

## ABSTRACT

Dorothea M. Mack. EXAMINING MULTICULTURAL COMPETENCIES OF STUDENT AFFAIRS PROFESSIONALS WHO ADVISE STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS OF COLOR (Under the direction of Dr. Crystal Chambers), Department of Educational Leadership, October 2018.

The purpose of this quantitative study was to determine if, and to what extent, racial and ethnic identity, years of experience, education level, age, gender, advisor status, and sexual orientation are related to multicultural competence among student affairs professionals who are responsible for advising racial and ethnic student organizations at predominantly white institutions (PWI). Student organizations used for this study are distinguished by type: fraternities and sororities (Greek letter organizations); racial or ethnocultural advocacy and community organizations; and academic or social organizations.

In order to elicit participants for this study, the researcher received a spreadsheet of 11,801 members from the historically known National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA). However, the association has updated its name to Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education. Of these members, only 2,585 participants met the requirements necessary to participate in this study. The 2,585 NASPA members were invited by email to participate. Four hundred ninety participants attempted the survey, a response rate of 19.0%. Of that sample, there were 338 usable responses for analytic purposes.

Multicultural competence was measured by the Multicultural Competence in Student Affairs-Preliminary 2 (MCSA-P2) Scale. The MCSA-P2 had excellent reliability ( $\alpha = .93$ ) for the sample of student affairs advisors. Data analysis of the mean, standard deviation, and internal consistency was conducted to evaluate responses. Basic descriptive statistics were used to analyze research question one. Research question two was analyzed using an Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) to measure mean differences between advisors of multicultural and other

types of student organizations. Research question three was analyzed using multiple linear regression to display differences in advisors' multicultural competency by race/ethnicity, years of experience, level of education, gender, age, advisor status, and sexual orientation. The data analysis included the examination of the univariate statistics and revealed that race, sexual orientation, and advisor status were significant predictors of multicultural competency among student affairs advisors.



EXAMINING MULTICULTURAL COMPETENCIES  
OF STUDENT AFFAIRS PROFESSIONALS  
WHO ADVISE STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS OF COLOR

A Dissertation

Presented to

The Faculty of the Department of Educational Leadership  
East Carolina University

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Education in Educational Leadership

by

Dorothea M. Mack

October, 2018

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OF STUDENT AFFAIRS PROFESSIONALS  
WHO ADVISE STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS OF COLOR

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## **DEDICATION**

I dedicate this dissertation to my mother, Annette. Without her love and support, this work would not have come to fruition. Only now, having produced this important piece of scholarship, am I able to realize and understand the sacrifices my mother made for my sisters and me, positioning me to this moment of completion and contribution. As a single parent, my mother worked long hours to provide the educational workshops and social opportunities (cheer, basketball, track, and piano) that have shaped me and my sisters' growth and development as learners and leaders. My mother raised women that believe in hard work, persistence, and giving back as keys to success; beliefs that we espouse every day. Her positivity, commitment to learning and passion for education are daily sources of inspiration - the makings of me.

I am overwhelmed by gratitude for everything my mother is and has done for me. I do not have the words to thoroughly express my appreciation for all she has done for me. She is the epitome of a positive role model. I love you, mom!!

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First, I would like to acknowledge my dissertation chair, Dr. Crystal Chambers. Thank you, Dr. Chambers, for your guidance, expertise, and patience, throughout the process of writing this dissertation. I want to thank my committee members, Dr. Hui Bian, Dr. Lathan E. Turner, Dr. Vivian Mott, and Dr. Travis Lewis for your support, suggestions, and encouragement. To Dr. Bian and Dr. Turner, thank you for letting me come to your office all the time. You both always made time for me. Dr. Bian, thank you for providing additional materials to help me understand statistical analysis. Dr. Turner, how many times did I come to your office and sit? You allowed me to vent and talk through ideas. Even though you did not say much, the few words of wisdom you shared always made me feel better. Thank you, Dr. Lewis, for stepping in at the last moment to be on my committee.

Thank you to Dr. Angela Marshall for many generous and helpful suggestions. You gave me a safe space to share my frustrations and express my research ideas. I want to give special thanks to my family: My mother, Aunt Faye, sisters, McKenzie and Carpia, and my brother-in-law, Randy. To my Mom and McKenzie, thank you for all the late-night talks, listening to my crazy questions, and pushing me when I wanted to give up. I could call you both anytime; at work, or in the middle of the night, and you always entertained me. You would stop whatever you were doing to read a sentence or ten pages of information. Your motivation kept me on track. Your tough love helped me never to give up and to believe in myself.

I would like to thank, Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education (NASPA) for allowing me to use their members as participants in my research. I would also like to thank Dr. John A. Mueller and Dr. Raechele Pope, who permitted me to use their instrument, Multicultural Competence in Student Affairs-Preliminary 2 (MCSA-P2) Scale.



Thank you to, “The Crew” Jarecia Jacobs, Enfiniti Afriyie, Lorenzo Norfolk, Tevin Woodard, Christopher Cooper, McKenzie Amos, Randy Amos, and Annette Mack (mom) for helping me gather thousands of email addresses. I could not have done it without all of you. I have so much love and respect for each one of you. You dedicated hours out of your day to help me reach my goal.

I would like to thank Natina Gurley and UriSonya Flunder for just being my friends through this dissertation process. You both have encouraged me with positive thoughts and held me accountable for what I said I was going to do.

Last but certainly not least, GOD!!! I want to thank GOD for showing me grace through writing this dissertation. You have been there since the beginning. You believed in me when I did not believe in myself. Many nights when I wanted to give up, you listened, with every prayer I became stronger, you never judged me or let me down. Thank you for holding my hand and never letting go.

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## **CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION**

### **Background of the Study**

Over the years, institutions of higher education have worked to create campus atmospheres conducive to the education of diverse groups by encouraging and promoting multicultural awareness (Castellanos, Gloria, Mayoral, & Salas, 2007; Goad, 2000). As the numbers and diversity of students continued to grow, so too has the frequency and types of interactions between these students and the gamut of campus-based student affairs professionals available to them. The diversification of higher education student bodies is fueled by a “browning” of the U.S. population as a whole: Whites under age 30 are projected to lose population majority status after 2040 (Frey, 2014).

The changing of U.S. racial demographics and the increase in diversity on college campuses could possibly be reflected in the 2016 presidential election which was accompanied by spikes in racial incidents on college campuses (Bouie, 2016; Bello, 2009; Brown, 2011; Frey, Teixeira, & Griffin, 2016; Garcia & Johnston-Guerrero, 2015; Southern Poverty Law Center, 2016a, 2016b). According to the U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), Hate Crimes Statistics (2015) from law enforcement agencies reported that 59% of 7, 121 hate crimes in 2015 were single-bias incidents motivated by race/ethnicity and ancestry bias. In addition, the Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC) (2016a) reported that 10 days after Donald Trump won the 2016 election, 867 hate crimes were reported nationally, and most of them occurred on K-12 and college campuses.

Dreid and Najmabadi (2016) listed examples of the many racial incidents college campuses experienced in the wake of November 2016 election results. For example, the day after the election, a student walked into her residence hall room on the Missouri campus of

Lindenwood University and noticed a wall had been built with shoes and clothes hangers. On the constructed wall was a message signed by a classmate. The message read, “Trump won so here’s a little preview of what is to come #wall” (Dreid & Najmabadi, 2016, para. 31).

Higher education institutions are at the forefront of racial violence. Student affairs professionals are charged through their national organizations to infuse diversity inclusion and equity in their work. There is an ever more pressing need to ensure that student affairs professionals have the multicultural competence to manage racial incidents while also supporting and educating students. This study defined multicultural competence as "the awareness, knowledge, and skills needed to work with others who are culturally different from self in meaningful, relevant, and productive ways" (Pope, Reynolds, & Mueller, 2004, p. 13). This study examined the multicultural competencies of student affairs professionals who advised organizations for students of color.

### **Problem Statement**

As diversity on college campuses increases, the challenge to create a multiculturally responsive and affirming environment for all students, especially students of color, has become crucial in these institutions (Pope, Mueller, & Reynolds, 2009). Many institutions have invested greater effort to increase the enrollment numbers for students of color and implement programs to promote student retention. As a result, the diversity of college campuses has increased, and students of color are attending college with their cultural needs not being addressed, leading to diversity issues in higher education. This increase in diversity issues calls for student affairs professionals to gain awareness, knowledge, and skills that will lead to productive work with culturally diverse populations (Mueller & Pope, 2001; Pope & Reynolds, 1997). Though academic institutions typically promote a philosophy of inclusivity and multicultural awareness

among their staff, many student affairs professionals have not obtained sufficient training in multiculturalism, nor have they been evaluated on their work in the area of diversity (Mueller & Pope, 2001). Pope et al.'s (2004) Dynamic Model of Student Affairs Competence provides a platform through which student affairs professionals, including advisors of student organizations, can become more aware of their multicultural competence, more effective in their jobs and more supportive of students of color. The model supports the value of becoming multiculturally competent by gaining awareness, knowledge, and skills when working with diverse students (Pope et al., 2004).

For underrepresented students, especially students of color, a welcoming and open campus climate can help combat the challenges they face (Griffin, Nichols, Perez, & Tuttle, 2008). According to Turner (1994), students of color at predominately white institutions often experience feelings of alienation and disconnection from their campuses due to the lack of iconography or artifacts that reflect their presence and represent their cultural backgrounds. Several researchers have identified incidents of racism on campuses where the educational curriculum is not inclusive of a diversity perspective. Feelings of exclusion and marginalization among students of color occur when their race or ethnicity is not sufficiently represented among faculty, staff and peer populations (Griffin et al., 2008; Kuh, Kinzie, Schuh, & Whitt, 2010).

Promoting culturally inclusive activities and student organizations have been shown to help reduce feelings of alienation and isolation among students of color at predominantly white institutions (Chambers, 2017; Sutton & Kimbrough, 2001). A culturally inclusive environment is essential because it plays a valuable role in how students of color adjust to campus life and in their retention rates on college campuses (Pope et al., 2004; Turner, 1994; Wilson, 2012).

Although student populations on college campuses are becoming increasingly diverse, it is not always reflected in the racial and ethnic demographics of college administrators (Mueller & Pope, 2001). In 2011, 87% of U.S. college presidents were White (Cook & Kim, 2012). An annual survey conducted by the National Association of Student Personnel Research and Policy Institute revealed that three-fourths of U.S. student affairs vice presidents were White (Wesaw & Sponsler, 2014). Furthermore, this survey aimed at collecting information from chief student affairs officers (CSAOs) at colleges and universities across the United States, revealed that an overwhelming majority of administrators holding these positions were White. Of the 827 total CSAOs that participated in the survey: 633 identified as White; 114 Black; 57 Hispanic; 12 Asian; 2 Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander; 1 American Indian or Alaska Native; and eight others identified with two or more races (Wesaw & Sponsler, 2014).

According to Mueller and Pope (2001), the implication of statistics such as these is the increased potential for instances in which students of color seek assistance or representation from student affairs professionals who have limited or inadequate experience and interactions with minorities. On this same topic, Roscoe (2015) stated, "advisors must understand that it is a privilege and responsibility as educators in higher education to be sensitive to the roles of culture and background that affect a student's academic and personal achievement" (p. 57). In addition, research has shown that retention rates and enrollment numbers are adversely affected by higher education institutions that do not adapt to the changing diverse student population (Talbot, 2003). Pope et al. (2004) emphasized the need for student affairs professionals to exhibit multicultural competence because it is vital to the overall development and experience of students of color.

## **Student Affairs Competency**

Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education (hereinafter, NASPA) is one of the governing associations for the student affairs profession. This association has set the expectations and guidelines for all student affairs professionals to follow. NASPA (2017a; 2017b) has set guiding principles, goals within their strategic plan, and created a diversity statement that focuses on the importance and value of promoting equity, inclusion, and social justice among all student affairs professionals. NASPA (2017b) explains that the association holds student affairs professionals accountable to the values of equity, inclusion and social justice, and student affairs professionals are expected to infuse these values in their work with students and other professionals. As part of their job responsibilities, student affairs professionals regularly interact with culturally diverse students. These professionals have significant roles in handling multicultural issues on college campuses due to the expectations placed on them when working with students of diverse cultural backgrounds (Reynolds, 2009).

As the demographics of the student population continue to change, higher education institutions are increasingly challenged with meeting the needs of diverse students (Talbot, 2003). As a result, many graduate programs are striving to prepare graduate students within the student affairs profession to become multiculturally competent (Pope & Reynolds, 1997). Pope and Reynolds (1997) created a list of 33 competencies that were to aid with the development of multicultural competence among student affairs professionals. The competencies were divided into three categories: awareness, knowledge, and skills (see Appendix E). This metric was later applied to a study created by King and Howard-Hamilton (2003) that examined the multicultural experiences and competence levels of individuals entering the student affairs profession, student affairs professionals who taught graduate students, and campus diversity educators.

King and Howard-Hamilton (2003) administered a multicultural competency questionnaire to 131 participants comprised of individuals from four college campuses and across two different geographical areas of the United States. Results indicated the majority of participants scored higher on their intercultural contact within a college setting compared to their daily intercultural contact outside a college setting (King & Howard-Hamilton, 2003). The results displayed:

- 69% of the students reported daily intercultural contact on campus
  - 90% of the staff members reported daily intercultural contact on campus
  - 100% of the diversity educators reported daily intercultural contact on campus.
- By contrast, only 40% of the students, 34% of the staff and 62% of the diversity educators reported intercultural contact outside collegiate settings on a daily basis (p. 125).

Furthermore, it was found that 90% of the student affairs staff had more cultural interactions on campus compared to their off-campus cultural interactions which showed only 34% (King & Howard-Hamilton, 2003). Therefore, if most of the intercultural interactions of student affairs professionals occurred in a college setting, and diversity on college campuses is increasing, it is essential for student affairs professionals to have the multicultural knowledge, skills, and awareness needed when working with students of color (Pope et al., 2004; Pope et al., 2009; Strayhorn & McCall, 2012; Talbot, 2003).

### **Multicultural Competency**

As student affairs professionals strived to become more multiculturally responsive and prepared to address multicultural student issues, they should reach a certain level of competency (Pope & Reynolds, 1997; Pope et al., 2004). This study defined multicultural competency as "the awareness, knowledge, and skills needed to work with others who are culturally different from self in meaningful, relevant, and productive ways" (Pope et al., 2004, p. 13). Additionally, this

study used the theoretical framework of the Dynamic Model of Student Affairs Competence (see Appendix F) developed by Pope and Reynolds (1997) and later built upon by Pope et al. (2004). The multicultural competency concept that is used in student affairs came from the counseling psychology profession (Reynolds, 2009; Pope & Mueller, 2011). For more than 25 years, the counseling psychology profession had used three, main multicultural categories in a tripartite model approach (Pope & Mueller, 2011; Reynolds, 2009). The three main multicultural categories were awareness, knowledge, and skills (Reynolds, 2009).

Pope et al.'s (2004) Dynamic Model of Student Affairs Competence includes seven competency areas, and the design of the model allows for all seven areas to be used in any work of student affairs professionals. The seven competency areas include: (1) administrative and management; (2) theory and translation; (3) helping and advising; (4) ethical and professional standards; (5) teaching and training; (6) assessment and research; (7) multicultural awareness, knowledge and skills (Pope et al., 2004). The Dynamic Model of Student Affairs Competence has proven to be a professional development and an assessment tool for student affairs practitioners. If student affairs professionals wish to remain consistently successful in their work with students, it is necessary to develop a basic level of knowledge for each of the seven core competency areas (Pope & Reynolds, 1997; Pope et al., 2004). As student affairs professionals become more experienced in their work, they will become better developed in their specific competency areas. Though the competency levels tend to be represented differently among varying student affairs professions, the model does provide some guidance for fostering minimal competence across all areas (Pope et al., 2004).

Pope and Mueller (2011) identified three reasons student affairs professionals may have limited training or why their job performance has not been evaluated using a scale of diversity



effectiveness: (1) institutions having only one multicultural expert (2) institutions not promoting or valuing multicultural competency among professionals; (3) professionals not viewing multicultural competency as part of their responsibilities. If professionals have not been sufficiently trained or evaluated, there is little hope that an increased understanding and sensitivity to cultural differences will be available for students on campus (Pope & Mueller, 2011).

### **Advising**

“Advising may be the universal task in student affairs, because it exists [as] the foundation of much of the work we do” (Love & Maxam, 2011, p. 413). Advising is just one component in many of the jobs within student affairs. Some of these jobs include but are not limited to, student organization advising, academic advising, and career advising. Professional staff members who advise students are seen as helpful and able to create an environment which promotes education and growth (Love & Maxam, 2011). According to Love and Maxam (2011), some of the objectives of advising are to encourage “learning, growth, empowerment, and self-authorship” (p. 413).

Many students get involved in student organizations as soon as they arrive on the college campus and then begin to interact directly with their organization advisor. The literature shows student involvement outside the classroom has proven to positively affect student success (Love & Maxam, 2011). Due to the positive impact involvement in student organizations can have on a student, “institutions of higher education are obligated to provide advisers with the tools they need to enhance the development of the organizations with which they work” (Dunkel & Schuh, 1998, p. xiii).

