that was frequently mentioned by participants was the importance of understanding institutional politics and organizational culture. Janosik et al. (2015) provide additional perspective for students and supervisors in understanding organizational contexts. A supervisor from this study, Ehrai, shared an example of learning politics/institutional culture:

> That's also the hardest stuff to learn. They don't teach you that in the classroom. I'm not trying to teach what you are learning in the classroom, that's covered. The faculty are going to do that better than I am. But learning when you CC someone on an e-mail versus BCC or leaving them off entirely, that's really important to know and not screw that up. I am more concerned with teaching them that sort of thing. I am more concerned with having them know the difference between when they have to run an e-mail past me and when they are okay to send it without me reviewing it. When they are allowed to talk to a dean, and when they are not allowed to talk to a dean. Those rules apply to everybody! I'm not allowed to pick up the phone and call the president of a university, right? That doesn't end when you are no longer a graduate assistant. That is what I am much more concerned about teaching them. We'll talk about the differences between what they saw at a small school versus what they are seeing here… [at] a large urban research university. That is my most important role as a supervisor.

This reflects how institutional culture and politics are important realities of student affairs work and professional socialization, and how this may take many forms. New professionals have to scan the environment to ascertain institutional norms and culture, then navigate a political environment to work effectively within an existing system, and challenge it carefully to make future changes when necessary (Tull et al., 2009).

Case studies. Case studies were described as an effective tool for professional socialization by allowing exploration of a possible what-if scenario that the graduate student may not other have the opportunity to experience directly within the supervised practice environment. Tom provides this example of a case study moment from his assistantship: "Most of the grad assistants got together for lunch one day with [the Assistant Vice President]. He had the budget. He said 'Okay, this is the budget. This is how we do the budget. Now, I'm going to give you two different scenarios.' He gave us one scenario if you have more money, how would you change these figures? He said, 'Okay, if you didn't have as much money, what would you do?' It was kind of cool to get that interactive scenario." Case studies provide graduate students with the ability to test their knowledge, skills, and attitudes in proposing a solution to a professional problem they may otherwise not have the opportunity to experience in their supervised practice setting. This enhances graduate students' awareness of the scope of student affairs work and can help prepare them for roles larger than their graduate experiences, aiding in their socialization to the field.

Significant Learning Moments

The final sub-research question also deals with the supervised practice environment, but is inclusive of all aspects: supervisor, student, and organizational/

culture factors. When examining what specific aspects of supervised practice experiences support graduate student competency development, participants' responses can be categorized into these five concepts: A) hands-on experiences, B) opportunity for reflection, C) trial and error in a learning laboratory, D) professional development and training, and E) direct exposure to the ACPA/NASPA (2015) competency areas. These concepts reveal that graduate students benefit from significant learning moments of hands-on/direct application that blend their classroom knowledge with real-world experience in an environment that supports reflective practice and continuous improvement of professional competencies.

Hands-on experiences. By providing real-world experiences that relate to their classroom learning, students can improve skills in the competency areas for student affairs educators through reflective professional practice. Janosik et al. (2015) present various models for learning through supervised practice, and in this study participants described both structures put in place within graduate preparation programs and methods practiced by supervisors to provide valuable opportunities for graduate student development. Many participants discussed the importance of practical application that is relevant to student affairs work. Tom said, "I would have to say probably the most important things I think that I feel are important for professional competency is that hands-on sort of experience, understanding how to live through some of these experiences that you can't always get in the classes." Anna provides a specific example of having hands-on experience supervising her RA staff, "I'm the one that gets to create the agenda and speak with them in our meetings. It's nice that I get to take ownership of that process." Hands-on experiences within supervised practice provide the foundation for

learning through reflection, coping with successes and failures, and ultimately developing professional competence for student affairs practice.

Opportunity for reflection. Significant learning can occur when the graduate student has the opportunity to reflect on observations of the supervised practice environment and work therein (Janosik et al., 2015). Participants discussed both formal opportunities for reflection through their graduate internship/assistantship coursework, but also the regular conversations within the supervised practice environment with their supervisors and other students. Danny describes his learning through reflection as, "I think having mentors and supervisors who have engaged in reflection with me on different opportunities that I've experienced myself is how I developed competence in some of those areas. I was probably looking at my work from the most critical lens of oh this is the competency and this is how this type of work connects to that experience." This highlights how providing an opportunity for reflection can ideally lead to meaning-making (Fried, 2016). This can help graduate students make sense of their work in context of the institutional environment or application of student development theories, and can inform adjustments for future practice.

Trial and error in a learning laboratory. Many students and supervisors reported the safety of being able to try and fail under the support and guidance of a supervisor was a key factor in their ability to have learning moments. Mary reflected on her graduate experience as, "I felt that it was like a learning laboratory that I could get professional experience and also not live in fear that if I made a mistake I'm not going to lose my job or anything." Amy echoes, "I never want them to feel like they are in trouble. This is a learning environment. We have expectations, but this should be a safe place to

learn." Duncan also feels this as a student, "I've been told that this is my learning laboratory, 'We trust your judgement and we trust your decision. As long as you can tell us why you did it, you'll be fine.' I've built a lot of my confidence just being in these two positions." Being open to the potential for mistakes can help graduate students build confidence by not being overly afraid of failure. When the supervised practice environment is a learning laboratory, both successes and failures are opportunities for reflective learning. A failure is viewed as an opportunity to regroup, reconsider, and try a different approach. Successes are also debriefed to uncover what led to the success and how it can be replicated again in the future. This trial and error in a learning laboratory can provide significant learning moments.

Professional development and training. Collaboration, involvement in professional organizations, participation in webinars, formal training programs, and reading professional publications were also reported as significant opportunities for learning in the supervised practice environment. Hands-on experiences with opportunities for reflection were most frequently described as key learning moments for the students interviewed. Of this, Tom explained,

> I'll be honest. I pull theories out of my hat for different things that I need to do, but I think when it comes to what I'm actually going to do on the job, having experience on how I just had a difficult conversation with an RA or a student, or how to master Excel, or how to understand delegating, you don't learn that in a class. You can learn all the student development theory you want, but unless you actually sit across from a student at midnight who is having a really tough time with an issue, unless you've lived through that, you don't really know how to do that in the real world.

Professional development can range from individual job skills, such as Excel mastery, to active engagement within a professional organization. Janosik et al. (2006) describe the important role professional organizations can play in professional development, and this

was reinforced by participants in this study. Graduate students spoke of how professional organizations allowed them to explore issues beyond their current supervised practice setting and campus environment. This occurred in-person, via online engagement (such as list-serves, social media conversations, and webinars), and/or through professional publications.

Direct exposure to ACPA/NASPA competency areas. Many participants explicitly conveyed their knowledge of the ACPA and NASPA (2015) competencies. Kiara thought, "knowing those competencies really helped a lot because they are a guideline to follow. This is the standard in the field. How can I get there? How can I help myself grow into that?" A supervisor, Amy, mentioned two examples of specific ACPA and NASPA (2015) competencies that her students develop through their assistantships:

> Advising and helping is something we try to pepper in to all of our assistantships. There are plenty of roles on a college campus where you may not have to interact with students, but it is definitely a skill to know how to work with and communicate with college students. Even with our more administrative roles, we ask them to advise student groups or committees. It combines their academic interests and what they were involved in as an undergrad or what they want to learn more about. Advising is a big part. Assessment, Evaluation, and Research is also a big part of what we do. With the programming board, it helps them to be more thoughtful, not just about program effectiveness, but what about the experience of being on the programming board and the student development of those leaders? Benchmarking is another example, but it could also be in the weeds program evaluation, focus groups and things.

These learning moments are significant in helping graduate students develop competencies for student affairs educators. One supervisor in the study, Bailey, recommends that supervisors "should be tying the competencies together and tailor individual experiences for people according to their career path and next steps."

Several interviews referenced specific competencies and ACPA/NASPA (2015) outcomes and conveyed significant learning and understanding in these areas of

professional practice. However, this was an area of dissonance among interview participants. For instance, Tom said, “I don't even think NASPA or ACPA would appear as words if you ran a transcript for every class. It's probably not even mentioned.” Students from the same graduate program expressed different levels of direct exposure to the competency areas. However, all participants in this study readily shared their learning and ability in multiple ACPA and NASPA (2015) competency areas for student affairs educators, even if they did not use the exact language or reference the competencies directly.

A Grounded Theory of Graduate Student Competency Development

These findings inform a grounded theory to describe the process by which graduate students develop competency as part of the professional socialization process in student affairs: *Higher education administration graduate students are exposed to professional competencies for student affairs practice and socialized to the profession inside and outside of the classroom. Significant learning moments and supervisor support during supervised practice allow students to develop skill in professional competency areas.* Figure 5 graphically represents this grounded theory. Graduate student competency development - the knowledge, skills and attitudes needed to be a student affairs educator - is informed by two key inputs, the classroom experiences and supervised practice experiences. This study explicates the process of graduate student competency development from the supervised practice perspective. Significant learning moments and professional socialization are two key experiences that occur in the supervised practice setting to support graduate student competency development. The frame shows that supervisor support is an overarching factor in the supervised practice

environment, and also contributes to graduate student competency development, but the frame fans out to indicate that supervisor support would have less influence in the classroom experience environment.