Increased interaction with students of diverse backgrounds will bring to light how advisors of student organizations demonstrate their preparedness and ability to meet the needs of students of color. Advisors of student organizations, as well as all student affairs professionals, need specific skills to work with diverse groups (Goad, 2000). Scholars have stated that the core competency areas mentioned above are needed when working with diverse groups on college campuses. Advisors have been encouraged to uphold certain core values that promote “student success in terms of academic achievement, engagement, satisfaction, global citizenship, personal growth, and attainment of educational and career goals” (Love & Maxam, 2011, p. 414). Meanwhile, Pope et al. (2004) suggest, “multicultural awareness, knowledge, and skills are core competencies that all student affairs professionals need regardless of their job responsibilities and level of training” (p. 28).

### **Purpose of Study**

Due to the increase in diversity in higher education, an examination of the multicultural competencies of student affairs professionals has become an area of interest for researchers. The purpose of this quantitative study was to determine if, and to what extent, racial and ethnic identity, years of experience, education level, age, gender, advisor status, and sexual orientation are related to multicultural competence among student affairs professionals who are responsible for advising racial and ethnic student organizations at predominantly white institutions. Student organizations used for this study were distinguished by type: fraternities and sororities (Greek letter organizations); racial or ethnocultural advocacy and community organizations; and academic or social organizations. They included, but were not limited to Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, Incorporated; Lambda Theta Alpha Latin Sorority, Incorporated; Black Student Union; Asian American Association; Caribbean Student Association; Student Government

Association; French Club; and Black Engineer Student Society. The following research questions guided this study:

Research Question 1: To what degree are student affairs advisors of racial and ethnic student organizations multiculturally competent?

Research Question 2: What differences exist in the multicultural competence of student affairs advisors who have advised racial and ethnic student organizations compared to those advisors who have not?

Research Question 3: How do race/ethnicity, years of experience, level of education, gender, age, advisor status, and sexual orientation predict multicultural competence among advisors?

### **Overview of the Methodology**

The data from this study were collected using two self-reporting instruments administered to the participants: (1) Multicultural Competence in Student Affairs-Preliminary 2 (MCSA-P2) Scale; and (2) Personal Demographic Form created by the researcher. The MCSA-P2 was used because it was proven to be an effective measure for multicultural competence within higher education institutions and produced a pre-validated score for multicultural competence (Pope & Mueller, 2000). All participants in the study were members of NASPA. The instrument was emailed to the participants in a survey format. The survey consisted of 34 questions on a Likert scale. Participants were sorted according to their roles in student affairs. The personal demographic form collected demographic information about each participant and the participant's institutional information. Each instrument is explained further in Chapter 2 and is included as Appendices C and D herein.

Each participant was sent an invitation email requesting his or her participation in this study. Consent to participate in this study was obtained through the first survey question. Each participant was asked through the survey: Do you give consent to participate in the study? Each participant had the option to respond "yes" or "no." When participants responded, "yes," they moved forward with the survey and if a participant responded, "no," the survey closed. Over a 2-week period, each participant who had not taken the survey was emailed a weekly reminder to complete the survey. All information gathered from participants was used to conduct this study for research and was not shared with anyone outside of the research team.

The data collected was kept confidential. The survey responses were entered into a browser-based survey software known as Qualtrics then downloaded into a database for data analysis. The data from this study was downloaded and analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Analysis of the mean, standard deviation, and internal consistency was conducted to evaluate responses. Basic descriptive statistics were used to analyze research question one. Results were compared against those of Pope and Mueller (2000) for consistency purposes.

Research question two was analyzed using an Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) to measure mean differences between advisors of multicultural and other types of student organizations. Research question three was analyzed using multiple linear regression to display differences in advisors' multicultural competency by race/ethnicity, years of experience, level of education, gender, age, advisor status, and sexual orientation.

### **Significance of the Study**

Despite the availability of research conducted on the multicultural competence of student affairs professionals, there is limited research that specifically addresses the multicultural

competence of student affairs professionals who advise race- and ethnicity-based student organizations. This study provided a theoretical significance to the research literature. Furthermore, this study aimed to add information to the growing body of literature on the topics of both the historical discrimination towards students of color and multicultural competence needed by student affairs professionals to be better prepared to work with students of color. The practical significance of this study was twofold: (a) multicultural competency is vital to the student affairs profession (Pope et al., 2004), and (b) student involvement in extracurricular activities, more specifically in race- and ethnicity-based student organizations, helps students to feel connected and engaged with their university and is shown to have positive effects on their academic success (Love & Maxam, 2011; Wasley, 2006).

### **Limitations of the Study**

Limitations of this study were taken into account: (a) because participants self-reported responses, the overall results could be biased or otherwise compromised; (b) participants were only members of NASPA; however, there are other populations in student affairs that advise racial and ethnic student groups; (c) not all participants who were sent the survey responded; and (d) the instrument was a fairly new instrument within research and has limited reliability and validity research published.

### **Assumptions of the Study**

The few assumptions associated with this study included the researcher's expectations that: (a) all participants had an interest in becoming multiculturally competent; (b) all participants provided accurate and forthright responses to the demographic information and survey; (c) all participants had a working knowledge of multicultural competency and advising student organizations.

## Definition of Terms

The following terms were used throughout the study and are defined as follows:

*Multicultural competency* is defined as “the awareness, knowledge, and skills needed to work with others who are culturally different from self in meaningful, relevant, and productive ways” (Pope et al., 2004, p. 13).

*Student affairs* refer to the department or divisional area on a college or university campus that provides services that support the educational experiences of college students.

*Student affairs professional* describes a staff member at a college or university who provides educational services and resources to students to help them develop in and out of the classroom.

*Students of color* are defined as “those persons of African American, Latino, Asian American, and Native American Ancestry” (Solorzano, Ceja, & Yosso, 2000, p. 61).

*Student organization advisor* is a professional staff member who advises a student organization as part of their job responsibilities.

*Student organization* is defined as an organization that is registered as an official organization on a college campus.

*Racially or ethnically based student organization* is a student organization that was developed for and has a particular focus on a specific racial or ethnic group of people.

## Summary

Racial and ethnic diversity on college campuses continues to increase, creating the need for higher education administrators to be prepared, trained and knowledgeable of cultural differences in a manner that reflects a level of multicultural competency. The ability of student affairs professionals to demonstrate multicultural competence and handle the many cultural

differences and concerns of a diverse student population is essential to the overall development of students of color (Pope et al., 2004). Many students of color feel they are unwelcome visitors on predominantly white campuses (Turner, 1994). As a result, these students often feel disenfranchised from the higher education institutions they attend and seek comfort in campus-based racial and ethnic student organizations (Griffin et al., 2008; Kuh et al., 2010). These racial and ethnic student organizations not only provide students of color a means of becoming involved in campus life and enhancing their feelings of inclusion but also improve retention rates at predominately white institutions (Pope et al., 2004; Turner, 1994; Wasley, 2006; Wilson, 2012). This study examined the multicultural competencies of student affairs professionals who advised student organizations of color.

### **Organization of Study**

Chapter 1 outlines the background, purpose, research questions, significance of the study, limitations, assumptions, summary, and provides definitions of frequently used terms. Additionally, the chapter explained the focus of the study, which examined multicultural competence among student affairs professionals who were responsible for advising racial and ethnic organizations at predominantly white institutions of higher education. The aim was to determine how the participants' racial and ethnic identity, years of experience, gender, age, education level, advisor status, and sexual orientation impacted their multicultural competence. Chapter 2 includes a review of the relevant literature regarding student affairs professionals, multicultural competency, advisors of racial and ethnic student organizations, dynamic Model of Student Affairs Competence, and Multicultural Competence in Student Affairs-Preliminary 2 (MCSA-P2) Scale. Chapter 3 details the research procedure, instruments, questions, and a description of the sample population used in this study. Additionally, Chapter 3 explains how the

data were collected and analyzed for this study. Chapter 4 imparts the results of the study. Lastly, Chapter 5 includes a summary of the study linking the findings back to the existing literature, implications of the findings, and lastly proposes recommendations for further research.



## **CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

This literature review demonstrates how the history of diversification and adversity in higher education has influenced the development of the student affairs profession and identify the relevant challenges in establishing a multicultural student population. The researcher aimed to critically understand how professional and multicultural competencies in the student affairs profession were developed, and how they could be measured for student affairs professionals who worked with and advised students of color. In addition, the researcher wanted to examine further how continuing to refine the standards of multicultural competence within the student affairs profession could create a continued positive influence on the academic and university experience and persistence to graduation for students of color.

### **Introduction**

As surmised by Wechsler, Goodchild, and Eisenmann (2007) “All advanced civilizations have needed higher education to train their...priestly, and military, and other service elite, but only in medieval Europe did an institution recognizable as a university arise” (p. 6). In this vein, European universities began with White male student clientele. This tradition was formed and carried over into the British colonies with the founding of Harvard College in 1636, now Harvard University. Harvard College was the first postsecondary institution founded in the British colonies (Thelin, 2004; Wechsler et al., 2007). From the outset, the diversification of the student population was a priority due to the financial needs of the institution. Once Harvard College set the standard for diversifying the student body, students of color slowly began to emerge on other college campuses.

## **The Diversification of Higher Education**

Harvard was initially founded for White, male, religious leaders to continue Puritan traditions however over time; financial concerns prompted college officials to seek external funding to support the institution. The civilization and Christianization of Native Americans was a profitable cause. It was a project which drew the attention of Europeans abroad who were likely to donate money to the endeavor (Carney, 1999; Thelin, 2004; Wechsler et al., 2007; Weinberg, 1977; Wright, 1988).

Higher education began to expand enrollment to students outside of the White elite and military; Harvard was first, and other colonial colleges followed Harvard's lead. Indian College, founded in 1655 for prospective Native American students and established through the charter of Harvard College, served as an object for philanthropic donations. However, in practice, only one student entered the baccalaureate program by 1660 (Carney, 1999; Weinberg, 1977; Wright, 1988). By 1776, only four Native American students had graduated from the total nine colonial colleges (Carney, 1999). The funding requested by the colonial colleges for Native American support was used for mostly White teachers, students, and tutors (Carney, 1999; Weinberg, 1977). The student bodies of colleges and universities from the colonial era into the antebellum years remained mostly White and male. From the 1860s to the turn of the 20th century, women, African Americans, and Native Americans began to be admitted into higher education institutions, however; they were separate and unequal (Thelin & Gasman, 2011). For these populations, discrimination struggles writ large were now extended to on-campus communities.

Before Native Americans, African Americans, Asian Americans, and women were admitted to higher education institutions; they were discriminated against in society at large. These populations were portrayed as property, not citizens, and they were not considered equal

to White males. During the colonial and antebellum periods, all women, in addition to African, Asian, Latinx, and Native American were dehumanized formally through immigration, constitutional, property, and treaty laws and informally through every day discriminatory subtleties of White and gender privilege in the United States (Chambers, 2017). Through law, women were perceived as extensions of their fathers or husbands, having limited rights and privileges in and outside of the home (Basch, 1982; Blackstone, 1890; Hymowitz & Weissman, 1978). One privilege included access to formal education K-16 (secondary and post-secondary education) (Chambers, 2016; Hymowitz & Weissman, 1978). However, there were women of elite social classes who were able to gain an education informally; notable women among them were Thomas Jefferson's daughters (Wagoner, 1999).

Females could not attend higher education institutions with male students, leading to the first female educational structures being built. The first female seminaries included Troy Female Seminary in New York founded 1821, Hartford Female Seminary in Connecticut founded 1832, and Mount Holyoke Female Seminary in Massachusetts founded 1837 (Newcomer, 1959). During the 1840s and 1850s, other higher education institutions were established for women, including Knox University in Illinois, Wesleyan Female Seminary in Macon, Georgia, and Masonic University in Selma, Alabama (Thelin, 2004). In the 1860s and 1870s, more female schools and seminaries became degree-granting institutions (Horowitz, 1984). These institutions were exclusively female, with other institutions remaining exclusively male.

Widespread coeducation would not be the norm until the expansion of state colleges under the first Morrill Act 1862 (Radke-Moss, 2008). Over time, colleges began to admit traditionally overlooked populations of citizens, students such as women and Blacks. Oberlin College led the way in coeducation by allowing admission of both men and women into their

college programs (Gordon, 1990). In 1833, Oberlin was the first college to admit Blacks and women.

During this time frame, Africans, as well as their progeny, were transplanted via slave ships to the Americas. Enslaved Africans were legally prohibited from reading and writing, especially in southern states. Slaves would commonly face criminal retribution for pursuing education as would the individuals found to be aiding them in pursuit of such education (Anderson, 1988). In 1860, only 5% of slaves could read and write, while the United States literacy rate was 30%. This bleak statistic did not discourage some Blacks from furthering their education by attending college and earning higher education degrees. In 1799, John Chavis, known as the first Black person to attend college, attended Liberty Hall Academy – today known as Washington and Lee University. Alexander Twilight was the first Black person to earn a baccalaureate degree in the United States. Twilight graduated from Middlebury College in 1823 (Chambers, 2017).

Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) were established for free Blacks to attend college. Free Blacks were allowed to attend the first HBCU in 1837, the Institution for Colored Youth, known today as Cheyney University in 1856. Shaw University was the first HBCU established in the South in 1865 (Chambers, 2017). HBCUs were not only for Black students- they were attended by Black, Native American and Puerto Rican students. While Whites were not excluded from attending HBCUs, they typically did not apply for admission to them (Chambers, 2017).

During the colonial and antebellum periods, Asian, Latinx and Native American men were not formally excluded from higher education in the same manner as the exclusion of African American men. Though immigration and treaty laws restricted and prescribed the

contours of access, these populations had claimed to U.S. soil (Carney, 1999; Takaki, 1998; Chambers, 2017). However, society found ways to curtail their access to higher education. As such, Native Americans (and Puerto Ricans) were encouraged to attend industrial education-focused HBCUs like Hampton University (MacDonald, 2003). In short, while colonial colleges used Native Americans to spawn philanthropic donations, the numbers of Native American students admitted were few; by 1776, only 47 Native American students had been enrolled in all nine colonial colleges. However, Dartmouth enrolled more than other colonial colleges—less than 200—by 1973, with only 25 graduating (Weinberg, 1977). There were few institutions founded to serve Native Americans. They included Sheldon Jackson College in Sitka, Alaska, founded in 1878, Bacone College in Muskogee, Oklahoma, founded in 1880, and Croatan Normal School is known today as the University of North Carolina, Pembroke, founded in 1887 (Chambers, 2017).

Regarding Latinx students in the western United States, The Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo of 1848, which ended the Mexican-American War and changed the U.S. Mexican border, did not define which Americans when it granted former Mexican citizens the same rights as Americans (U.S.). As such, Mexicans with lighter phenotypes, especially those who learned English, were more likely to be treated as White Americans; those with darker phenotypes unable to speak English were more likely to be treated like Blacks/African Americans (MacDonald, 2004). Since the former Mexican territories were distant from central Mexico, individuals living therein tended to be less educated with minimal access to higher education before the treaty (MacDonald, 2004), rich history of Mexican higher education predating Harvard's founding notwithstanding (Sanchez, 1944).

Linguistic and cultural differences made the broader inclusion of multicultural student populations quite challenging. For Latinx Americans on the east coast, Puerto Rico became a colonial extension for higher education in the United States from 1901 to 1907. Yearly, twenty students were sent from Puerto Rico to the United States to study the arts and trades (*An Act to Provide for the Education of Certain Young Men and Women in the United States, 1902*; MacDonald, 2003). Puerto Ricans were not restricted from historically White colleges and universities, but the University of Puerto Rico was established in 1903 to further higher education on the island (MacDonald, 2003).

Also, a series of immigration laws facilitated the migration of waves of Chinese, Japanese, Filipino, and Korean immigrants. By law, Asian Americans were excluded from naturalized citizenship, although citizenship was granted to individuals born in the United States (*In re Ah Yup, 1878*). Newly arrived Asian immigrants on Ellis Island were not only excluded from public services and accommodations, but all immigrants were tested for diseases, parasites, trade/occupation, and family ties (Lee & Yung, 2010). In the South, Asian Americans who were considered citizens had the privilege to receive a primary and secondary education (Low, 1982). In the case of *Gong Lum et al., v. Rice et al., 275 U.S. 78 (1927)* a female Chinese student was excluded from a White high school in Mississippi due to there being a segregated black school in her neighborhood to attend. Although colleges and universities did not formally exclude Asian Americans, their admission to and engagement on campus was limited.

By the 1950s, only a few Blacks were admitted to and had graduated from desegregated public historically predominantly white institutions (HWCUs) (Britts, 1975; Wallenstein, 1999). In 1954, only 25 HWCUs in the South would admit Black students (Wiggins, 1966). Even after the *Brown v. Board of Education* court case, some higher education institutions would not admit

students of color; those admitted were often victims of discrimination. For example, the University of Alabama granted admission to Autherine Juanita Lucy and Pollie Myers in 1952. However, once university officials learned of their race, their admission status was revoked (Clark, 1993; *Lucy v. Adams*, 1955). On White college campuses, Black students experienced isolation (Jencks & Riesman, 1967), racial slurs, violence, unequal grading scales, intimidation and harassment by faculty and peers, and rarely interacted with other races outside the classroom (Blauner, 1972; Goldstone, 2006; Hedegard, 1972; Morgan, 1972; NSSFNS, 1955; Sayre, 1995; Willie & McCord, 1972).