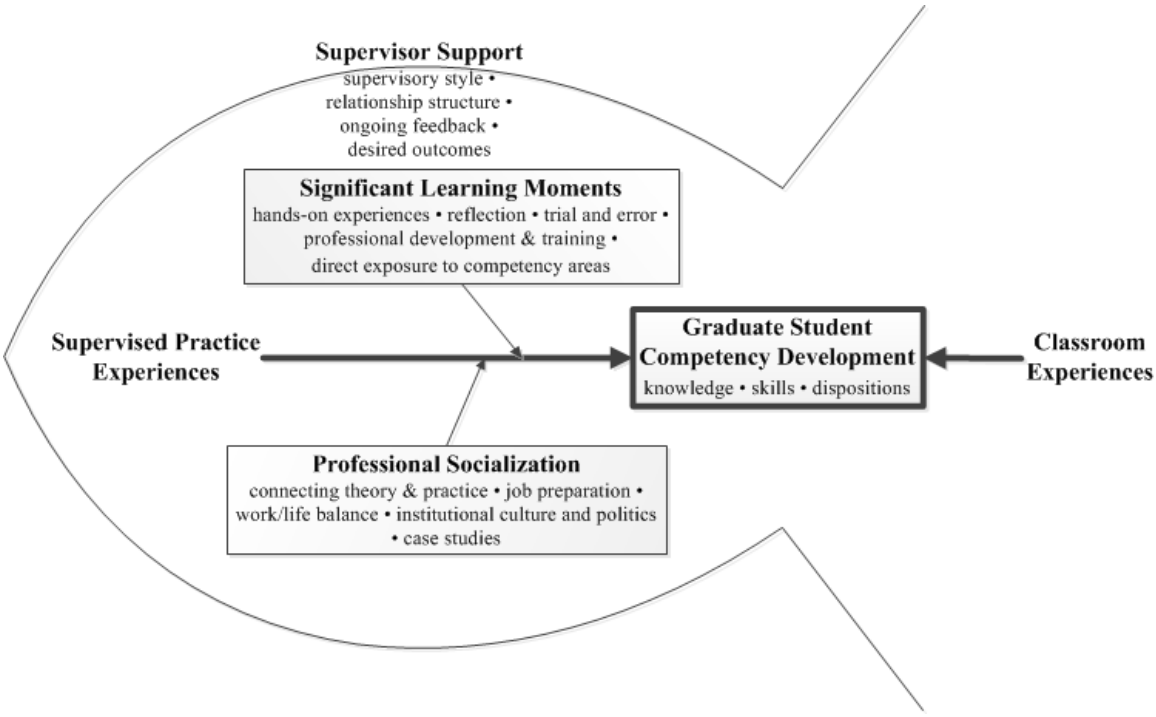

Figure 5. Process of graduate student competency development.

Discussion

Application of Competencies

The level of exposure to the *Professional Competency Areas for Student Affairs Educators* (ACPA & NASPA, 2015) varied greatly among the participants in this study. Both students and supervisors ranged from no knowledge of the competencies before being interviewed for this study, having exposure in either the classroom or supervised practice environment but not both, to advanced knowledge and application. Most

interesting was that participants from the same site often demonstrated this continuum of knowledge as well, suggesting that some professors or supervisors place more emphasis on including and discussing the competencies in their work than others.

Whether explicitly naming or having prior exposure to the ACPA and NASPA (2015) competency areas or not, all participants were able to describe their knowledge and ability in multiple competency areas. While it is fortunate that students are learning these through their graduate preparation programs, CAS standards literature (2012) encourages us to make the application of competencies an integrated focus of both the classroom and supervised practice aspects of graduate preparation rather than happenstance occurrence. Competencies have been a topic of professional debate in student affairs for many years (Burkard et al., 2005; Cuyjet et al., 2009; Dickerson et al., 2011; Hephner LaBanc, 2010; Herdlein, 2004; Janosik et al., 2006; Kretovics, 2002; Kuk et al., 2007; Palmer, 1995; Renn & Jessup-Anger, 2008; Waple, 2006), and yet professional competencies were variably utilized or understood within the institutions where this study's research was conducted.

Another challenge of using the ACPA and NASPA (2015) professional competencies in graduate preparation is that organizations such as the Association of College Unions International (ACUI), the Association of College and University Housing Officers - International (ACUHO-I), and the Association for Orientation, Transition, and Retention in Higher Education (NODA) are also developing their own functional area-specific competencies. This can be another aspect of professional socialization that supervisors can help students navigate. This might entail exposing them to the various competencies as professional standards in the supervised practice functional area,

discussing the overlaps and differences, assessing current level of competence, and working together to develop a plan for growth.

Clarity of professional standards and norms is a hallmark of professional socialization (Freidson, 1986). Janosik et al. (2006) made several recommendations for the role of professional associations in ensuring a high quality workforce from professional preparation programs and throughout a student affairs career, namely a student affairs professional development curriculum. The ACPA and NASPA professional competencies (2015) are the best effort at a standard professional development curriculum in student affairs at this point, yet adopting it at the graduate preparation program and supervised practice level was not universally seen in this research.

Implications for Practice

As exemplified by the participants in this study, supervisors can impact professional competency development of higher education administration graduate students. Supervisors and students should be intentional about seeking experiences and reflecting on practice through engaged learning to maximize competency development during the supervised practice component of graduate study. Armed with research on the supervisor's role in graduate student competency development, supervisors, graduate preparation program faculty, and graduate students can craft intentional competency development plans that optimize learning inside and outside of the classroom. A graduate student's competency development plan should include desired learning outcomes to be achieved through the curriculum and supervised practice (including any formal training programs, professional organization involvement, and professional development

experiences) and factors for assessment (such as self-reflection and assessments by the faculty and/or supervisor). Graduate preparation program faculty can assist in establishing supervised practice experiences in which students will discuss and develop professional competencies and work with current professionals in the field to bridge academic learning and application of real world issues.

Supervisors are reminded of the important role that they play in the competency development process, and may alter their practice to devote more time and effort towards supporting their graduate students' learning and development. This research advocates that supervisors of graduate students be intentional about focusing on students' competency development and also help them bring academic knowledge to life through their daily work with students. An enhanced focus on graduate student competency development will ultimately improve student affairs practice as a whole, and hopefully multiply student learning and development throughout the many students served by the profession.

Future Research

As this research focused on administrative graduate preparation programs, further research in competency development and professional socialization at counseling and student development-focused graduate preparation programs is needed. Additionally, a quantitative or mixed-methods follow up study to assess the effectiveness of various supervisor approaches or the level of growth demonstrated by graduate students participating in various supervised practice experiences could also follow. Quantitative or mixed-methods studies assessing graduate student competency development over time may benefit from using a version of Sriram's (2014) psychometric instrument to measure

competencies in student affairs when updated to the 2015 competency areas. When updated, this could provide a quantitative instrument to measure the level of competency development prior to a supervised practice experience and then afterwards to assess growth.

Conclusion

The role of the supervisor of a higher education administration graduate student is certainly multifaceted and important to the learning and development of professional competencies. Professional socialization, supervisor support, and providing significant learning opportunities were key factors that supervisors contribute to in developing higher education administration graduate students' competency. By conducting this research, I was impressed with both the intentionality and care supervisors described in their approach to working with graduate students and the rich learning experiences described by the graduate students. The process by which graduate students develop competency is important to the future of the student affairs profession.

Chapter 6

Supporting Higher Education Administration Graduate Students' Professional Competency Development

"We say that the college students are really developing, but I think I did most of my developing in my two years of grad school," said Emma, a new professional in student affairs who recently completed her master's degree in higher education administration. Emma's reflection captured the experience of many of the graduate students and supervisors I interviewed for my dissertation on graduate student competency development in student affairs. Student affairs educators can support student learning not just by attending to the student growth and development of our undergraduates, but also by focusing on our graduate students as professionals – the student affairs educators of tomorrow.

Focusing on the professional socialization of higher education administration graduate students and their competency development is an important skill for student affairs educators entrusted with this duty. Many of us supervise one or more graduate assistants or interns who seek to develop their competencies to be student affairs educators through these supervised practice experiences. Unfortunately, many fewer of us have had formal training or experience with this important job duty prior to meeting our first graduate assistant, and do our best to challenge and support them by replicating best practices from our own former supervisors or trusted colleagues and mentors. Later in our conversation, Emma, who is now supervising graduate students in her professional position, said "I wish there was something that told me what my graduate students are looking for in a supervisor and how to support their competency development." This

article shares some insight into supervisor support of graduate student competency development from interviews with graduate students and supervisors.

Supervised Student Affairs Practice

The student affairs profession has developed to have core professional standards, competencies, and a process of professional socialization for future student affairs educators through graduate preparation programs (ACPA & NASPA, 2015; CAS, 2012; Schuh, Jones, & Harper, 2010). Steven Janosik, Stan Carpenter, and Don Creamer (2006) examined competency development as a core professional responsibility that happens over time, present a model acknowledging that competency development is a process that student affairs practitioners undertake across the span of an entire career, and advocate for an organized way for student affairs educators to improve competencies over time through continuing professional education and development within professional organizations.

As a result of the considerable research in the field on student affairs competencies, ACPA and NASPA first developed and published a joint set of *Professional Competency Areas for Student Affairs Practitioners* in 2010. These were recently revised and are currently: Advising and Supporting; Assessment, Evaluation, and Research; Ethical Professional Practice and Personal Foundations; History, Philosophy and Values; Human and Organizational Resources; Law, Policy and Governance; Leadership; Social Justice; Student Learning and Development; and Technology (ACPA & NASPA, 2015). These *Professional Competencies for Student Affairs Educators* include foundational, intermediate, and advanced outcomes (ACPA & NASPA, 2015). The foundational competency outcomes can be a great guide for graduate student

learning and development in the supervised practice environment where students and supervisors intentionally focus on knowledge and skill building in specific competency areas.

Professional socialization is also an important aspect of the graduate student/supervisor relationship. This helps students uncover the meanings student affairs professionals give to actions and events, and understand how meanings are constructed and negotiated within our professional context. One supervisor highlighted the importance her department places on professional socialization on a more personal level: "My supervisor and I often joke that we want to help create people that we would ultimately like to work with one day, since these are the people who will be going out to work in the field," said Amy.

Supervisors Can Support Competency Development

The supervised practice environment can be a great learning laboratory for graduate students. The students in this study shared that they appreciated the autonomy to try new ideas and approaches, even when they fail, because they know they have the support of their supervisor and ongoing feedback and training. Tom described it like this: "when it comes to one-on-ones, I have a mentality where I don't know what success looks like, but I know this isn't it." He then shared how supervision meetings are a new skill he is learning with the support of his supervisor, and he knows that she does not expect him to be perfect at them now, but they discuss new ideas and she role models effective supervision meetings with him.

Higher education administration graduate students are exposed to professional competencies for student affairs practice and socialized to the profession inside and

outside of the classroom. Bailey's approach to supervision is focused on skill building: "I have really always taken the approach of how can this position benefit both of us, how can we work on transferrable skills. Any field our grads are going into have some skills like supervision, interpersonal skills, time management, and administrative things." How this process happens and what it looks like varied among the students and supervisors I spoke with, but a common theme was that significant learning moments and supervisor support during supervised practice allowed students to develop skill in professional competency areas.

Another supervisor, Ehari, put it this way, "a lot of what I view my responsibility is, is to prepare them for the ubiquitous skills that they will need no matter what position or institution that they end up at." Beyond supervision, this practice can also be viewed as an important leadership skill. "We were talking about leadership in our class last semester, and just the different functions of a leader. How people lead differently and that depending on what needs to be done you have to be flexible in your style, which I definitely see being displayed with [my supervisor]," said Audrey. This flexibility, for both the supervisor and student, can also lead to learning through engaging with the environment and coping with challenges presented along the way (Fried, 2016).

Engaged Learning and Supervisor Support

Jane Fried (2016) discusses engaged learning that involves knowledge acquisition, application, and meaning-making. This closely matches what participants described in their supervised practice environment, and highlights an intentional process the supervisor can utilize in promoting students' self-authorship and meaning-making. Mutually constructed knowledge, accounting for expertise and authority (Baxter Magolda

& King, 2004; Baxter Magolda, 2009), is a great practice to support professional competency development. Examples from the study included debriefing events to uncover what behaviors to replicate and what things to do differently in the future, discussing possible approaches to case studies covering scenarios that may not present themselves in the current supervised practice setting, and exploring why when disconnects between classroom learning and supervised practice experiences emerged. This allows the graduate student to see what they are learning, do hands-on activities to practice skills, and get a better understanding of competency areas for student affairs educators.