Until the 1960s, admissions of non-whites on college campuses were limited, as was the integration of women. Black students on white college campuses were likely to be segregated in dining halls, libraries, and common spaces, even when the facilities were legally open to all students. This has been partly credited to the Supreme Court's decisions in *McLaurin v. Oklahoma State Regents*, 339 U.S. 637 (1950) and *Sweatt v. Painter* 39 U.S. 629 (1950). During the civil rights movement of the 1950s and 1960s and through the Vietnam War, multicultural issues in higher education were very prominent, and student affairs professionals did not have the tools needed to address the evolving multicultural campus dynamics (Pope et al., 2004).

Throughout the 1960s, college enrollments among students of color were minimal. For Blacks, those enrollments were predominantly at HBCUs (Alger et al., 2000; Chambers, 2017). At the time of the Civil Rights Movement, there existed a population of Black students enrolled at (HWCUs). Black students admitted to HWCUs estimated at 10,000 in the 1960s. Per Britts (1975), Black students rarely made up 1% of the student body at HWCUs. Public HWCUs were

considered 72% desegregated due to the Black student enrollment numbers ranging from five to four hundred (Johnson, 1964).

During this time, Black students were an approximate population of 3.1% of individuals with four or more years of some higher education experience where Whites approximated 8.1%. Moving ahead to the 1970s, the gap in higher education acquisition increased between Blacks and Whites. Blacks encompassed 4.5% while Whites comprised 11.8% (Pratt, Hixson, & Jones, 2010). During the 1970s, enrollment for Mexican American students who were part of the University of California system increased from 1.8% to 5% (Lopez, Madrid, & Macias, 1976). Asian American enrollment during this period estimated at 2% of the higher education population (Teranishi, 2010). By the 1980s, the Asian American population had increased to 4% nationwide (Chan & Wang, 1991).

As campuses slowly became desegregated, Black students could participate in some campus life activities and athletics as well as receive honor awards. Despite this, Black students could not swim in the campus swimming pools or join White sororities and fraternities (Horwitz, 1988). Some institutions began to desegregate involuntarily due to a Supreme Court decision in *Sipuel v. Board of Regents of the University of Oklahoma*, 332 U.S. 631 (1948), which required taxpayer-funded state universities to admit and provide same instruction to qualified Black students as they did for White students.

The injustice felt by students of color came to the forefront during the time of the Civil Rights Movement. Increased student activism began to emerge on HBCUs and HWCUs campuses through violent and silent protests and rallies. In 1969, 292 California protests were carried out at 232 higher education institutions (Phillips, 1985). By 1970, 60% of students participated in political protests, and 86% participated in student activism by signing petitions



(Astin, 1971). For participating in protests, students faced backlashes such as jail time and expulsion from school. Student's academic persistence was routinely jeopardized (Rosen, 1971). Blacks received harsher disciplinary actions compared to Whites when found responsible for participating in various forms of student activism (Rosen, 1971). For example, at the University of Southern Mississippi, Whites that protested would often attack police with bottles, eggs, rocks, and even carried burned crosses. Blacks, however, conducted peaceful sit-ins. Black students who were found to have participated in the sit-ins at Delta State and the University of Mississippi were sent to jail (Williamson, 2008).

As higher education institutions began to desegregate and diversify their campuses, the reality of racially motivated incidents fueled with discrimination and hatred increased. Students on HBCU and HWCU campuses protested for some of the same reasons, such as, but not limited to, equality on campus, police abuse, and ill-treatment of persons of color (Lovett, 2011). HBCU and HWCU college presidents alike often opposed student-initiated protests as they risked being fired, losing funding and support of their boards of trustees (Nelson, 2012; Williamson, 2008). Students regarded HBCU presidents who opposed student protests on campus as "white racists in blackface" (Williamson, 2008, p. 129).

According to Chambers (2017), as a result of the protests, many states issued bans on certain speakers within civil rights organizations to discourage them from speaking on college campuses. Mississippi is an example of one state which banned civil rights speakers from speaking on college campuses; however, the Supreme Court ruled this action unconstitutional in *Stacy v. Williams* (1969).

Well-known civil rights speakers during this time began to emerge, including Malcolm X, Muhammad Ali, and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. They were known to speak publicly about

and against racial discrimination. College students and community protestors began to recite their rhetoric aimed at educating college administrators on the social injustices and dehumanizing acts against students of color on their campuses. Stokely Carmichael, the chairperson of the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), was arrested for trespassing after participating in the March of Fear. Once released from jail, he began using phrases like "Black Power" (Jeffries, 2009, p. 187) and quoting Malcolm X's philosophy, "Whites can help us, but they can't join us. There can be no Black-White unity until there is some Black unity" (Breitman, 1967, p. 56). After that, the University of Pennsylvania student organization, Society of African and Afro-American Students (SAAS) invited Muhammad Ali to campus to speak, excluding Whites from attending the event (Breitman, 1967; Chambers, 2017). This action was seen as racial discrimination against Whites, and according to Tatum (2003), Whites overlook discrimination when they self-segregate and congregate.

Higher education has a history of discriminatory admission practices and not ensuring a safe and supportive environment for students of color (Chambers, 2017; Griffin & Hurtado, 2011; Thelin & Gasman, 2011). This history continues to support institutionalized practices and policies that marginalize and alienate students of color at predominantly white institutions (PWIs) today (Chambers, 2017; Griffin et al., 2008).

Due to this history, institutions of higher education were established to help the underserved student populations. In 2011, these institutions included approximately 268 Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSIs), 103 HBCUs, 70 women's colleges, and six Asian American-serving institutions. Additionally, there were three institutions for the differently abled (Griffin & Hurtado, 2011, p. 33) and 37 tribal colleges for Native Americans (Griffin & Hurtado,

2011). Even though these institutions were created to help the underserved populations, discrimination and acts of violence toward these groups did not disappear.

Today, the enrollment rates of students of color are the highest ever and continue to increase. In 2014, for the first time, the University of California System admitted more Latinx American freshman students compared to White students from within the state of California (Goad, 2018; “More Latinos than Whites admitted,” 2014). The demographics for admitted students in the University of California system showed 29% were Latinx American, 27% were White American, while 36% were Asian American and 4% were African American (“California Latinos surpass Whites,” 2014; “More Latinos than Whites admitted,” 2014).

The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) (2011) reported student enrollment from 1976 to 2011 concluded: (1) Hispanic student enrollment increased from 4% to 14%; (2) Asian/Pacific Islander rose from 2% to 6%; (3) Black students increased from 10% to 15%; and (4) American Indian/Alaska Native students increased from .07% to 0.9%.

Musu-Gillette et al. (2016) compiled data from the NCES and the U.S. Department of Education on the racial and ethnic trends in higher education. Data for 2013 showed higher enrollment rates for Whites at 42% with an age range from 18-24. This enrollment data is compared to Black and Hispanic students at 34% each. The total enrollment gap between Whites and Hispanics between 2003 through 2013, changed from 18% to 8%. Despite this change, White and Black total enrollment rates showed no significant change during 2003-2013. By 2050, it is expected that the U.S. population will not have a majority ethnic group (Goad, 2018).

### **Safe Spaces on Campuses for Diverse Students**

As college campuses continue to diversify, it is critical for campus administrators to create and develop safe spaces for students of color. Theme housing, cultural centers, and student

organizations have emerged to ensure that students of color can develop a sense of community and feel safe on college campuses (Patton, 2010a; Peterson & Davenport, 1978). During the 1960s, as ethnic student organizations were established on college campuses throughout the North and West, they began to request spaces of their own. Requesting their own space, resulted in reactionary rhetoric labeling these organizations and their members as racist and exclusionary (Exum, 1985). Any academic institution maintaining a climate that is not culturally inclusive and supportive of typically disenfranchised groups can have a negative impact on its students (Milem, Chang, & Antonio, 2005; Pope & Mueller, 2011; Roscoe, 2005; Sutton & Kimbrough, 2001; Tatum, 2003). Creating safe spaces on college campuses is a way that institutions can begin to combat the challenges students of color face on their campuses. A few examples of these types of spaces include racial and ethnic centers, residence halls, and student-of-color organizations. These spaces have been implemented as solutions to the problem of no culturally inclusive spaces on campuses (Milem et al., 2005).

According to Shuford (2011), cultural centers began to form on college campuses during the mid-1960s. Cultural centers were created due to the interest of faculty and students in helping support students of color (Stewart & Bridges, 2011). According to Stewart and Bridges (2011), cultural centers were developed on college campuses to address student retention, response to regional accrediting agencies and federal equal opportunity programs, mandates, and racial incidents. Cultural centers have been at the forefront of multicultural competency development over the last 40 years (Patton, 2010b). Building self-confidence (Pittman, 1994; Tatum, 2003); supporting academic success (Patton, 2006, 2010a); providing programs and creating an inclusive environment for all students (Patton, 2010b) are benefits of cultural centers.

On the student side, organizations were formed to address racial tensions on college campuses and feelings of isolation and exclusion among minority populations. Thus, racial and ethnic student organizations such as the Black Student Union (BSU) began to establish themselves as peer to peer support networks on campuses (Chambers, 2017; Peterson & Davenport, 1978). The objective of the BSU was to give Black students a space on college campuses where they could have a sense of belonging (Willie & McCord, 1972). Each BSU's structure was different, depending on the college campus where it was established. A BSU's structure may have included several Black-based student organizations grouped or a student government association with a branch that included Black student organizations (Peterson & Davenport, 1978).

Other racial and ethnic student organizations established during this time were: (a) Asian American, (b) Latinx and Native American, and (c) Mexican American. Asian American organizations focused on political advocacy and support of Third-World students (Lui, Geron, & Lai, 2008). Latinx and Native American organizations were developed, including the National Indian Youth Council (NIYC) (Shreve, 2011); the Mexican American Youth Organization (MAYO) (Acuña, 2011; Navarro, 1995); and the Mexican American Student Association (MASA) (Acuña, 2011). These organizations championed issues such as the preservation of Indian customs and policing of treaties, political protest, community service, and education.

Ethnically based student organizations are critical to the social integration of students of color at PWIs (Milem et al., 2005). These ethnic organizations help to meet needs that traditionally White student organizations do not meet (Griffin et al., 2008) and provide a cultural connection for students of color (Giuffre, 2003; Harper & Quaye, 2007). Student affairs professionals, more specifically the advisors of student organizations of color, should develop a

sensitivity to leadership styles among minority cultures to better help students of color.

Additionally, incorporating multicultural leadership training for members of non-culturally based student organizations has been shown to aid these students and organizations in becoming more ethnically diverse (Sutton & Kimbrough, 2001). These developments notwithstanding, racialized incidents continue and remain prevalent on campuses today; many of which are of heightened publicity in the Trump era (Bello, 2009; Bouie, 2016; Brown, 2011; Brown, 2017; Frey et al., 2016; Schmidt, 2017; Southern Poverty Law Center, 2016a, 2016b).

### **Adversity on Diversified Campuses**

According to Frey et al. (2016), the racial diversity changes in the U.S. population are noted as a factor leading to Barack Obama winning the 2008 and 2012 presidential elections. The presidential elections could have been influenced partly by the Latinx and Asian American populations growing rapidly compared to the White population. Frey et al. (2016) also noted that in 2016 the minority population's voter representation had increased to 31%, compared to 23% in 2000, and by 2032 it is expected to increase to 40%. By 2032, eligible Latinx American voters are expected to outnumber African Americans by 50%. The presidential election of Donald Trump in 2016 has had a substantial effect on race relations within the U.S. population and within institutions of higher education (Bello, 2009; Bouie, 2016; Brown, 2011, 2017; Frey et al., 2016; Southern Poverty Law Center, 2016a, 2016b).

A non-profit civil rights organization, the Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC), known for investigating hate crimes and acts of social injustices around the world, completed two reports on the impact of hate incidents since Donald Trump's election. In 2016, the first report by the SPLC (2016a) revealed Donald Trump's election as president of the United States, was filled with derogatory racial statements that factored into the increase of hate crimes shortly after the

election. These included statements made by the president-elect himself, such as his threat to build a wall between Mexico and the United States (Southern Poverty Law Center, 2016a). The report also stated that ten days following Donald Trump's election as president, 867 hate crimes had been reported nationally, most of them occurred on K-12 and college campuses. During some of the hate crime assaults, violators said Trump's name aloud, clearly demonstrating the president-elect's rhetoric specifically inspiring the assaults. Furthermore, as more racial incidents are occurring on K-12 and college campuses, increasing scrutiny has been placed on the multicultural competencies of educators, specifically, student affairs professionals.

Student affairs professionals are beginning to speak out about the impact of race relations on college campuses as influenced by the 2016 presidential election. Sarah Brown's (2017) article details an interview with Shaun Harper, at the time, Director of the Center for the Study of Race and Equity in Education at the University of Pennsylvania, who shared his viewpoint on how the 2016 presidential election has influenced and impacted higher education:

Mr. Trump's victory in the presidential election means college officials can no longer doubt that racism still exists and can appear on their campuses...making improving the racial climate a more urgent matter for higher education leaders. Barack Obama's 2008 victory led many Americans, including those on college campuses, to believe that the nation had moved past its fraught racial history by electing a black president. (para. 1-5)

Dickerson and Saul's (2016) *New York Times* article, "Campuses Confront Hostile Acts Against Minorities After Donald Trump's Election," gives examples of many college campuses that have experienced racial incidents due to the November 2016 election results. According to Dickerson and Saul (2016), a Muslim student at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville expressed concern for Muslim students' safety after the election, asserting that Donald Trump's victory had empowered students that hate Muslims to be violent towards them potentially. Additionally, the article reported another incident which occurred at Wellesley College in

Massachusetts: Two male students from Babson College rode onto the campus in a truck with Trump flags attached and waited in their truck outside of a Black student organization's meeting.

The male students attempted to spit on a Black female student as she exited their meeting.

Since the November 2016 election, incidents of hate have continued, and have received increased attention nationally and worldwide. An incident of hate was seen in August 2017 in Charlottesville, Virginia, where White supremacists, along with White nationalists and hate groups, marched on the grounds at the University of Virginia. Violence ensued on campus and in the community, prompting new discussions of the obligation of college administrators to ensure the safety of students and the campus community during protests (Schmidt, 2017).

Racial incidents are continuing to occur today, even though college campuses are more racially diverse. This is validated by data compiled by Roberts, Zhang, Morgan, and Musu-Gillette (2015) that details 791 hate crimes that occurred at academic institutions in 2012. The report outlined the most common incidents that occurred on college campuses: (a) 412 cases of destruction, damage, and vandalism; (b) 261 cases of intimidation; (c) 79 cases of simple assault; (d) 14 cases of aggravated assault; (e) 11 cases of larceny; (f) 5 cases of robbery; (g) 5 cases of burglary; and (h) 4 forcible sex offenses. Roberts et al. (2015) continued to explain that the above hate crimes are race-related incidents that

...accounted for 46 percent of reported vandalisms classified as hate crimes, 45 percent of reported intimidations, and 44 percent of reported simple assaults in 2012.

Additionally, one-quarter of vandalism and intimidation hate crimes, and 28 percent of simple assaults were classified with sexual orientation as the motivating bias. (p. ix)

Examples of racial incidents are presented below and can be found in the *Journal of Blacks in Higher Education* (JBHE).

The *Journal of Blacks in Higher Education* (JBHE) is an academic publication that gives attention to and provides statistics for, incidents of discrimination and racial inequality at higher



education institutions throughout the United States. The following incidents were all retrieved from JBHE. An article in the JBHE describes a lawsuit filed against women's basketball coaches at the University of Illinois by former players (“Lawsuit claims Black women basketball,” 2015). The players claim the coaches fostered a hostile racial environment for African American players by creating segregated practices and subjecting them to more intense discipline than their White teammates. According to the lawsuit, African American players were often referred to as “crabs” and deemed “unintelligent” (“Lawsuit claims Black women,” 2015, para. 2). Another JBHE article pertains to a group of White women soccer players at Whitworth University in Spokane, Washington, who were suspended after posting pictures of themselves in Black-face at a costume party (“Blackface incident at Whitworth University,” 2015). In May 2017, nooses were found hanging from trees and lamp posts on the campus of American University in Washington, DC after the first female African American was named the president of the Student Government Association (Jones, 2017; “Racism rears its ugly head,” 2017). At Wheaton College in Wheaton, Illinois, football players were caught performing a skit that included the players dressing like Ku Klux Klan members and carrying Confederate flags. Some players later claimed the activity was a bonding event and not meant to advocate racism. College officials stated, “Coaches accepted responsibility for their failure to provide appropriate guidance” (“Students appeared in KKK uniforms,” 2015, para. 3). The above-noted incidents demonstrate how a lack of multicultural competence can directly affect the university staff's ability to instruct cultural awareness and demonstrate sensitivity to the issues faced by students of color while educating everyone to be inclusive. In addition, when these types of incidents occur on campus, they affect a student of color's capacity to trust university staff professionals.

Racial incidents like the aforementioned demonstrate how multicultural conflict can arise on college campuses when cultural prejudices and norms collide (Castellanos et al., 2007; Cuyjet & Duncan, 2013; Goad, 2000; Pope et al., 2004). In addition to overtly discriminatory incidents occurring on campus, multicultural conflict can also stem from staff and faculty who do not have a working understanding of cultural differences such as race, ethnicity, sex and gender identity, sexual orientation, religion, ability, geographic norms, social class, and more (Chambers, 2017; Harper, 2017; Ibarra, 2001; Ladany & Bradley, 2011). Given that student affairs professionals work with an increasingly diverse student body, there is an overwhelming need for these professionals to be multiculturally competent, prepared to work with students of color, and receive continuous training on cultural differences (Pope et al., 2004; Roscoe, 2015).