Mezirow and Taylor (2009) situates engaged learning as a process in which individuals become aware of and interrogate their assumptions to learn and explore their own meaning-making processes. Graduate students should ultimately take critical stances toward their learning (Mezirow & Taylor, 2009). This may involve trial and error in a learning laboratory of supervised practice to see what works for them and what does not and making meaning of their successes and failures. Sometimes this took the form of trying to replicate behaviors of successful professionals or mentors and interrogating what yielded the success, or questioning why a well-planned event had poor student engagement. The ultimate outcome being incorporating the knowledge, skills, and dispositions that match the unique contributions they can make to the student affairs enterprise, what ACPA and NASPA (2015) categorize as professional competencies for student affairs educators.

The engaged learning process begins with knowledge acquisition (Fried, 2016). Students are exposed to foundational and professional studies in the classroom

experiences of their student affairs graduate programs (CAS, 2012). Knowledge can also be acquired through the supervised practice component of graduate education by direct exposure to the ACPA and NASPA (2015) competency areas. Professional development activities also present opportunities for knowledge acquisition. Indeed, graduate students can and should acquire knowledge both inside and outside of the classroom (as we wish for our undergraduates as well).

Application

Application is a critical component of engaged learning for graduate students in the supervised practice setting. They can take the acquired knowledge and try it out through hands-on experiences with students. This trial and error in a learning laboratory is one method of application. Students can also bridge application and meaning-making by looking back and looking ahead. In the interviews, many students identified a turning point sometime in their first year of graduate school. A tool for application they initially used in their graduate program was looking back on their own undergraduate student development or their own undergraduate co-curricular experiences to seek examples and understand the concepts they were learning in their graduate program. Later in their first year, many graduate students reported a shift to looking ahead and thinking of how they can apply theories and concepts in their own work within their supervised practice setting with undergraduates. Supervisors can support this method of application by example by helping explore students' past experiences or mutually constructing ideas for application in the current supervised practice experience.

Meaning-Making

Meaning-making is construction of knowledge in the engaged learning process. In student affairs, we often discuss the process and goal of self-authorship when considering our undergraduate students (Baxter Magolda & King, 2004; Baxter Magolda, 2009). Self-authorship can be an important tool of meaning-making for graduate students as well. This helps students make meaning of what they are seeing and doing in their graduate studies and supervised practice and incorporate knowledge into their emerging professional identity. A very practical way supervisors can support meaning-making is by providing opportunities for reflection. This may take the form of debriefing after activities, helping connect the knowledge and theories from classroom learning with their supervised practice experiences, acknowledging disconnects between theory and practice, having guided meaning making conversations as part of one-on-one supervisory meetings, and/or reviewing faculty-assigned supervised practice reflections with the graduate student.

Fried (2012) encourages us all to embrace an organic learning process wherein students learn as whole human beings. For graduate students, that often adds a layer of emotional support during this challenging engaged learning experience. Beyond developing the tangible skills for student affairs practice through engaged learning, the students and supervisors I spoke with also underscored the importance of feeling personally supported. Many supervisors intentionally focused on providing supportive behaviors, like Mary who said, “I want to be the support that they need.” Specific aspects of supervisor support discussed included supervisory style, a formal but flexible relationship structure, ongoing feedback, and providing specific experiences to help the

student reach desired outcomes. The desired supervisory style was a careful balance allowing for student autonomy while providing hands-on, intrusive coaching when needed. This sounds just like the challenge and support mantra we often use with our undergraduate students.

Let's Learn Together

"We are mentoring people into the field and trying to help build the professional competencies that will make their transition to a professional role easier," Amy said.

These conversations on supporting graduate student competency development has reframed my approach to supervision. This may not be the how-to guide that Emma was hoping for, but hopefully it is a good reminder of the importance of our work with our student affairs graduate students. How can we better support them? How are we discussing and demonstrating theory-to-practice, professionalism, and other realities of student affairs? What significant learning moments can we help facilitate with them through engaged learning? How can we best use engaged learning strategies to facilitate professional competency development? Supervisors, go check in with your graduate students. Students, let us know how we can best support you and what you want to learn with us next.