The ongoing and pervasive nature of racialized incidents gives rise to several questions related to the aforementioned incidents. While colleges and universities should become equipped to manage multicultural conflicts, this study's focus was the support of students of color: Are university professionals multiculturally competent enough to work with students of color? What are the multicultural competencies of these university staff professionals? How can the university staff professionals of these organizations instill an attitude of multicultural awareness within student organizations?

According to Roscoe (2015), "By using specific cultural strategies, an advisor can demonstrate cultural awareness and competency to work successfully with all groups of underrepresented student populations" (p. 57). Likewise, Dunkel and Schuh (1998) assert, "Institutions of higher education are obligated to provide advisors with the tools they need to enhance the development of the organizations with which they work" (p. xiii). Multicultural competency among student affairs professionals is essential to success in their daily work and

helps foster a safe and inclusive learning environment for students of color (Pope & Reynolds, 1997; Pope et al., 2004).

### **Student Affairs Profession**

Since the establishment of higher education institutions, faculty members have often adopted a parental role to students attending the college. During the Colonial period, Leonard (1956) describes the work of faculty and institutional presidents was *in loco parentis* (in place of the parent). Initially, the focus of the faculty and institutional presidents was to ensure that social, moral, and academic success centered on Christian beliefs (Leonard, 1956). The formal beginning of the student affairs profession is marked during the Federal Period of 1780-1820. During this period, administrators began to oversee the health of enrolled students, dormitory assignments, and disciplinary actions for students (Leonard, 1956). The purpose of the student affairs profession continued to develop as the college campus infrastructure changed, such as college type (land grant, technical, and liberal arts), housing, student conduct, and extracurricular activities (Leonard, 1956; Nuss, 2003; Rudolph, 1965).

As the demographics of the student body changed, more resources on campuses were allocated to support the student population. In 1870, President Charles Eliot of Harvard announced the first student dean, a position he created to handle administrative responsibilities such as enrollment and registration which provided a framework for the formalization role of university presidents (Garland, 1985; Nuss, 2003; Stewart, 1985). This position eventually evolved into another role, dean of men, who were responsible for disciplining students and later establishing social and political ideals as the college atmosphere changed (Rhatigan, 1978; Secretarial Notes, 1929). While the first dean of men position is not confidently recorded, LeBaron Russell Briggs of Harvard was appointed to the role in 1890 (Cowley, 1940). In 1892,

to compensate for the growing numbers of female student enrollees, the University of Chicago became the first university to appoint a dean of women (Fley, 1979; Horowitz, 1987).

The responsibilities of these deans changed as student curricula evolved to include student activities in and out of the classroom. The implementation of new pedagogical models intended to develop the whole student; i.e., linking an individual's curricular and co-curricular activities created the foundation for the student personnel movement (Brubacher & Rudy, 1976; Nuss, 2003). With this new initiative, college personnel began to provide services for "recruiting students, providing financial aid, housing them, feeding them, and providing health services and services for students with disabilities, all while continuing to discipline students as necessary" (Barr, Keating, & Associates, 1985, p. 68). Student personnel focused on guiding students, while deans of men and women focused on conduct and management (Barr et al., 1985). Due to the overwhelming growth in student populations, training programs for student affairs professionals were created to help the profession evolve and adapt to the changing student population.

Today, the student affairs profession covers a variety of departments with specific functions, while all sharing the same goal of developing the student in and out of the classroom (Reynolds, 2009). "Helping, advising, and counseling skills are critical tools for student affairs practitioners, and helping students is central to the history, goals, and responsibilities of student affairs work" (Reynolds, 2009, p. 6).

As part of their job responsibility, student affairs professionals have a very significant role in managing multicultural issues on college campuses due to the direct interactions they have with students of color (Reynold, 2009). This role extends to helping create a positive academic environment that promotes student learning—an influence significant enough to

warrant student affairs scholarships dedicated to the research and development of good practice principles (Blimling, Whitt, & Associates, 1999).

There are seven dominant concepts behind good practice in student affairs: (1) engaging students in active learning; (2) helping students develop coherent values and ethical standards; (3) communicating high expectations; (4) using systematic inquiry to improve performance; (5) aligning resources with institutional goals and mission; (6) forging partnerships; and (7) creating inclusive communities (Blimling et al., 1999). The research of Astin and Astin (2000) outlined four essential roles and responsibilities of student affairs professionals when creating a proper learning environment: (1) service delivery; (2) student directed activities; (3) integrated learning; and (4) institutional governance.

These roles and responsibilities promote a bilateral approach that allows student affairs professionals the capacity to help their students both in and out of the classroom. In addition, these roles and responsibilities continue to evolve and dovetail with the further establishment of student affairs professional competencies.

### **Student Affairs Competencies**

Even though a need for professional competencies has been demonstrated, it has been challenging to set a standard consensus over the years regarding which competencies are needed for the student affairs profession. Pope et al. (1997) stated, "The student affairs literature shows increasing attention to the core competencies, or general awareness, knowledge, and skills needed for efficacious and improved professional practice" (p. 267). Several researchers have debated the exact competencies, knowledge, and skills that are needed to assist student affairs professionals in being more effective (Pope & Reynolds, 1997; Waple, 2006). The following paragraphs will identify professional competencies within the student affairs profession.

Komives and Woodard (2003) state that the work responsibilities of all student affairs professionals involve certain competencies which include: (a) multiculturalism and diversity; (b) leadership; (c) counseling; (d) assessment; (e) teaching and training; (f) professionalism; (g) advising and consulting; (h) conflict resolution; and (i) community building and programming. Janosik, Carpenter, and Creamer (2006) presented a list of competencies for student affairs professionals that included: (a) history, values and philosophy; (b) management, administration, technology and organizational development; (c) culture, diversity and multiculturalism; (d) assessment and research practices; (e) law, legislation and policy; and (f) student development characteristics, environment and learning.

Janosik et al. (2006) developed their list of competencies in the absence of clear direction from governing associations of student affairs, believing that some form of a professional model would help foster the longevity of the profession. The three main associations which have taken the position of governing the student affairs profession are The Council for the Advancement of Standards (CAS), the American College Personnel Association (ACPA), and Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education (NASPA) (Janosik et al., 2006).

Since Janosik et al.'s (2006) article was written, the CAS, ACPA, and NASPA have developed standards and competencies for student affairs professionals designed to offer guidelines that promote growth and success within the profession. The following paragraphs review the professional competencies identified by ACPA, NASPA, and CAS. With the assistance of a task force comprised of student affairs professionals, ACPA and NASPA (2010) developed a set of 10 competency standards they assert student affairs professionals ought to fulfill regardless of their job position.

The following 10 competencies offer general expectations, provide student affairs professionals a starting point to engage in self-reflection on their competency levels, and encourage their continued personal development (ACPA & NASPA, 2010). The competencies include: (1) advising and helping; (2) assessment, evaluation and research; (3) equity, diversity and inclusion; (4) ethical professional practice; (5) history, philosophy and values; (6) human and organizational resources; (7) law, policy and governance; (8) leadership; (9) personal foundations; and (10) student learning and development. While student affairs professionals mature in their development, they should be able to demonstrate the competencies on one of three levels: (1) basic; (2) intermediate; and (3) advanced (ACPA & NASPA, 2010). Professionals are expected to have a basic level of knowledge and skills in all competency areas; however, professionals are not expected to have advanced skills in all competency areas (ACPA & NASPA, 2010).

In 2015, the governing boards of the ACPA and NASPA approved and released an updated list of core competencies for the student affairs profession to ensure specific outcomes and maintain curriculum standards for the profession of student affairs (ACPA & NASPA, 2015). The updated competencies are as follows: (a) personal and ethical foundations; (b) values, philosophy and history; (c) assessment, evaluation and research; (d) law policy and governance; (e) organizational and human resources; (f) leadership; (g) social justice and inclusion; (h) student learning and development; (i) technology; and (k) advising and supporting. Since it is common that student affairs professionals enter into the profession from a variety of fields and majors, the competencies serve to establish a basic level of understanding and skill sets for all student affairs professionals. Student affairs professionals can reach intermediate or advanced

levels in their work as they explore their professional self-improvement (ACPA & NASPA, 2015).

Though there are similarities between the two professional competency lists developed by ACPA and NASPA (2010) and ACPA and NASPA (2015), the newest competencies developed by ACPA and NASPA (2015) have been formulated according to a conceptual model that asserts that professional development in one area is directly related to development and improvement in other competency levels (ACPA & NASPA, 2015).

According to Munsch and Cortez (2014), student affairs professionals can benefit from using the ACPA and NASPA competencies for self-evaluation and improvement. The use of these competencies can lead to a mutual standard for all community college professionals to follow as well as any student affairs professional. A mutual standard gives professionals a chance to review and evaluate their practices to help improve their performance and identify advanced training opportunities in specific competency areas (Munsch & Cortez, 2014).

The Council for the Advancement of Standards (CAS) in higher education is a resource to help student affairs professionals. CAS was created to develop a set of achievable standards to be used as a reference to help support student affairs professionals in their work. To that end, CAS (2015a) has set guidelines for professionals to follow when working to create supportive academic environments that encourage student learning, programs, and services. To achieve excellence in the profession, an individual must practice "life-long learning, and professional development" through three characteristics, "general knowledge and skills, interactive competences, and self-mastery" (CAS, 2006, para. 2). The guiding principles that underlie the work of the CAS (2015b) can be organized into five categories or areas of attention:



1. Students and their environment. The whole student is shaped by environments that provide learning opportunities reflective of society and diversity, with students having ultimate responsibility for learning.
2. Organization, leadership and human resources. Quality of leaders possessing sound preparation is essential, with success directly correlated to clarity of mission.
3. Ethical considerations. Educators exhibit impeccable behavior in professional and personal life.
4. Diversity and multiculturalism. Institutions embracing diversity eliminating barriers with justice and respect for differences, binding individuals to community.
5. Health engendering environments. Education prospers in benevolent environments that provide students with appropriate challenges and necessary support. (p. 2)

These categories were developed from theories and conceptual models that influenced the work of higher education professionals, such as “human development, group dynamics, student learning, organizational management and administration” (CAS, 2015b, p. 2).

Though there is no agreement on the core competencies among scholars, there is a healthy demand for the student affairs profession to be competency based (ACPA & NASPA, 2015; Pope & Reynolds, 1997). CAS created their guidelines to move the profession to "more concrete, concise and agreed upon characteristics that are expected of professionals" (CAS, 2015c, p. 19).

According to CAS (2015c), “Defining competencies of student affairs and other professionals in higher education who plan, implement, and offer other programs and services is the mark of a maturing profession” (p. 19). In 1990, the Student Affairs National Agenda wanted to see a positive change among community college professionals; therefore, it developed tools such as worksheets and a monograph to help them meet the needs of students (Munsch & Cortez, 2014).

The student affairs profession is continuing to make strides in setting firm competencies, and ongoing research continues to reveal new approaches that ensure student affairs professionals are competent in helping students. There is a consensus among student affairs

professionals that graduate school training is vital in preparing professionals to work in the profession and to work with students (Pope & Reynolds, 1997; Waple, 2006).

In 2006, Waple conducted a study to highlight the problems associated with the academic preparedness of students in graduate student affairs programs. For the study, specific competencies and skills were identified and labeled necessary for entry-level student affairs work (Waple, 2006). The participant population for the final study consisted of 1,237 active members in the NASPA and ACPA database who showed membership for less than five years having graduated with a master's degree in student personnel within the past five years (Waple, 2006). All participants rated 28 competencies by selecting whether they developed the competency while in the master's degree program or if the competency was needed for them to complete their current duties at work. Of the participants, 430 out of 1,237 met all the requirements for the study and returned the questionnaire, resulting in a total response rate of 55.7% (Waple, 2006).

The results of the study indicated participants achieved highly in 11 skills:

(a) history of student affairs; (b) history of education; (c) cultural foundations of higher education; (d) student demographics and characteristics; (e) student development theory; (f) career development; (g) ethics in student affairs work; (h) multicultural awareness and knowledge; (i) effective programs planning and implementation; (j) effective written and oral communication skills; and (k) problem solving. (Waple, 2006, p. 8)

Waple's (2006) results indicated that participants within the graduate programs showed low levels of achievement in four skills that were utilized significantly in the actual duties of entry-level professionals. These skills included: "microcomputers in higher education; budget and fiscal management; strategic planning; and supervision of staff" (Waple, 2006, p. 14).

Overall, Waple showed a higher level of skill development among the participants in 11 different skill areas. Of significance was the finding that student affairs professionals showed low levels of competency in skill sets identified as pertinent to entry-level duties (Waple, 2006).

Mastrodicasa (2004) conducted a study investigating the impact of a diversity course in student affairs graduate programs. Utilizing the Multicultural Competence in Student Affairs-Preliminary 2 (MCSA-P2) Scale instrument, researchers evaluated the multicultural competence of participants in conjunction with their racial identity and years of experience in the profession. The data showed there was no statistical difference in multicultural competence levels between those participants who did take a diversity course and those participants who did not. Mastrodicasa (2004) attributed this data conclusion to mitigating factors such as the age of the participants and the number of years of experience they possessed in the student affairs profession.

Students interact with and have more frequent access to, student affairs professionals than any other college officials. Furthermore, student affairs professionals are more likely to be approached by students with a broader range of questions and issues; answers to those inquiries sometimes being outside of their area of specialization. Therefore, cross-training within student affairs professionals is paramount to their success in supporting students. For example, student affairs professional in orientation should know how to refer a student in mental distress to the counseling center, or a student with course registration needs to the registrar (Pope et al., 2004).

All student affairs professionals need problem-solving skills as well as behavior characteristics suitable to their position (Pope et al., 2004). Creamer, Winston, and Miller (2001) and Reynolds, (2009) suggest these behavioral characteristics include advising, facilitating, coaching, collaborating, supporting, counseling, motivating, managing conflict, solving problems, advocating, and transforming. As student affairs professionals continue to develop new skills in their work, they must include multicultural awareness, knowledge, and skills

(Reynolds, 2009). Multicultural competency of student affairs professionals can influence the academic and university experience and outcome for students of color.

According to Cuyjet and Duncan (2013), the role of student affairs professionals can extend to advancing the cultural development of the students they work with daily; however, the benefit of this type of influence is often contingent on the advisors' appreciation and understanding of their own cultural identity. Once this type of understanding has been acquired, professionals become more sensitive to other cultures, and subsequently more attuned to developing a scholastic atmosphere where students of color feel more self-assured and comfortable in an atmosphere where their differences are valued (Cuyjet & Duncan, 2013; McKeiver, 2013).

### **Advising**

As mentioned earlier, one of the purposes of this quantitative study was to measure the multicultural competency levels of student affairs professionals when working with students of color. More specifically, this study aimed to identify the multicultural competencies of student affairs professionals when advising racial and ethnic student organizations. Therefore, this section of the paper will discuss the history of advising, the role of advisors, the advising of racial and ethnic student organizations, and studies that discuss multicultural competency among advisors, all topics integral to this research.

Advisors are essential to the development of students, specifically students of color. The impact advisors have on students depends on the advisor's ability to obtain appropriate skills and knowledge. Educators can directly impact students of color when they behave in reaffirming ways (Chambers, 2017). To be a quality advisor, student affairs professional needs to have the

willingness to continue to seek professional development, provide up-to-date information and to provide excellent service to students (Love & Maxam, 2011).

Advisors have been encouraged to uphold specific core values that promote "student success concerning academic achievement, engagement, satisfaction, global citizenship, personal growth, and attainment of educational and career goals" (Love & Maxam, 2011, p. 414).

According to Gordon, Habley, and Grites (2008), the National Academic Advising Association (NACADA) established six values that all advisors should utilize when working with students either individually or in a group:

1. Advisors are responsible to the individual[s] they advise.
2. Advisors are responsible for involving others, when appropriate, in the advising process.
3. Advisors are responsible to their institution.
4. Advisors are responsible to higher education in general.
5. Advisors are responsible to their educational community.
6. Advisors are responsible for their professional practices and for themselves personally. (Gordon et al., 2008, pp. 525-532)

### **Role of Advisors**

For many years, the role of advising student groups has been a critical part of the student affairs profession and the higher education system. During the Colonial period of higher education, college student activities outside the classroom originated from "religious themes and strong discipline" (Dunkel & Schuh, 1998, p. 18).

Over time, not only have the activities on college campuses changed to include social activities rather than wholly religion-based ones, but student interest in activities outside the classroom have increased as well. As student participation in campus activities intensified, so too did the perception that professional staff was needed to advise those activities. The growing participation rates and development of activities resulted in institutions dedicating specific

departments or areas to student activities, as well as assigning staff to oversee them. These staff members have been designated the title "student affairs professional." The departments in which they work are often known as the office of student activities, with some variation in name depending on the institution (Dunkel & Schuh, 1998).

The literature shows student involvement outside the classroom has proven to positively affect student success (Love & Maxam, 2011). Institutions, which employ student affairs professionals required to work with student organizations, must ensure them adequately resource these individuals with the tools needed to facilitate the development of such organizations (Dunkel & Schuh, 1998).