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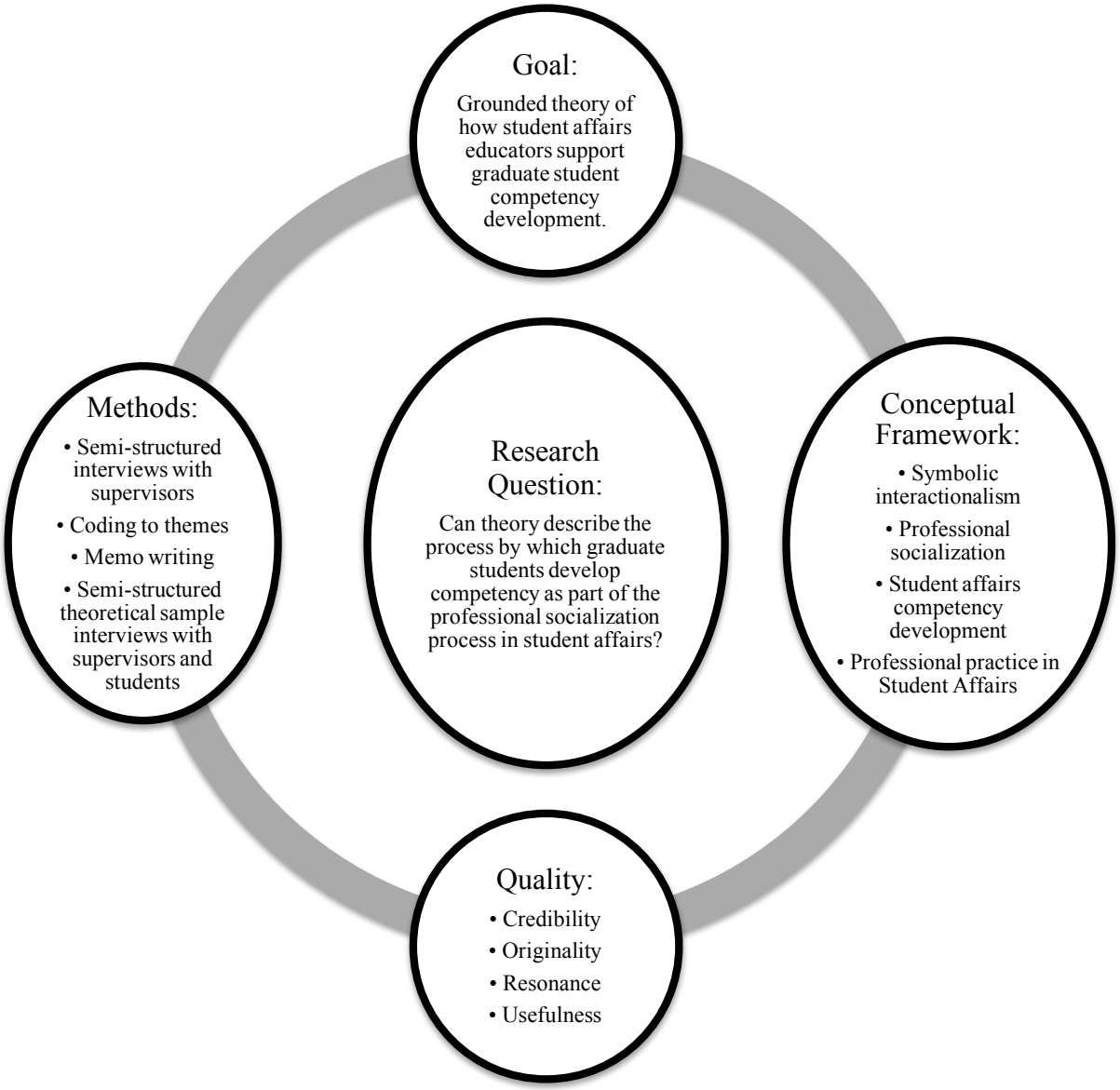
Appendix A

Research Design Map



Based on Maxwell (2013)

Appendix B

Consent to Take Part in a Research Study

TITLE OF STUDY: Encouraging Professional Competency Development of Higher Education Administration Graduate Students Through Supervised Student Affairs Practice

Co-Investigator (Dissertation advisor): Ane Johnson, Ph.D.
Co-Investigator (Doctoral candidate): Andrew Tinnin

This consent form is part of an informed consent process for a research study and it will provide information that will help you to decide whether you wish to volunteer for this research study. It will help you to understand what the study is about and what will happen in the course of the study.

If you have questions at any time during the research study, you should feel free to ask them and should expect to be given answers that you completely understand.

After all of your questions have been answered, if you still wish to take part in the study, you will be asked to sign this informed consent form.

Drew Tinnin or another member of the study team will also be asked to sign this informed consent. You will be given a copy of the signed consent form to keep.

You are not giving up any of your legal rights by volunteering for this research study or by signing this consent form.

Why is this study being done?

The purpose of this study is to understand how student affairs educators support competency development among the graduate students whom they supervise. The study is being conducted by Drew Tinnin, a doctoral student in Educational Leadership at Rowan University as part of his dissertation research. The data collected in this study may be published in the final dissertation, articles, and/or conference presentations.

Why have you been asked to take part in this study?

Your experience has qualified you for this study. Specific experiences that qualify for participation in this study are: 1) supervisors of graduate students in professional practice settings, 2) graduate students in higher-education administration graduate programs, and 3) higher education administration graduate program faculty.

Who may take part in this study? And who may not?

1. Any college or university staff member who supervises a graduate student (working in either a paid or volunteer capacity) is eligible to take part in this study. The student(s) you supervise do not need to be enrolled in the Higher Education Administration or any other specific graduate program, but should have a possible interest in future student affairs work.
2. Graduate students currently or previously enrolled in higher education administration graduate programs.
3. Faculty (including adjunct, lecturers, and other instructors) who teach at least one course in a higher education administration graduate program.

Other individuals lack the specific experience this study seeks to examine.

How many subjects will be enrolled in the study?

We are uncertain at the present time what the sample size will be as qualitative interview research seeks to find a saturation point. Saturation occurs when gathering additional data does not result in any new insights or categories.

How long will my participation in this study take?

Your participation in the study may involve multiple interviews over an extended period of time (up to one year). Each individual interview should not exceed one hour. Future interviews may be necessary to confirm prior insights; however you may withdraw your participation at any time.

Where will the study take place?

You will be asked to select a location of your preference to participate in interviews related to the study. Interviews are preferred in your office or primary place of employment or study. The primary investigator will secure a private office or meeting room for your interview upon request. A neutral location, such as a lounge or dining establishment may also be selected.