Debate exists among researchers concerning the role of advisors in the student affairs profession. Bloland (1967) stated that the functions of advisors are maintenance, group growth, and program content. The maintenance function promotes the use of governing policies that will (a) help the group to exist over time; (b) the group growth function helps the group work towards its overall objectives and purpose; and (c) the program content function consists of the ways in which the advisors use their knowledge to educate the group in a specific area (Bloland, 1967). Dunkel and Schuh (1998) identified critical roles that advisors perform when working with student groups or organizations, including mentor, supervisor, teacher, leader, and follower. An advisor will often play multiple roles when working with student organizations, and research suggests that advisors benefit by not adopting the same approach with each of the unique student organizations (Dunkel, Schuh, & Chrystal-Green, 2014).

Many skills that supervisors have can translate to the advisor role, including team building, planning, and evaluation. Additional roles sometimes arise depending on the situation and needs within the student organization. According to Dunkel et al. (2014), one such role is a

mentor, as they can directly affect the lives of members of student organizations by helping them to grow and develop skills which can positively impact them beyond their college experience.

According to Griffin et al. (2008), there are 11 fundamental approaches administrators can use to catalyze and expand the engagement of minority students in campus organizations, clubs, and activities. Griffin et al. (2008) recommended considering these approaches when creating all-encompassing programs and empowering students' leaders:

1. Begin engaging underrepresented students in the campus community before they arrive on campus.
2. Host orientation events to welcome new students and educate them about campus leadership opportunities.
3. Work with engaged student leaders from underrepresented communities to personally recruit their uninvolved peers.
4. Create and support groups that cater to the diverse needs of underrepresented student populations.
5. Hold student organization leaders accountable for reaching out to underrepresented students and fostering an inclusive community.
6. Use inclusive leadership models to provide ongoing training and development opportunities for student leaders.
7. Encourage and support student leaders to organize programs that raise the consciousness of their peers and inspire activism.
8. Establish mentoring programs to connect new students with faculty members and administrators.

9. Encourage collaboration between faculty, student affairs professionals, and other campus administrators committed to the successful involvement of underrepresented student population.
10. Communicate with parents throughout the year about the involvement of minority student leaders.
11. Celebrate the contributions of minority student leaders. (p. 126-130)

While many student affairs professionals perform the critical role of advising individual students in various capacities (Love & Maxam, 2011), there are specific positions within student affairs that demonstrate a professional commitment to student groups such as Greek organizations, military groups, honor societies, academic clubs, and support organizations for students of color, gay, and transgender students (Dunkel & Schuh, 1998).

Professional staff members who advise students are responsible for helping them while actively creating an environment that promotes education and growth (Love & Maxam, 2011). According to Delgado-Romero and Hernandez (2002), “It is imperative that [student] organizations have trained, knowledgeable, caring and involved faculty advisors who can facilitate the transition from home to school for underrepresented Hispanic/Latino/populations” (p. 155). While Delgado-Romero and Hernandez (2002) specified Hispanic/Latinx populations, this rings true for all student populations of color.

Some of the objectives of advising are to encourage “learning, growth, empowerment, and self-authorship” (Love & Maxam, 2011, p. 413). Advisors have been shown to be more effective if they do not give advice to students. Research has shown that the ability of advisors to provide reliable and competent guidance to minority student organizations is essential to their success at PWIs (Delgado-Romero & Hernandez, 2002). According to CAS (2015d), all student



organizations must have an advisor, and it is the responsibility of the institution to provide appropriate staff support and to define the role and duties of the advisors. CAS (2015d) provided the following guidelines for advisors:

(a) be knowledgeable of student development theory and philosophy to appropriately support students and also to encourage learning and development; (b) have adaptive advising styles in order to be able to work with students with a variety of skill and knowledge levels; (c) have interest in the students involved in the organization; (d) have expertise in the topic for which the student group is engaged; (e) understand organizational development process and team building. (p. 89)

### **Impact of Student Organizations on Student's Cultural Experiences**

The following paragraphs explain research studies that explore student involvement in student organizations on college campuses and how these organizations impact students' cultural relationships with peers and how student affairs professionals are critical in understanding the role of advisors. Cheng and Zhao (2006) investigated the reported gains in self-identified multicultural competence that students experience as a result of their involvement in different campus organizations and activities. Participants in this study attended large, private institutions, which enroll traditionally aged and high achieving students. The survey received 2,921 student respondents in spring 2004 with a gender division of 51% female and 49% male. The survey measured "student's opinions about campus life related to instruction and academic advising to residential programs and student clubs and activities" (Cheng & Zhao, 2006, p. 17).

Cheng and Zhao's results indicated a positive correlation between multicultural competence and student participation in organizations such as student government, cultural organizations, social action groups, and volunteer/community service groups (Cheng & Zhao, 2006). Participating in these organizations was shown to impact student perceptions regarding their community being open to diversity. However, students who participated in political

organizations indicated a lack of cultural communication across campus. Cheng and Zhao's (2006) study also reported that students who self-identified as Black or Asian perceived their campus as less open to multicultural students, while students from affluent backgrounds perceived their campus to be diversity approachable, welcoming, and friendly.

Park and Kim (2013) demonstrated that student organizations play an essential role in helping students develop social and leadership skills and relationships outside the classroom. Together, they conducted a study that examined students' interracial friendships through factors such as race, structural diversity in high school and college, high school interracial friendships, and student participation in student organizations. Their results indicate minority students are more likely than not to have interracial friendships while in college. Students who had interracial friendships in high school were more likely to have interracial friendships in college. Collegiate Greek organization affiliation was found to negatively impact the creation of interracial friendships (Park & Kim, 2013). Additionally, students whose campuses were considered more racially diverse were not likely to engage with students in Greek organizations (Park & Kim, 2013).

Continuing the discussion on Greek organizations, Strayhorn and McCall (2012) completed a study examining the cultural competencies of Black Greek Letter Organization (BGLO) advisors. The researchers wanted to address the gap in the relevant literature on the topic and explore the cultural competency considerations put in place by the Association of Fraternity/Sorority Advisors (AFA), the governing council for fraternities and sororities (Strayhorn & McCall, 2012). Their research showed that AFA had set core competencies for all formal advising practices for sororities and fraternities, including those about diversity and ethical standards (Strayhorn & McCall, 2012). Despite the AFA's efforts to promote diversity

and incorporate it into advisory work, Strayhorn and McCall (2012) identified reasons for continual research on this topic. The reasons they wanted to do this include: (a) to expand knowledge on the historical connection between BGLOs and students of color; (b) develop advisor cultural competencies with a changing student population; and (c) to prevent the marginalization of students who are culturally different from their advisors.

For their study, Strayhorn and McCall (2012) surveyed 71 advisors from BGLOs at higher education institutions in the United States. Seventy percent of participants were White student affairs professionals at 4-year public institutions. Researchers sent out a Cultural Diversity Questionnaire for Greek Advisors (CDQ-GA) survey in the summer and fall semesters. Strayhorn and McCall's (2012) survey elicited several findings:

- i) participants with higher educational degrees scored higher on cultural awareness compared to participants with a bachelor degree or no degree; ii) part-time advisors scored higher on cultural awareness compared to full-time advisors; iii) minority advisors scored lower in cultural knowledge than White advisors; and iv) advisors who work mostly with sororities scored higher in the area of cultural skills compared to those who worked mostly with fraternities. (p. x)

The results of this study strongly suggest a need for the implementation of cultural competency development for student affairs advisors, as the more training they have, the higher the chance is for them to engage and understand the populations they serve.

According to Love and Maxam (2011), student affairs can include academic advising. Therefore, any research or literature on the multicultural competency of academic advisors is relevant to this study regarding the multicultural competency of advisors of student organizations of color. Shiroma (2015) conducted a study using the Culturally Engaging Campus Environment Model of Success to determine how academic advisors impact the motivation of students from underrepresented groups. The researcher conducted hour-long interviews with 22 undergraduate

students from underrepresented groups. All participants had at least a cumulative grade point average of 3.0 and were in the Honors College at the University of Hawaii at Manoa.

The results concluded that students of underrepresented groups felt motivated by their academic advisor when: (a) the advisor displayed interest and care about the students' success and developed a relationship with them; (b) the advisor went beyond his or her job responsibilities to provide support to students in an emotional or informational capacity; and (c) the advisor brought information and resources to the student. The results of Shiroma's (2015) study encouraged institutions to consider their climate, the competencies of the advisors who work with underrepresented groups, and the institutional policies which affect students of color. Additionally, Shiroma (2015) argued that the hiring committees at institutions need to consider the ratio of students of color to advisor personnel in their employ and that they need to hire advisors who have knowledge and experience working with students of color.

Advisors working directly with students serve as internal and external ambassadors of the institution. Therefore, advisors need to be mindful of how their own biases and cultural perceptions impact their work with students from cultures unlike their own (Cuyjet & Duncan, 2013; McKeiver, 2013; Pope et al., 2004; Roscoe, 2015). Roberts (2005) stated student affairs professionals should engage in their professional development and improvement, as research has shown that continual learning and development of cultural competencies helps ensure advisors are prepared to help students of color succeed. While it is unrealistic to assume advisors will demonstrate an awareness of every cultural norm, they can espouse a genuine interest in learning about other cultures to positively impact their students and their cultural development (McKeiver, 2013).

When advisors work with students, they need to consider the whole student. For example, an advisor working with Latinx American students might want to keep in mind that family support is critical to the success of this student population (Roscoe, 2015). Roscoe (2015) indicated that some of these challenges include socio-economic issues, under-preparedness for college, and family issues, along with other factors. To combat these challenges, advisors can develop programs to assist these students during their transition to college. Research data shows Latinx and African American students are entering college under-prepared and graduating at lower rates than their White counterparts (Roscoe, 2015). Roscoe (2015) also stated it is essential for colleges to implement initiatives which directly impact African American and Latinx American student retention rates. Colleges can promote retention by creating advising strategies such as "social support, family support, mentoring, student involvement, and cultural competency" (Roscoe, 2015, p. 51).

### **Racial and Ethnic Student Organizations on Predominantly White Campuses**

Special interest categories of diverse student organizations exist on many college campuses. These organizations include ethnic and cultural organizations composed of students with similar racial and ethnic backgrounds that offer peer support and a sense of belonging for students of color (Dunkel & Schuh, 1998). Guiffrida (2003) completed a study showing that African American students benefited greatly from cultural student groups because they encouraged interactions with faculty and helped build relationships with African American peers. Racial and ethnic student organizations were also found to offer students of color social opportunities which proved essential to their overall experience at PWIs (Guiffrida, 2003).

Advisors who are not multiculturally competent and do not practice multicultural sensitivity can negatively impact their students as well as the advisor-to-student relationship by

propagating cultural biases, instructing students outside their beliefs, and causing students to feel isolated (Pope & Mueller, 2011; Strayhorn & McCall, 2012). Students have been shown to respond poorly to advising professionals who direct them in ways contrary to their cultural norms (Pope & Mueller, 2011).

Lewis, Chesler, and Forman (2000) conducted a study that indicated the main culture of a PWI has the potential to present challenges for students of color. The researchers explored the student intergroup relations of 75 Asian, Latinx, Native, and African American students, focusing on their personal experiences with their White peers. All participants in the study were from PWIs in the Midwestern part of the United States; they interviewed in a focus group setting for durations ranging from one to two hours. Their data concluded students of color felt marginalized and excluded from campus experiences designed for their White peers. The data also indicated these students felt stressed to be associated with their own race while adapting to the main culture of their campus.

Museus (2008) conducted a study exploring the impact on students of color from joining and adapting to racial and ethnic student organizations at PWIs. Interviews analyzed from 12 African American and 12 Asian American students indicated that racial and ethnic student organizations provided them a cultural comfort space, opportunities for cultural freedom, and avenues for cultural acceptance (Museus, 2008).

Delgado-Romero and Hernandez (2002), who have more than 10 years of experience advising Latinx American student organizations at a PWI, created a list of competencies needed for advisors to be more effective when working with these student organizations. The researchers' proposed the following 10 competencies:

- (1) know the many ways that Hispanic American students identify themselves;
- (2) understand ethnic identity development and acculturation;
- (3) strive for cultural

empowerment; (4) understand and work with difference; (5) are aware of the scarcity of Hispanic American faculty and staff; (6) are aware of their own biases; (7) are aware of specific cultural values; (8) foster leadership; (9) involve La Familia community members and alumni; and (10) actively deal with racism and oppression. (Delgado-Romero & Hernandez, 2002, p. 153)

The work of Sutton and Kimbrough (2001) proposes three strategies that student affairs personnel should adapt to when promoting Black student involvement at PWIs. First, increasing Black student's participation in organizations, such as the student government association; a student group with the power to impact and which can facilitate university changes to policies and procedures. Second, increasing professional staff recruitment efforts to attract, hire, and retain a racially diverse paraprofessional staff. Third, increases to the leadership learning and development opportunities for members of culturally based student organizations (Sutton & Kimbrough, 2001).

The studies above highlight the impact diversity has on students of color. According to Chambers (2017), positive student relationships with an advisor, faculty, or staff member can positively affect a student's path to graduation. Educators can directly impact students of color when they act in reaffirming ways, catalyze positive change, or play a direct role in addressing the social injustices on college campuses. Thus, advisors of racial and ethnic student organizations may adhere to core values that will help aid their positive interactions with students and promote student success (Gordon et al., 2008). This is especially relevant when it comes to the advising role many student affairs professionals engage in with students of color.

### **Multicultural Competency**

The multicultural competency concept used in student affairs has its origins in the counseling psychology profession. This concept focuses on three main multicultural ideas:

(1) awareness, (2) knowledge, and (3) skills (Pope & Mueller, 2011; Reynolds, 2009). This tripartite model approach has been a part of the counseling profession for many years and forms the foundational core competencies in the Dynamic Model of Student Affairs Competency.

The model for multicultural competency has been the groundwork for “multicultural training, practice, and research for use by student affairs professionals in their work” (Reynolds, 2009, p. 113). To continue to help student affairs professionals who advise, counsel, mentor, supervise, teach and interact with students, Pope and Reynolds developed the Characteristics of a Multiculturally Competent Student Affairs Practitioner (Pope & Mueller, 2011; Pope & Reynolds, 1997). The Characteristics of a Multiculturally Competent Student Affairs Practitioner consists of 33 attributes that contribute to the success of the student affairs professional (Pope & Mueller, 2011; Pope & Reynolds, 1997).

In understanding the importance of the multicultural competencies of student affairs professionals, one needs to be acquainted with the role. Student affairs professionals are educators responsible for ensuring that students are ready for a diverse society (Watt, 2013). The actual job titles of student affairs professionals vary depending on the institution; however, their role in preparing students for the world outside the classroom has not changed (Pope et al., 2004). Many professionals are tasked with developing multicultural initiatives to assist students of color with adjusting to college (Watt, 2013). One purpose of developing multicultural initiatives is to encourage students to make a "positive and inclusive social change" (Watt, 2013, p. 7) on the college campus, a responsibility of all campus staff, not exclusive to student affairs professionals alone. According to Talbot (2003), higher education institutions should provide better academic environments, programs, and educational initiatives that support diversity to serve better the growing numbers of minority students attending college.



Many institutions have a strategic plan or mission statement which outlines their efforts to promote, increase, and incorporate diversity on their campus. Institutions usually work with a specific person or department who has expert knowledge on how to create a welcoming, and diverse and inclusive campus community (Worthington, Stanley, & Lewis, 2014). The National Association of Diversity Officers in Higher Education (NADOHE) published a list of 12 standards that all chief diversity officers in higher education can use as a foundation to help diversity inclusion on campuses. The first three are as follows:

- Standard 1 - Has the ability to envision and conceptualize the diversity mission of an institution through a broad and inclusive definition of diversity.
- Standard 2 - Understands and is able to articulate in verbal and written form the importance of equity, inclusion and diversity to the broader educational mission of higher education institutions.
- Standard 3 - Understands the contexts, cultures and politics within institutions that impact the implementation and management of effective diversity change efforts. (Worthington et al., 2014, pp. 230-232)

While the standards for chief diversity officers are not all-inclusive, they represent the expectation that officers promote "equity, diversity and inclusion" within the institution (Worthington et al., 2014, p. 228). These three components need to be incorporated into institutional strategic plans. While all officers have the same core expectations to advance diversity efforts at their institutions, chief diversity officers will have different approaches to diversity explicitly designed around their institutions' missions (Worthington et al., 2014).

As student affairs professionals attempt to become more aware of, and prepared to address multicultural student issues, they need to reach a certain level of proficiency with multicultural competency (Pope & Reynolds, 1997; Pope et al., 2004). Due to the critical role multicultural competency plays in the student affairs profession, significant time and effort have been dedicated to developing research in the field.

Wilson (2013, 2015) conducted two studies on the multicultural competencies of student affairs professionals whose responsibilities include leadership programming development.

Wilson (2015) examined the multicultural competency of student affairs professionals and faculty who were also responsible for leadership education. Initial findings showed participants who “addressed multicultural issues through specific workshops, targeted programming, retreats, or through full courses demonstrated higher [multicultural competency] scores than those who utilized guest speakers or addressed diversity in only a section of a course” (Wilson, 2015, p.7).

Another study conducted by Wilson (2013) included the investigation of the multicultural competency levels among professionals who provided leadership education to students. The study explored the correlation between participants' multicultural competence and their ethnic identity, cultural training, and experiences. Wilson devised a three-part, self-reporting survey that was completed by 167 participants. The participant demographic consisted of both men and women, including full-time staff, graduate students with internships in leadership, and faculty in higher education. All participants possessed at a minimum a bachelor's degree, with experience ranging from less than a year, to more than 25 years. Participants reported ethnicities included African American, Asian American/Pacific Islander, Caucasian/White, Latinx/Hispanic, Native American/Alaskan Native and Multiracial (Wilson, 2013).