What will you be asked to do if you take part in this research study?

You will be asked to describe your understanding of professional competency areas for student affairs educators, how you supervise graduate students and/or how you have experienced supervision as a graduate student, and how you demonstrate theory in practice during one or more semi-structured interview(s). We ask that the interview(s) be recorded for data analysis purposes only.

What are the risks and/or discomforts you might experience if you take part in this study?

There are no known physical or psychological risks involved in this study, and you are free to withdraw your participation at any time without penalty.

Are there any benefits for you if you choose to take part in this research study?

The benefits of taking part in this study may be:

- An improved understanding of professional competency areas for student affairs educators
- Reflection on your ability to connect various theories to your professional practice
- Reflection on your supervisory style

However, it is possible that you might receive no direct personal benefit from taking part in this study. Your participation may help us understand which can benefit you directly, and may help other people to understand student affairs practice and the graduate student experience in student affairs.

What are your alternatives if you don't want to take part in this study?

There are no alternative treatments available. Your alternative is not to take part in this study.

How will you know if new information is learned that may affect whether you are willing to stay in this research study?

During the course of the study, you will be updated about any new information that may affect whether you are willing to continue taking part in the study. If new information is learned that may affect you, you will be contacted.

Will there be any cost to you to take part in this study?

The only cost for you to take part in this study would be the time spent preparing for and participating in scheduled interviews.

Will you be paid to take part in this study?

You will not be paid for your participation in this research study. Your participation does not imply employment with the state of New Jersey, Rowan University, the principal investigator, or any other project facilitator.

How will information about you be kept private or confidential?

All efforts will be made to keep your personal information in your research record confidential, but total confidentiality cannot be guaranteed. Your personal information may be given out, if required by law. Presentations and publications to the public and at scientific conferences and meetings will not use your name and other personal information. A pseudonym will be used to identify your responses in interview transcripts and all resulting works.

Interview recordings and transcripts will be digitally stored on an encrypted and password-protected personal computer accessible only by the primary researcher. Audio recordings may be made available to a transcriptionist for the purposes of transcribing interview responses only. Immediately upon receipt of the transcription, pseudonyms will replace names used in the interview. Only the primary investigator (not the transcriptionist) will have access to the code sheet listing original names and assigned pseudonyms in a separately password-protected electronic file. Only the typed interview transcripts using your pseudonym (not audio recordings) will be available for dissertation committee members and other parties to review.

What will happen if you are injured during this study?

Although no injuries are anticipated, if you are injured in this study and need treatment, contact the Rowan University Wellness Center, Emergency Medical Service, or another provider of your choice and seek treatment.

We will offer the care needed to treat injuries directly resulting from taking part in this study. Rowan University may bill your insurance company or other third parties, if appropriate, for the costs of the care you get for the injury. However, you may be responsible for some of those costs. Rowan University does not plan to pay you or provide compensation for the injury. You do not give up your legal rights by signing this form.

If at any time during your participation and conduct in the study you have been or are injured, you should communicate those injuries to the research staff present at the time of injury and to the Principal Investigator, whose name and contact information is on this consent form.

What will happen if you do not wish to take part in the study or if you later decide not to stay in the study?

Participation in this study is voluntary. You may choose not to participate or you may change your mind at any time.

If you do not want to enter the study or decide to stop participating, your relationship with the study staff will not change, and you may do so without penalty and without loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

You may also withdraw your consent for the use of data already collected about you, but you must do this in writing to Drew Tinnin at tinnin95@students.rowan.edu.

If you decide to withdraw from the study for any reason, you may be asked to participate in one meeting with the Principal Investigator.

Who can you call if you have any questions?

If you have any questions or problems concerning my participation in this study, please contact Drew Tinnin at (856) 256-4453 or at tinnin95@students.rowan.edu and/or the dissertation advisor, Dr. Ane Turner Johnson at (856) 256-4500 ext. 3818 or johnsona@rowan.edu.

If you have any questions about your rights as a research subject, you can call:

> Rowan University Office of Research
> Glassboro Campus Institutional Review Board
> (856) 256-5150

What are your rights if you decide to take part in this research study?

You have the right to ask questions about any part of the study at any time. You should not sign this form unless you have had a chance to ask questions and have been given answers to all of your questions.

AGREEMENT TO PARTICIPATE AND
AUDIO/VIDEOTAPE ADDENDUM TO CONSENT FORM

We are asking for your permission to allow us to audio record the interviews you will participate in as part of this research study. The recording(s) will be used for data analysis by the research team.

The recording(s) will include our conversations during interview(s) conducted during the course of the study. The researcher will tell you when audio recording begins as well as when the recording ends. Names or any other identifier need not be recorded, but if you choose to mention them during the interview they will be included. There will be no file names assigned to the recording that would serve as an identifier for you or your institution. After transcription, all participant names will be assigned an alias, and any references to your name in the interview transcript(s) will be replaced by your alias.

The recording(s) will be stored on an encrypted and fingerprint secured mobile phone (iPhone) and on the local drive of an encrypted and password-protected laptop computer. All digital files may also be accessed on an encrypted and fingerprint secured iPad mobile device. All digital files may be backed up to a password and two-factor random number authenticator-secured backup service, Dropbox. Following approval of the dissertation and publication of study results, all digital files will be saved to a password protected compressed (ZIP file) archive on the local drive of the computer, which may also be backed up to Dropbox. Other than the dissertation archive file, any and all original digital files (including but not limited to audio recordings) will then be deleted from all devices (including but not limited to computer, iPad, and iPhone).