Results of Wilson's (2013) study indicated student affairs professionals who self-identified in an ethnic group and had earned higher degrees displayed a considerable positive correlation with multicultural competence. These results suggest ethnic identity and education levels could be sound indicators of multicultural competence among professionals who work in leadership education. According to Pope et al. (2004) and Wilson (2013), student affairs professionals need to explore their own cultural identities and experiences to understand how the

relationship between race and multicultural competency affects their multicultural competency growth. Using the Dynamic Model of Student Affairs Competence and the Characteristics of a Multiculturally Competent Student Affairs Practitioner checklist for the informal and formal assessment of multicultural competence may aid in this multicultural competency growth (Pope & Mueller, 2011).

While the Dynamic Model of Student Affairs Competence does not measure competency levels with numeric values, it can be used in "self-assessment, goals setting and supervision" (Pope & Mueller, 2011, p. 342). The model consists of seven core competencies, and professionals are expected to include multiculturalism in all competency areas when working with students. The Characteristics of a Multiculturally Competent Student Affairs Practitioner Checklist "can be used to identify and develop goals to promote multicultural competence in staff evaluation procedures and staff development programs" (Pope & Mueller, 2011, p. 343).

A more formal means of assessment can be performed using the Multicultural Competence in Student Affairs-Preliminary 2 (MCSA-P2) Scale created by Pope and Mueller (2000). The MCSA-P2 instrument consists of 34 items on a Likert scale and is based on the Characteristics of a Multiculturally Competent Student Affairs Practitioner Checklist. This instrument, a self-reporting tool purportedly optimal for research use rather than staff training, has proven its reliability and validity in many studies (Pope & Mueller, 2000).

Mueller and Pope (2001) posited that the increase in diversity issues in higher education has caused student affairs professionals to gain "awareness, knowledge, and skills to work effectively with culturally diverse populations" (p. 133). Even though scholars encourage multicultural openness and knowledge, many student affairs professionals have not obtained

adequate training in multiculturalism or have not had their multicultural competence formally evaluated (Mueller & Pope, 2001).

Pope and Mueller (2011) identified three rational explanations that explain why student affairs professionals may have limited training or why their job performance has not been evaluated using a scale of diversity effectiveness. Pope and Mueller found: (1) institutions may only have one multicultural expert on campus; (2) institutions do not promote or value multicultural competency among professionals; (3) professionals do not view multicultural competency as part of their work. As evidenced earlier through the work of Wilson (2013, 2015), and Pope and Mueller (2011), multicultural competency is essential to student affairs practitioners' success. This is especially apparent when it comes to applying and understanding the influence of multicultural competency within the advising role of the student affairs professional.

### **Theoretical Framework**

This section includes a discussion on the theoretical framework used for this study, the Dynamic Model of Student Affairs Competence. The following paragraphs review the and empirical studies on the model.

#### **Dynamic Model of Student Affairs Competence**

This study used the theoretical framework of the Dynamic Model of Student Affairs Competence developed by Pope et al. (2004). As mentioned earlier, this model describes seven core competencies for student affairs professionals: (1) administrative and management; (2) theory and translation; (3) helping and advising; (4) ethical and professional standards; (5) teaching and training; (6) assessment and research; and (7) multicultural awareness, knowledge, and skills (Pope et al., 2004, p. 10). The seventh competency serves as the foundation of this

model. Pope et al. (2004) contend multicultural awareness, knowledge, and skills, permeate the other six competencies to enhance their application when student affairs professionals are working with diverse student populations.

### **Administrative and Management Competency**

The first competency discussed in Pope et al.'s (2004) model, includes some fundamental abilities and responsibilities related to the student affairs profession, such as supervision, time management, budgeting, and delegation. According to Pope et al. (2004), student affairs professionals have a vast responsibility to infuse multicultural awareness into administrative and management work. Pope et al. (2004) stated skill in a supervisory role is critical to administrative work and includes the expectation that supervisors can work with individuals from different cultures.

Cultural differences between a supervisor and his or her subordinates may heavily impact their professional relationship. If the supervisee is from a minority group, he or she may seek out peer relationships to address needs not being met by their supervisor (Pope et al., 2004). It is not only the obligation of student affairs professionals to include multicultural awareness, knowledge, and skills into their work, but the responsibility of the institution to foster a system that acknowledges multicultural issues (Pope et al., 2004). An institution can show interest in changing multicultural issues on campus by creating policies and procedures that advocate for and are inclusive of, individuals traditionally underrepresented in higher education (Pope et al., 2004). There must be an institutional effort to move towards a system with practices and policies that work for the betterment of all students.

## **Theory and Translation**

The second competency of the model is theory and translation. This competency refers to the assurance that student affairs professionals have adequate knowledge of professional theory that will help them in their work and the capacity to apply that knowledge correctly in practical situations (Pope et al., 2004). Many student affairs theories were formulated to cater to White, male student populations at PWIs and excluded the consideration of a minority student perspective. According to Pope et al. (2004), research and theory developed from White, male, student experiences are not relevant or applicable to students of color or even to White females.

## **Helping and Advising**

The third competency of the model has played a historical role in the construction of the responsibilities and goals of the profession (Pope et al., 2004). Student affairs professionals require interpersonal skills suitable for students of color. "Do no harm," as stated by Pope et al. (2004), is a well-known command spoken within the counseling profession (p. 79). The command is used to remind counselors of the influential position they hold and the harm that could happen to their clients as a result of uninformed or misguided assistance provided. Likewise, it is essential for student affairs professionals to be aware of their abilities and limitations when working with students, especially students of color. Student affairs professionals inadequately versed in the necessary skills required to work with diverse student groups can have a significantly negative impact on students due to their susceptibility to personal biases and stereotypes (Pope et al., 2004). These professionals tend to find it challenging to communicate with individuals who are culturally different from themselves. Research suggests that professionals should gain more knowledge of cultural styles of communication and cultural differences to enhance their multicultural awareness (Pope et al., 2004).

## **Ethical and Professional Standards**

The fourth competency of the model is ethical and professional standards. Professionals are considered ethical and competent when they use a multicultural viewpoint in all areas of their work (Pope et al., 2004). According to Pope et al. (2004), to be considered an ethical professional, there are two types of requisite knowledge: "self-knowledge and knowledge of relevant ethical principles, values, codes and legal considerations" (p. 130). Self-knowledge refers to understanding personal, cultural values and the impact they have on one's decision-making process. According to Pope et al. (2004), "knowledge of the specific ethical values and requirements of the profession is also essential to being an effective and ethical practitioner" (p. 130). Student affairs professionals need to pursue an understanding of cultural differences and values because ethical concerns are integral to multicultural issues in higher education. Purposeful attention to multicultural issues by student affairs professionals needs to be guided by ethical principles which can help bring awareness to cultural differences (Pope et al., 2004).

## **Teaching and Training**

The fifth competency in Pope et al.'s (2004) model is teaching and training. Student affairs professionals play an essential role in the growth and development of students. Their work impacts students and other professionals both directly and indirectly. Student affairs professionals directly impact students by teaching undergraduate or graduate classes and facilitating professional workshops and training. Indirect teaching outside the classroom would include their involvement with student organizations, residence halls, and student government (Pope et al., 2004). Therefore, the ability of student affairs professionals to train and teach from a multicultural viewpoint is imperative to the overall success of students, professional peers, and colleagues within the broader field of higher education (Pope et al., 2004).

When developing and teaching student affairs course curricula, it is important to incorporate multicultural courses and diversity content into the program of study. “Infusing multiculturalism into graduate student affairs preparation programs is especially powerful because of their role in shaping the values, knowledge, and experiential base, and culture of new student affairs professionals” (Pope et al., 2004, p. 150).

### **Assessment and Research**

The sixth competency of the model is assessment and research. According to Pope et al. (2004), a multiculturally skilled researcher includes techniques, instruments, and structure that ensure a more culturally inclusive research design. Moreover, researchers who are more aware of their own cultural biases and are informed about other cultures demonstrate practical benefits through this type of understanding (Pope et al., 2004). Research and assessment competencies are key factors in understanding target groups of interest, in this case, college students. The validity and legitimacy of a research study are deemed more reliable when multicultural competence is a major consideration in the design of assessment and evaluation protocols, especially if the subjects of study include underrepresented populations (Pope et al., 2004).

### **Multicultural Awareness, Knowledge, and Skills**

The seventh competency of the model is multicultural awareness, knowledge, and skills. In the context of student affairs professionals, this refers to the individuals’ awareness of their own biases, values, knowledge about other cultures, and use of appropriate techniques when working with students (Pope et al., 2004). According to Pope et al. (2004), awareness, knowledge, and skills aid student affairs professionals in developing a more inclusive environment on campus. All professionals need to have a level of multicultural awareness,



knowledge, and skills to be considered competent while working with students of color and fellow professionals (Pope et al., 2004).

Overall, the design of the model allows for all seven competencies to be used in any aspect of the work student affairs professionals perform (Pope et al., 2004; Wilson, 2012). Research shows the Dynamic Model of Student Affairs Competence is critical to professional success in student affairs and requires a basic level of knowledge in each of the seven core competencies to be consistently useful (Pope & Reynolds, 1997; Pope et al., 2004). Furthermore, as student affairs professionals acquire experience, they become more proficient in specific competency sets (Pope et al., 2004). While research has shown that levels of competency in different aspects of the model vary among student affairs professionals, a guideline that defines minimal competence requisites for success has yet to be developed (Pope et al., 2004).

As student affairs professionals attempt to increase their multicultural sensitivity or prepared to address multicultural student issues, they need to reach a certain level of competency (Pope & Mueller, 2000; Pope & Reynolds, 1997; Pope et al., 2004). Multicultural awareness, knowledge, and skills help professionals work better with diverse student populations and help professionals create an inclusive community. According to Pope and Reynolds (1997), multicultural awareness relates to the "attitudes, beliefs, values, assumptions, and self-awareness" (p. 270) needed to help students with different cultural experiences, while multicultural knowledge refers to "the information individuals have about various cultures" (Pope & Reynolds, 1997, p. 270). Multicultural skills are those that, "allow for effective and meaningful interactions" (Pope & Reynolds, 1997, p. 270). For this study, multicultural competency was defined as "the awareness, knowledge, and skills needed to work with others

who are culturally different from self in meaningful, relevant, and productive ways” (Pope et al., 2004, p. 13).

The Dynamic Model of Student Affairs Competence was not designed as a measurement tool (Pope et al., 2004). However, the authors created a competency scale to help demonstrate and calculate proficiency levels using their model. This scale is not connected to any formal rating, and researchers use it only to differentiate levels of competency professionals can develop via their model (Pope & Reynolds, 1997). The Dynamic Model of Student Affairs Competence works best as a comprehensive evaluation tool to help student affairs professionals identify limitations or potential areas of improvement, as well as a means of re-evaluating their job responsibilities. The model is designed in such a way that proficiency in one competency area has a direct influence on other competency areas. The model design has resulted in a professional development system which is continuous and fluid (Pope et al., 2004).

Existing empirical studies using the Dynamic Model of Student Affairs Competence include Wilson’s (2012) study that validated the need for student affairs professionals to develop multicultural competencies. The study explored the relationship between multicultural competence and the use of the Social Change Model of Leadership Development (SCM) among leadership educators. The participants for this study included: (a) student affairs professionals who indicated they were responsible for leadership programming and education; (b) full-time staff with a minimum of a bachelor’s degree, who were entry-level, mid-level, and senior level; (c) graduate students in student affairs programs who had or have held assistantships or internships in leadership programming; and (d) faculty. Participants’ reported ethnicities included African American, Asian American/Pacific Islander, Caucasian/White, Latinx/Hispanic, Native American/Alaskan Native and Multiracial (Wilson, 2012).

The results of Wilson's (2012) study indicated student affairs professionals who intentionally used the social change model of leadership development along with one or more models related to leadership programming development did significantly correlate with multicultural competence. Additionally, the results demonstrated "student affairs professionals who intentionally use a model for program development and use specific practices for infusing diversity into leadership programming demonstrate[d] higher levels of multicultural competence than student affairs professionals who do not intentionally use a model for program development" (Wilson, 2012, p. 51). Furthermore, the SCM can be used as a social justice approach to leadership, benefiting students who feel marginalized due to their race, gender, sexual orientation, religion, abilities, or other social identities which suffer from societal or institutional forms of oppression (Bell, 1997; Wagner, 2006; Wilson, 2012).

Another study designed by Castellanos et al. (2007) examined the multicultural awareness, skills, and knowledge of student affairs professionals as they relate to their interactions with students. One hundred student affairs professionals were surveyed using a 32 item Multicultural Competence Characteristic of Student Affairs Professionals Inventory (MCCSAPI) (Castellanos et al., 2007). The MCCASPI survey provided by Castellanos et al. (2007) included sample items such as "awareness of your own behavior and its impact on others" and "knowledge about instructional barriers that limit access in higher education for members of oppressed groups" (p. 650). Participants were asked to rate the 32 survey items on a five-point Likert scale ranging from "extremely important" to "not at all important" (Castellanos et al., 2007).

The results identified female student affairs professionals were scoring lower in multicultural awareness competency (Castellanos et al., 2007). The participant's age, gender, or

ethnicity showed no implication of their skills competency area but did show a correlation to multicultural awareness (Castellanos et al., 2007). Participant knowledge about other theories and ethnicities proved to be a large indicator of multicultural skill development (Castellanos et al., 2007). Even though male participants tended to have maintained their professional positions for a longer duration than female participants, there was no meaningful difference between their respective competency levels in multicultural knowledge or skills development (Castellanos et al., 2007).

### **Research Instrument**

This section includes a discussion on the research instrument used in this study, Multicultural Competence in Student Affairs-Preliminary 2 (MCSA-P2) Scale. The following paragraphs describe the instrument, how the instrument was used in this study, and research on the instrument.

#### **Multicultural Competence in Student Affairs-Preliminary 2 Scale**

Pope and Mueller (2000) created a self-reporting measuring instrument for qualifying the multicultural competence of student affairs professionals known as the Multicultural Competence in Student Affairs-Preliminary 2 (MCSA-P2) Scale. To test the reliability and validity of the instrument, they conducted two studies (Pope & Mueller, 2000). The first study used an earlier instrument, MCSA P-1, based on Pope and Reynolds's (1997) characteristics for student affairs professionals who are considered multiculturally competent (Pope & Mueller, 2000). The participants in the initial study included 253 student affairs professionals, faculty, and graduate students. The instrument yielded a high consistency-coefficient alpha of .92, but after review, the researchers decided to refine the self-reporting tool to 34 items (Pope & Mueller, 2000).

By comparison, the second study using the MCSA-P2 included 190 participants (Pope & Mueller, 2000; Pope et al., 2004). Results showed that the MCSA-P2 maintained a high consistency-coefficient alpha of .91, leading the researchers to endorse the “judicious and discriminant use of the MCSA-P2 as a multicultural competence assessment instrument” (Pope & Mueller, 2000, p. 606). MCSA-P2 is not without its practical limitations, and the researchers do not recommend it for staff evaluations, identifying educational needs, or assessing preparedness for graduate school, though it does have favorable applications for research in multicultural competence (Pope & Mueller, 2000).

The MCSA-P2 instrument is an appropriate instrument to guide this study for three reasons. First, this usage will advance the research and validation merits of the instrument in higher education; second, this instrument measured the multicultural competency of student affairs professionals; third, its proven efficacy in measuring multicultural competence is transposable to this proposed assessment of the competencies of student affairs professionals who advise student organizations of color (Pope & Mueller, 2000).

Studies that demonstrate the value of the MCSA-P2 instrument include Mueller and Pope’s (2001) investigation into “how White racial consciousness may be related to multicultural competence among White student affairs professionals” (p. 135). This study included 534 White participants, consisting of 338 females and 196 males. The MCSA-P2 identified participants “lacking awareness of their racial identity and resisting exploration of racial issues” (Pope, 2011, p. 139).

Miklitsch (2005) conducted a study to examine the relationships between student affairs professionals’ multicultural education and experiences, their racial identity development, and their multicultural competence. This study used the MCSA-P2 scale to measure the multicultural

competence of 324 residence life professionals. Of these professionals, 81% identified as White; 11.7% African American; 2.2% Asian American or Pacific Islander; 1.5% Latinx, Chicano or Hispanic; 0.9% Biracial; and 0.3% Native American (Miklitsch, 2005). The data collected indicated that 233 participants categorized themselves as belonging to a marginalized group. Results of the study indicated a participant's multicultural education score was positively and significantly related to their multicultural competence. Participants who held positions on multicultural or diversity committees did not exhibit higher levels of multicultural competence than those who did not (Miklitsch, 2005).

Abduallah (2012) conducted a study that examined the academic, personal, and professional experiences and multicultural competence of the staff who worked in diversity services. The study used a mixed method approach; quantitative and qualitative. The quantitative method used the instrument MCSA-P2 to measure the multicultural competence score of the participants. The qualitative method utilized open-ended research questions which were used to analyze the participants' responses. The study included 182 participants who were NASPA members that were classified as diversity staff from around the country. Only 155 participants fully completed the survey and 167 completed most of the survey instrument with a completion rate of 19% (155/808). Participants were given the internet-based instrument, MCSA-P2, and a demographic information form. With 155 participants completing the survey, the quantitative analysis was based on those participants (Abduallah, 2012).

According to Abduallah (2012), the quantitative results indicated the standard deviation was 0.662, and the average score was 5.68 among the participants that completed the MCSA-P2. Participants with bachelor's degrees had higher mean scores for multicultural competency ( $M = 5.890$ ,  $SD = .551$ ) compared to participants with associate degrees or less ( $M = 4.451$ ,  $SD =$

.103). Participants with general education majors had higher means scores for multicultural competency ( $M = 5.898$ ,  $SD = .757$ ) compared to other graduate majors ( $M = 5.797$ ,  $SD = .782$ ). For example, participants with law or law-related majors scored the lowest on the MCSA-P2 ( $M = 5.127$ ,  $SD = .580$ ).

The qualitative results indicated seven main themes among diversity staff. These themes included: (1) a need for staff to feel passionate about diversity work; (2) increase in professional development; (3) isolation among diversity staff; (4) job stress; (5) increase in collaborative leadership; (6) increase in recognition; and (7) increase resource allocation (Abduallah, 2012). Additionally, demographic information of the participants was not found to be statistically significant in determining multicultural scores. No statistically significant difference existed in multicultural competence between genders, ethnicity, socioeconomic, status growing up, religious, identity-sexual orientation, years working in diversity, age, or first-generation college status (Abduallah, 2012).

### **Summary**

Diversity on college campuses is rapidly increasing and is estimated to do so for the next 30 years (Roscoe, 2015; Shiroma, 2015). The increase in diversity on college campuses will increase the frequency of interactions between advisors and students of color. Student affairs professionals who understand their cultural perspective and how their background experiences have influenced their decision-making are considered more culturally competent and better equipped to work with students who are culturally different from themselves (Cuyjet & Duncan, 2013; McKeiver, 2013; Pope et al., 2004; Roscoe, 2005). According to Roscoe (2015) and Delgado-Romero and Hernandez (2002), advisors need to have a wealth of

knowledge on the challenges facing these student populations, and they need to be prepared to meet the needs of students of color to help them succeed.



## **CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY**

The purpose of this quantitative study was to determine if and to what extent racial and ethnic identity, years of experience, education level, age, gender, advisor status, and sexual orientation were related to multicultural competence among student affairs professionals who were responsible for advising racial and ethnic student organizations at predominantly white institutions. Due to the increase in diversity in higher education, an examination of the multicultural competencies of student affairs professionals has become an important area of interest for researchers. National statistics for American college students show an increase in diversity. From the fall of 1976 to fall 2014, Hispanic students increased from 4% to 17%, Asian/Pacific Islander students increased from 2% to 7%, Black students increased from 10% to 14%, and American Indian/Alaska Native students increased from .07% to .08%. However, White students during this time decreased from 84% to 58% (U.S. Department of Education; National Center for Education Statistics, 2016). Additionally, by 2050, the U.S. population will not have a majority ethnic group (Goad, 2018).

This study defined multicultural competency as “the awareness, knowledge, and skills needed to work with others who are culturally different from self in meaningful, relevant, and productive ways” (Pope et al., 2004, p. 13). This chapter will address the following primary aspects of the methodology: (1) research questions; (2) sample participants; (3) research design; (4) instruments; (5) data collection; and (6) data analysis.

### **Research Questions**

The research questions were the following:

**Research Question 1:** To what degree were student affairs advisors of racial and ethnic student organizations multiculturally competent?

Research Question 2: What differences existed in the multicultural competence of student affairs advisors who have advised racial and ethnic student organizations compared to those advisors who have not?

Research Question 3: How did race/ethnicity, years of experience, level of education, gender, age, advisor status, and sexual orientation predict multicultural competence among student affairs advisors?

These research questions were derived from Muller and Pope's (2001) call for student affairs professionals to gain "awareness, knowledge, and skills to work effectively with culturally diverse populations" (p.133). Even though scholars have encouraged being multiculturally inclusive and knowledgeable, many student affairs professionals have not obtained adequate training in multiculturalism nor have they been evaluated on their work in diversity (Pope & Mueller, 2001). This study added valuable information to the growing literature of multicultural competence needed by student affairs professionals to be better prepared to work with students of color (Pope et al., 2004).

The significance of this study is twofold: (a) multicultural competency is vital to the student affairs profession (Pope et al., 2004) and (b) student involvement in extracurricular activities, more specifically in race-and ethnicity-based student organizations, helps students to feel connected and engaged in their university and has shown to have positive effects on their academic success (Love & Maxam, 2011; Wasley, 2006).

### **Sample Participants**

All participants for the study met the following criteria: (a) were student affairs professionals responsible for advising a student organization and were members of NASPA; (b) advising student organization were a primary responsibility of the participant's job

description/position; (c) participants were full-time student affairs professionals, including a full-time graduate student (master or doctoral); and finally (d) had earned a bachelor's degree.

There were two reasons NASPA was the best population to utilize for this study: (1) it is one of the governing associations for the student affairs profession and (2) its vision statement states "NASPA is the leading voice for the student affairs profession" (NASPA, 2017a, para. 1). This association provides educational leadership to student affairs professionals through professional development experiences and initiatives to help promote student learning (NASPA, 2017a; NASPA Annual Report, 2015). NASPA membership is expanding throughout the United States with an estimated 15,000 members in all 50 states, 25 countries, and 8 U.S. territories (NASPA, 2017a). In 2015, its membership increased to more than 1,000 new members. The top three membership categories between July 2014 and June 2015 included: (a) professionals, 57%; (b) students, 29%; and (c) voting delegates, 8% (NASPA Annual Report, 2015). Furthermore, more than half of the NASPA membership were student affairs professionals, making this population an ideal sample group for this study, as well as demonstrating the importance of assessing the multicultural competence of student affairs professionals.

NASPA had a procedure for requesting permission to use NASPA members as part of any research study. The following procedure was completed to request permission to use NASPA members as part of this study: (a) a completed form was submitted to NASPA with a description of this study, doctoral committee chair support letter, and Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval letter; (b) NASPA contacted the researcher to confirm receipt of the form and asked additional questions; (c) the researcher was contacted within seven business days. Additionally, the NASPA membership list request form had options to select specific characteristics/categories for potential participants of a study. For this study, the following

characteristics/categories were selected from NASPA members: (a) members from all regional areas; (b) professional levels: new, mid-level, senior, and senior student affairs officer; (c) student members: masters and doctoral level; (d) gender: male, female and transgender; (e) all races and ethnicities; (f) members in the United States only; and (g) special request for random sample size of members who advise student groups. The last request for a special random sample size of members who advise student groups was not able to be fulfilled due to not all NASPA members indicated if they advised student organizations or not on their identification form. Therefore, the researcher had to sort the potential participants by functional area and position title.

Once approved, the researcher received a spreadsheet via email including the following information: first and last name, job title, institution name, and mailing address of NASPA members. The researcher was not provided any email addresses or phone numbers of NASPA members. Due to NASPA not providing any email addresses, the researcher accessed the email addresses of the members that were relevant to this study from institutional websites. As mentioned above, the researcher had to sort the potential participants by functional area and position title.

The researcher received a spreadsheet of 11,801 members from NASPA. Out of the 11,801 NASPA members, only 2,585 participants met the requirements for the study. The 2,585 NASPA members were invited by email to participate. Four hundred ninety participants attempted the survey, a response rate of 19.0%. Of that sample, there were 338 usable responses for analytic purposes.

The researcher expected about a 20% response rate from participants who were emailed the survey. The sample size was estimated by using a G Power calculation (Heinrich Heine

University, Dusseldorf, Germany, 2002). Before determining an estimated sample size for this study, the researcher needed to determine the individual predictor effect by using a t-test and a statistical test of multiple linear multiple regression fixed model, single regression coefficient with an effect size of 0.15, an alpha level of .05 with seven total predictors. The sample size was estimated at 74 participants. To determine the model effect, the researcher conducted an F-test and a statistical test linear multiple regression: fixed model,  $R^2$  deviation from zero with an effect size of 0.15, error measure of .05 with seven predictors. The power analysis – a priori: compute required sample size – given  $\alpha$ , power, 0.95, and effect size. The statistical sample size was estimated at 153 participants.

According to Kelley, Clark, Brown, and Sitzia (2003), there is not an exact number of participants needed for a survey sample size. However, there are three main factors which influence the number of participants needed for a sample size: (1) the resources available; (2) the aim of the study; (3) the statistical quality needed for the survey. If the researcher performs any statistical data analysis, a calculation on the sample size must be performed by a computer program such as "G power" (Heinrich Heine University, Dusseldorf, Germany, 2002). When calculating the sample size, the researcher will include room for non-response rates, as not all participants are guaranteed to respond. Larger sample populations will yield powerful and accurate assumptions about the population of a study but will take more time to complete. When a survey has a large non-response rate, the results can be a misrepresentation of the sample population (Dillman, Smyth, & Christian, 2014; Kelley et al., 2003).

Participants for this study were selected from the NASPA membership list of those who advised student organizations. Due to many of the NASPA members not indicating their advisor status on their identification form, the researcher had to select participants who indicated

advising in their position title as well. Each participant was sent an invitation email requesting their participation in this study. The participants were offered an incentive to take this survey and had a chance to win a \$10 Starbucks e-gift card. A drawing for ten such gift cards was completed after the survey closed.

To be eligible for the e-gift card, the participants must have completed the survey and provided their email address. When a participant answered the last question of the survey, the participant was redirected to an outside link where they could put their email address if they wanted to be considered for the \$10 e-gift card drawing. Within one month of the closing of the survey, the participants who provided their email addresses were placed into a drawing to receive the e-gift card. All ten Starbucks e-gift cards were given out by randomly selecting ten participants who provided their email addresses at the end of the survey.

### **Research Design**

The research design for this study was an Internet-based survey. "A survey design provides a quantitative or numeric description of trends, attitudes, or opinions of a population by studying a sample of that population" (Creswell, 2014, p. 155). More specifically, this study used a cross-sectional survey approach which gave a glimpse of the participants' multicultural competence at the exact time of taking the survey. According to Kelley et al. (2003), when using a survey approach, a pre-selected population typically large is used, and then the researcher gathers a small amount of data from that population. The data gathered are then used by the researcher to make assumptions about the broader population. Surveys are used to give a picture of things at a precise time. There is no manipulation or controlling of the variables or varying in the treatment of participants when using a survey approach (Denscombe, 1998). The participants in this study took the MCSA-P2 instrument, and then received a multicultural score that

determined their multicultural competence at the time of taking the survey. Demographic information was gathered about the participants which included: race and ethnic identity, years of experience, education level, age, gender, sexual orientation, advisor status, experiences, and attitudes.

There were many advantages and disadvantages of using a survey approach. According to Wright (2005), the advantages of using a survey design include access to certain populations, time savings, and low cost. Gaining access to certain populations would not be possible if it were not for the ability of the internet to make contact with large groups of people at once across different geographical areas (Garton, Haythornthwaite, & Wellman, 1999; Wellman, 1997). Using the internet requires less time to reach a large population with specific interests and characteristics.

According to the Pew Research Center (2018) in 2016, 88% of adults in the United States used the Internet. However, for this study participants were student affairs professionals who had 100% access to the Internet via their institutions. Additionally, the researcher could use the Internet to invite participants into a chatroom or newsroom to help reach certain populations. By using the auspices of NASPA, the researcher had easier access to the student affairs professionals who work with student organizations of color. Collecting data by using an in-person interview would take considerably more time and resources than an Internet survey design (Bachmann & Elfrink, 1996; Taylor, 2000; Wright, 2005; Yun & Trumbo, 2000). The survey approach is cost effective and usually has a fast response rate (Fowler, 2013; Kelley et al., 2003). Therefore, the researcher used a survey approach.

According to Kelley et al. (2003), there are three disadvantages to using a survey design. The disadvantages potentially include: (a) not getting a high response rate; (b) information

collected may lack depth and details and; (c) not focusing on the significance of the study, but instead discussing only minute data findings. This study overcame these disadvantages by distributing the survey to a large sample population, gathering in-depth descriptive information about the sample population, focusing on the research questions, and completing all Institutional Review Board (IRB) request.

A survey approach was appropriate for this study because it collected the opinions of the sample population by accumulating their responses and combining those into a numeric description. In this case, a snapshot of each participant's multicultural competence was provided by the survey which then was compiled into a multicultural competence score. Using this approach was best for gathering, comparing and helping format the data for analyzing the responses and results of the NASPA participants of this study who advised student organizations of color. Additionally, a survey approach was appropriate for this study because, according to Pew Research Center (2018), in 2016, 73% of adults had access to the Internet in their homes, and 98% of college graduates used the Internet.

Additionally, understanding research bias is very important. Bias can occur at any stage of the research process even when analyzing the results of a survey (Dillman et al., 2014; Kelley et al., 2003; Smith, 2014). Research bias can have effects on the reliability and validity of research results and the misunderstanding of data which can have significant consequences for practice (Smith, 2014). Bias is almost impossible to eradicate; however, the goals of the researcher are to minimize bias (Sica, 2006). The researcher should avoid writing with preconceived ideas but write with fairness and generality to gain respect from the readers (Smith, 2014).



## **Instruments**

The data for this study was collected using two self-reporting instruments administered to the participants: (1) Multicultural Competence in Student Affairs-Preliminary 2 (MCSA-P2) Scale and (2) Personal Demographic Form, created by the researcher. MCSA-P2 measures the multicultural competence in higher education for student affairs professionals (Pope & Mueller, 2000). This study utilized the MCSA-P2 to assess the multicultural competence for advisors of racial and or ethnic student organizations. The personal demographic form collected demographic information about each participant and the participant's institutional information. Each instrument is explained below and copies of the instruments can be found in Appendices C and D.

### **Multicultural Competence in Student Affairs-Preliminary 2 (MCSA-P2) Scale**

The researcher for this study followed all requirements to obtain permission to use Drs. Mueller and Pope's (2002) MCSA-P2 instrument. The procedure to receive permission included requesting permission from the authors to use the instrument and providing the authors of the instrument a description of the researcher's study. The researcher agreed to a list of terms and conditions and provided the name and contact information for the chair of the study. Dr. John A. Mueller and Dr. Raechele Pope granted the researcher of this study permission to use their instrument, MCSA-P2, and sent an official letter granting permission to the researcher. Information to request a copy of the instrument is provided (see Appendix C).

Pope and Mueller (2000) created a self-reporting instrument for identifying the multicultural competence of student affairs professionals known as the Multicultural Competence in Student Affairs-Preliminary 2 (MCSA-P2) Scale. The MCSA-P2 is a 34-item instrument using a 7-point Likert scale. The Likert scale for this instrument ranges from 1 (not at

all accurate) to 7 (very accurate). Participants were asked to respond to the questions by indicating how truthfully each statement describes their beliefs when working in a student affairs environment. The instrument was designed to create a multicultural competence score. The questions were not reverse scored, and a single score was calculated to measure the participants' multicultural competence.

MCSA-P2 was developed to assess the “competencies necessary for effective and multiculturally sensitive work in student affairs” (Pope & Mueller, 2000, p. 600). The MCSA-P2 instrument was an appropriate instrument to guide this research study for three reasons. First, the use of this instrument may advance the research and validation merits of the instrument in higher education; second, this instrument measured the multicultural competency of student affairs professionals; and third, its proven efficacy in measuring multicultural competence was transposable to the researcher's proposed assessment of these competencies in student affairs professionals who advised student organizations (Pope & Mueller, 2000).

The MCSA-P2 focuses on three categories of multicultural competence, which include: knowledge, awareness, and skills (Pope & Mueller, 2000). Multicultural knowledge is “the information individuals have about various cultures” (Pope & Reynolds, 1997, p. 270). Multicultural awareness is “the attitudes, beliefs, values, assumptions, and self-awareness necessary to serve students who are culturally different” (Pope & Reynolds, 1997, p. 270). Multicultural skill is the ability to “allow for effective and meaningful interaction such as seeking consultation as necessary with people who differ from them culturally” (Pope & Reynolds, 1997, p. 270). Sample questions from the MCSA-P2 include: (a) Within the last month, I can recall a personal interaction where racial dynamics played a significant role; (b) I can discuss at length the limitations of student development theories as they apply to students of

color; and (c) My cultural assumptions affect the ways I perceive and interact with others (Pope & Mueller, 2000, p. 600).

To test the reliability and validity of their MCSA-P2 instrument, Pope and Mueller (2000) conducted two research studies. The first round of testing involved the instrument, MCSA-P1, and included 56 items based on specific changes to the measures of multicultural competence from the field of counseling psychology and the student affairs profession. After reviewing the 56-item list, Pope and Mueller (2000) reduced items to 50 to avoid repetition. The 50 items were then sorted by category of awareness, knowledge, and skills and found to have near a .97 inter-rater reliability. After that, a research team re-evaluated six items of the instrument to improve clarity, and two items were removed from the instrument; leaving only 48 items. Lastly, the instrument of 48 items was tested for validity. The items were rated on dimensions of clarity from 1 to 5, 1 being "ambiguous" or "unclear" to 5 being "clear" and "concise", and the items were also rated on appropriateness from 1 to 5, 1 being, "not relevant to multicultural awareness, knowledge or skills" and 5 being, "most relevant to multicultural awareness, knowledge or skills" (Pope & Mueller, 2000, p. 600). The results of the 48 items indicated a mean score of 4.0, which further helped the researchers adjust their instrument to improve its clarity.