Your signature on this form grants the investigator named above permission to record you as described above during participation in the above-referenced study. The investigator will not use the recording(s) for any other reason than that/those stated in the consent form without your written permission.

AGREEMENT TO PARTICIPATE

I have read this entire form, or it has been read to me, and I believe that I understand what has been discussed. All of my questions about this form or this study have been answered.

Subject Name:_____

Subject Signature:_____ Date:_____

Signature of Investigator/Individual Obtaining Consent:

To the best of my ability, I have explained and discussed the full contents of the study including all of the information contained in this consent form. All questions of the research subject and those of his/her parent or legal guardian have been accurately answered.

Investigator/Person Obtaining Consent: Drew Tinnin

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Appendix C

Interview/Observation Protocol – Students

Date: _____ **Institution:** _____

Place: _____

Observations
Provide descriptive and analytic notes:

❑ Professionals present:

❑ Graduate students present:

❑ Higher education texts:

❑ Social justice texts:

❑ Other artifacts:

Interviewee: _____

Title/role: _____

Department: _____

Protocol reminder

First, thank you for meeting with me. I want to remind you that your participation is voluntary and you are free to withdraw from this study at any time. May I record this interview?

a. I may also take additional written notes; please do not let this be distracting.
b. Do you have any questions about my project or the consent information?

Interview Questions:

1. Today we will discuss your experiences developing competencies for professional practice in student affairs. First, tell me about your graduate program.
    a. *Probes as needed:* What do you want to get out of that?
    b. Are you interested in working in student affairs in the future?
    c. *Follow-up:* What functional area(s)? (list individually)

2. What assistantship, internship, or other employment experience have you had?
    a. *Probes as needed:* What are your responsibilities?
    b. Did you prepare this/these role(s)?

3. Tell me about your supervisor.
    a. *Probes as needed:* What is your relationship like with your supervisor?
    b. Describe how your supervisor works.
        i. *Probes as needed:* With you?
        ii. With other grads?
        iii. With undergraduate students?
    c. What have you learned from your supervisor?
    d. Has he/she discussed student affairs with you?
    e. Has he/she discussed student learning and development with you?
    f. Has he/she discussed social justice with you?
    g. Have you utilized theory in your work together here?
    h. Has your relationship changed over time?
    i. What opportunities has he/she provided you to develop competence?
    j. Does he/she provide feedback to you about your competence?

4. Prior to our meeting today, I e-mailed you information about professional competency areas for student affairs educators. What do you think about them?
    a. *Probes as needed:* Have you heard of these before?
    b. Do you think this matches your work in student affairs?
    c. How have you developed your own competence?
    d. What do you think are your biggest strengths?
        i. Areas for growth?

    e. How do you demonstrate competence?
    f. Has your competence developed over time?
        i. *Follow-up:* How?
    g. Tell me about a time that you think you really learned from in this position.

5. Who else should I talk to to learn more about graduate student competency development?
    a. *Probes as needed:* Students?
    b. Supervisors?

6. Thank you so much for your help today. Is there anything else you would like to share that might be helpful for my study?

Appendix D

Interview/Observation Protocol – Supervisors

Date: _____ **Institution:** _____

Place: _____

Observations
Provide descriptive and analytic notes:

❑ Professionals present:

❑ Graduate students present:

❑ Higher education texts:

❑ Social justice texts:

❑ Other artifacts:

Interviewee: _____

Title/role: _____

Department: _____

Protocol reminder
First, thank you for meeting with me. I want to remind you that your participation is voluntary and you are free to withdraw from this study at any time. May I record this interview?

a. I may also take additional written notes; please do not let this be distracting.
b. Do you have any questions about my project or the consent information?

Goal: Drill down to support

Interview Questions:

1. Today we will discuss your experiences supervising graduate students. Tell me about the students that you supervise.
    a. *Probes as needed:* What are their names and contact information?
    b. What graduate programs are they in? (list individually)
    c. Why do you work with graduate students in your office?
    d. Are they interested in possibly working in student affairs in the future?
    e. What are their responsibilities here?
    f. How did you prepare them for that role?

2. How do you work with the students?
    a. Nature (individual, group meetings, e-mails, etc.) and frequency of your interaction with them?
    b. How would you describe your personal style of working with higher education graduate students?
    c. How has your engagement changed over time and/or with different students?

3. Prior to our meeting today, I e-mailed you information about professional competency areas for student affairs educators. What do you think about them?
    a. *Probes as needed:* Have you heard of these before?
    b. Do you think this matches your work in student affairs?
    c. How have you developed your own competence?
    d. How do you think (*graduate student*) is doing in these areas? What are her/his biggest strengths? Biggest areas for growth?
    e. How does (*graduate student*) demonstrate competence?
    f. How do you provide feedback to (*graduate student*) about their competence?
    g. How has their competence developed over time?
    h. What opportunities do you provide graduate students to develop in these areas?

4. What was your graduate experience like?

5. How do your graduate students see your work as a student affairs professional?
    a. Do you discuss student development theory with them? How?
    b. Do you discuss issues of social justice with them? How?
    c. How do you utilize theory in your professional practice?

6. Who else should I interview to learn more about graduate student supervisors?

7. Thank you so much for your help today. Is there anything else you would like to share that might be helpful for my study?

Appendix E

Document Collection Protocol

Date: _____ **Institution:** _____

Description of artifact:

Who created this document?

Who uses this document?

What is this used for?

When was this made?

When is this used?

Where is this document found?

Appendix F

Data Analysis Diagram