In their first formal study using the MCSA-P1, 48 items were tested with 253 student affairs professionals as participants. This instrument demonstrated a high coefficient alpha = .92. Items were then re-evaluated and analyzed for their strength and relationship to the scale, and 14 items were removed to improve efficiency leaving 34 items. The validity of the instrument was tested using a t-test and was used to test the score difference of the graduate student group and expert group. "The expert group had a mean score of 6.44 (SD = .27) on the instrument, whereas

the graduate student group mean score was 5.35 (SD = .68)” (Pope & Mueller, 2000, p. 604). The expert group showed significantly greater scores than the graduate student group. These scores showed evidence of validity with the MCSA-P1 instrument (Pope & Mueller, 2000).

Pope and Mueller's second formal study used the revised and re-named, MCSA-P2 instrument. It included 34 items arranged on a Likert-type scale with 190 student affairs professionals as participants (Pope & Mueller, 2000). The 34 items of the MCSA-P2 were developed when 14 items were removed from the 48 items of the MCSA-P1 to improve efficiency. The MCSA-P2 instrument maintained a high consistency of a coefficient alpha of .91 (Pope & Muller, 2000) ... the results “support the judicious and discriminant use of the MCSA-P2 as a multicultural competence assessment instrument” (Pope & Muller, 2000, p. 606). The results indicate this instrument is efficient to be used to measure the multicultural competencies of student affairs professionals.

Pope and Mueller (2000) conducted two studies to test the reliability and validity of a measuring tool for the multicultural competence of student affairs professionals, thus creating these instruments: MCSA-P1 and MCSA-P2. The theory and concept behind the development of these instruments came from the counseling profession with a tripartite model approach consisting of three categories within multicultural competence: (1) awareness, (2) knowledge, and (3) skills. To confirm that these three categories could be specific outliners in the instrument, two-, three- and four-factor models were assessed and analyzed. The criteria used to determine the best factor model structure was the interpretability and clarity of each resulting factor. Pope and Mueller (2000) stated two reasons why the three-model factor may not be appropriate for the MCSA-P2: (a) The instrument may not be able to characterize domains (knowledge, awareness, and skills) that are conceptually or behaviorally distinctive and (b) They hypothesize that the

domains (knowledge, awareness, and skills) could have a high overlap. The one-factor model gave a 26% of the variance and showed the greatest representation of the data. As a result of these findings, items were removed from MCSA-P1, and the MCSA-P2 was created (Pope & Mueller, 2000).

There have been numerous studies that utilize the MCSA-P2 instrument. The following paragraphs provide examples of research conducted using the MCSA-P2 instrument. Pope and Mueller (2005) conducted a study to investigate the multicultural competence of faculty members in student affairs preparation programs. The participants included faculty who performed primary job duties within student or academic affairs. The study included 71 males and 76 females. The researchers used three primary instruments to obtain their results: the MCSA-P2, Marlowe-Crowne Social Desirability Scale-Short Form C (MC-SDS), and a background data form developed by Pope and Mueller (2005). The researchers organized data from the study into three categories: demographic variables, experience variables and departmental variables (Pope & Mueller, 2005).

The results indicated no relationship between age and multicultural competence. However, a t-test comparison of gender and race did show a significant relationship with multicultural competence (Pope & Mueller, 2005). Female participants scored higher on the MCSA-P2 ( $M = 5.98$ ) compared to the male participants ( $M = 5.62$ ). The mean scores differed significantly between the female and male participants ( $p < .001$ ). The participants of color scored higher ( $M = 6.33$ ) than the White participants ( $M = 5.75$ ); on the MCSA-P2 (Pope & Mueller, 2005). Additionally, some demographic and experience variables were significant predictors of multicultural competence among the sample faculty in graduate preparation programs.

Porter (2011) conducted a study examining the demographics and institutional variables of student affairs administrators at member institutions of the Council for Christian Colleges and Universities. The study sought to determine if there was a statistical relationship between multicultural competence and a variety of variables: race, age, gender, professional level in student affairs, years' experience, the location of the current institution, levels of diversity training, and the existence of diversity-based resources (Porter, 2011). The researcher provided all participants with the MCSA-P2 (Pope & Mueller, 2000) along with a questionnaire on the demographics of the participants and institutional information all developed by the researcher (Porter, 2011).

The participants in the study included 115 student affairs administrators across 33 colleges and universities within 17 states (Porter, 2011). The researcher implemented a linear regression to investigate the relationships between multicultural competence and eight independent variables: “race, age, gender, professional level in student affairs, years’ experience, location of current institution, levels of diversity training and the existence of diversity-based resources” (Porter, 2011, p. 79). Porter (2011) found that there was a significant connection related to participants' race, diversity training and professional status and their multicultural competence ( $p < .05$ ). However, the age of the participants and their years of professional experience did not correspond significantly to their multicultural competence (Porter, 2011).

Cook (2016) conducted a study to investigate the effect that the multicultural competency scores of entry-level housing professionals had on race, gender, sexual orientation, years of experience, and graduate school diversity curricular content and experiences. Participants were selected from the 2016 membership directory of Upper Midwest Region of the Association of College and University Housing Officers (UMR-ACUHO). From the UMR-ACUHO directory,

426 potential participants included professional staff with the titles of hall director, residence hall director, and residence life coordinator was shared with the researcher, but after the screening, only 109 met all criteria. The researcher used the MCSA-P2 to test the multicultural competence scores and a questionnaire to gather demographic information on the participants. Four research questions used the following test analysis: (a) ANOVA; (b) Tukey post hoc; and (c) Levene's Testing for Homogeneity of Variance.

The results showed statistically significant differences among the participants' race and sexual orientation in multicultural competence. Gay male participants had a mean multicultural competency score over 19 points higher than heterosexual participants. No significant difference was found among the participants' multicultural competency scores as they related to gender, years of full-time experience, and diversity or multicultural content of the graduate program the participants attended (Cook, 2016).

### **Personal Demographic Form**

Demographic information was collected through a personal demographic form. Information gathered from participants included: age, gender, sexual orientation, advisor status, race, ethnicity, highest level of education, field of highest degree, position level, professional job title, years of experience, name of student organization and type of student organization participant advised, and other institutional variables such as enrollment numbers, type of institution (private, public, HBCU or PWI), percentage of participants' institution's student population in students of color, percentage of school/work environment that is the same race/ethnicity as the participant, and state of their institution.

## Data Collection

According to Kelley et al. (2003), data collection should be approached, and it should be documented in the following ways:

1. How, where, how many times, and by whom were potential respondents contacted?
2. How many people were approached and how many of those agreed to participate?
3. How did those who agreed to participate differ from those who refused with regard to characteristics of interest in the study; for example, how were they identified, where were they approached, and what was their gender, age, and features of their illness or health care?
4. How was the survey administered (e.g., telephone interview)?
5. What was the response rate (i.e., the number of usable data sets as a proportion of the number of people approached)? (p. 265)

Before data were collected for this study, the researcher completed all required human rights training modules. The Institutional Review Board (IRB) of East Carolina University approved this study (see Appendix A). This study was conducted via the Internet as a web-based survey. The instruments were not altered from their paper-and-pencil versions with the exception that all responses were entered in a web version rather than circled on a paper version. The survey responses were entered into a browser-based survey software known as Qualtrics, used to collect data.

All participants were asked to verify their consent to participate in the survey. The survey was available for two weeks, and reminder emails were sent to the participants who had not completed the survey. The emails were prewritten and set up to distribute automatically on every 7<sup>th</sup> day after the first invitation email was sent to participants. All information gathered from the participants was used to research this study, and information was not shared with anyone outside of the research team. The data collected were kept confidential. There were no known risks or costs to the participants for taking the survey.



Once the survey had been implemented, the response rates, reminder emails, duration, and timing of the survey were re-evaluated. According to Dillman et al. (2014), the content of the reminder emails and the timing of the survey should be determined by the early response rates. However, the plan was to leave the survey open for four weeks, but the response rate to the survey was considerable. As a result, the data collection was closed earlier.

During data collection, the researcher was respectful of four types of survey errors to ensure more accurate data results which included: (a) coverage error; (b) sample error; (c) nonresponse error; and (d) measurement error (Dillman et al., 2014). Additionally, to help minimize survey errors, a larger number of survey responses were gathered to help the statistical confidence in the data results. This supports the literature, according to Dillman et al. (2014), the higher the number of survey responses collected, the greater the statistical confidence of the data results.

### **Data Analysis**

All data analyses were conducted using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 23.0. The mean, standard deviation, and internal consistency to evaluate the psychometric properties of the instrument were calculated. A multiple linear regression analysis was used to investigate the relationship between the dependent variable, multicultural competence, and independent variables of racial and ethnic identity, highest level of education, demographic variables, and different aspects of advisors of student organizations of color.

The multicultural competence levels of the participants were determined by adding the number from each question on the survey. The survey had 34 questions on the MCSA-P2 instrument. Once a participant completed the questionnaire, their score ranged from 34-238. The

questions were not reverse scored, and a single score was calculated to measure the participant's multicultural competence.

To examine Research Question Number 1, *to what degree are student affairs advisors of racial and ethnic student organizations multiculturally competent*, descriptive statistics were used to describe the participants and calculate the competency scores.

The MCSA-P2 gave each participant a multicultural competence score. MCSA-P2 was scored using a single total score and was designed as a one-factor model. This instrument will “more appropriately assess the overarching construct of ‘general multicultural competence’” (Pope & Mueller, 2000, p. 603). Therefore, there was not a pre-determined score, which identified a participant's multicultural competence level. Descriptive statistics were completed to summarize the data for this study. The mean and standard deviation were used to summarize data. Demographic information that was gathered included: field of highest degree, position level, professional job title, years of experience, name of student organization/ type of student organization participant advises, and other institutional variables such as enrollment numbers, type of institution (private, public, HBCU or PWI), percentage of participants' institution's student population in students of color, percentage of school/work environment that is the same race/ethnicity as the participant, and state of their institution.

To examine Research Question Number 2, *what differences exist between the multicultural competence of student affairs advisors who have advised student groups of color and those who have not*; this question used a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA). ANOVA is a “statistical procedure that uses the F- ratio to test the overall fit of a linear model” (Field, 2013, p. 870). This means that F-ratio is calculated on the “variability between groups as opposed to the variability within groups” (Laerd Statistics, 2017, p. 3). ANOVA is a statistical

approach to determine if there are significantly different values for multicultural competence between two groups—those who had advised student groups of color and or ethnicity, and those who had not advised student groups of color or ethnicity. ANOVA was conducted to compare the mean multicultural competency between the two groups.

To ensure that an ANOVA test was appropriate, there were six assumptions considered: (1) have one dependent variable that is measured at the continuous level; (2) have one independent variable that consists of two or more categorical, independent groups; (3) have independence of observations; (4) have no significant outliers in the groups of your independent variable in terms of the dependent variable; (5) the dependent variable should be approximately normally distributed for each group of the independent variable; and (6) have homogeneity of variances (Laerd Statistics, 2017, p. 3). Data screening can help check the assumptions for the ANOVA test.

To examine Research Question Number 3, *how do race and or ethnicity, years of experience, level of education, gender and age influence multicultural competence among advisors*, this question used multiple linear regression. The multiple linear regression was used to explain the relationship between the continuous dependent variable multicultural competence and the independent variables—age, gender, race/ethnicity, years of experience, education level, advisor status, and sexual orientation.

Multiple linear regression has eight assumptions to consider when running this type of test. The assumptions are divided into two areas: (a) the first two assumptions encompass the chosen study design, and the measurements the researcher selects, (b) the other six assumptions encompass how the data fit the model (Laerd Statistics, 2015). The eight assumptions include:

(1) one dependent variable is measured at the continuous level; (2) two or more independent variables are measured either at the continuous or nominal level; (3) there

should be independence of errors (residuals); (4) there should be a linear relationship between the predictor variables (and composite) and the dependent variable; (5) there should be homoscedasticity of residuals (equal error variances); (6) there should be no multicollinearity; (7) there should be no significant outliers, high leverage points or highly influential points; and (8) the errors (residuals) should be approximately normally distributed. (Laerd Statistics, 2015, p. 3)

Multiple regression allowed the researcher “to determine the overall fit (variance explained) of the model and the relative contribution of each of the predictors to the total variance explained” (Laerd Statistics, 2015 p. 1). “A multiple regression analysis is most often used to (a) predict new values for the dependent variable given the independent variables; and (b) determine how much of the variation in the dependent variable is explained by the independent variables” (Laerd Statistics, 2015, p. 4).

Before running the multiple linear regression, a scatter plot was examined first. “Scatter plot is a graph that plots each person’s score on one variable against their score on another” (Field, 2013, p. 148). The scatter plot examined the linear relationship between multicultural competencies, years of experience and age. The scatter plot graph informed the researcher of three concepts: (a) if there was a relationship between the variables; (b) whether there is a linear relationship; and (c) if the variables were statistically different from others (Field, 2013).

### **Summary**

The purpose of this quantitative study was to determine if and to what extent racial and ethnic identity, years of experience, education level, age, gender, advisor status, and sexual orientation were related to multicultural competence among student affairs professionals who were responsible for advising racial and ethnic student organizations at predominantly white institutions. As this study was designed, the questions and the instruments were developed to extract the current pulse of the multicultural competence among student affairs professional advisors in higher education. The study was distributed to the advisors of student organizations

to assess their multicultural competency. After reviewing the data and resulting analyses, the researcher would better understand where there are gaps among student affairs professional advisors who work with multicultural/ethnic student organizations.

Results are presented in Chapter 4. Connections to the existing literature, implications for future research, and potential contributions for practice are discussed in Chapter 5.

## **CHAPTER 4: RESULTS**

### **Introduction**

The purpose of this quantitative study was to determine if and to what extent racial and ethnic identity, years of experience, education level, age, gender, advisor status, and sexual orientation are related to multicultural competence among student affairs professionals who are responsible for advising racial and ethnic student organizations at predominantly white institutions. Student organizations used for this study are distinguished by type: fraternities and sororities (Greek letter organizations); racial or ethnocultural advocacy and community organizations; and academic or social organizations. They include but are not limited to Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, Incorporated; Lambda Theta Alpha Latin Sorority Incorporated; Black Student Union; Asian American Association; Caribbean Student Association; Student Government Association; French Club; and Black Engineer Student Society. The following research questions guided this study:

Research Question 1: To what degree are student affairs advisors of racial and ethnic student organizations multiculturally competent?

Research Question 2: What differences exist in the multicultural competence of student affairs advisors who have advised racial and ethnic student organizations compared to those advisors who have not?

Research Question 3: How do race/ethnicity, years of experience, level of education, gender, age, advisor status, and sexual orientation predict multicultural competence among advisors?

Chapter 4 is organized by a discussion of the sample demographics, reliability analysis, descriptive statistics, research questions, and conclusions. The data were collected using an

online survey through Qualtrics. Data were analyzed with SPSS 23.0 for Windows. The following provides descriptions of the sample demographics.

### **Sample Demographics**

The participants in this study were student affairs professionals who met the following criteria: a) responsible for advising a student organization as a primary responsibility of their job description/position; (c) full-time student affairs professionals including full-time graduate students (master or doctoral); (d) earned at least a bachelor's degree; and finally (e) members of NASPA within in the United States. There are three reasons NASPA is the best population to utilize for this study: (1) it is one of the governing associations for the student affairs profession; (2) its vision statement defines "NASPA [as] the leading voice for the student affairs profession" (NASPA, 2017a, para. 1); and (3) more than half of the NASPA membership are student affairs professionals and graduate students, making this population an ideal sample group for this study.

The researcher received a spreadsheet of 11,801 members from NASPA. Out of the 11,801 NASPA members, only 2,585 participants met the requirements for the study. The 2,585 NASPA members were invited by email to participate. Four hundred ninety participants attempted the survey, a response rate of 19.0%. Of that sample, there were 338 usable responses for analytic purposes.

Although all the student affairs professionals were currently advising or had advised student organizations, 57.7% ( $n = 195$ ) advised racial or ethnic-based student organizations and 42.3% ( $n = 143$ ) did not. Approximately 18% ( $n = 60$ ) advised Greek student organizations; 33.7% ( $n = 114$ ) advised cultural student organizations; and 7.1% ( $n = 24$ ) advised academic student organizations. Other types of student organizations advised included the Black Student Union, Residence Hall Associations or Councils, Student Activities Boards, Student Government

Associations and other various student organizations. Type of student organizations advised are presented (see Table 1). The tables in this paper displayed numeric data that included valid percentage and percentage. The columns that indicated valid percentage refers to the percentage when missing data are excluded from the calculations and percentage refers to the total sample who responded to the survey.

Regarding age, 43.2% ( $n = 145$ ) of participants were 20-29 years of age, and the remaining 57% ( $n = 191$ ) were 30 years or older. Eighty-one percent ( $n = 273$ ) were under the age of 40. Participant ages are presented (see Table 2).

Regarding gender, 32.6% ( $n = 110$ ) were males, 64.4% ( $n = 217$ ) were females; and 3% ( $n = 10$ ) were “gender nonconforming.” Pertaining to sexual orientation, 75.4% ( $n = 251$ ) were heterosexuals; 12.9% ( $n = 43$ ) were homosexuals; and 11.7% ( $n = 39$ ) were bisexuals. Gender and sexual orientation are presented (see Table 3).

Forty-two percent of respondents ( $n = 143$ ) were Caucasian/White; 25.1% ( $n = 85$ ) were African American/Black; and 13% ( $n = 44$ ) were Latinx/Chicano(a)/Hispanic. The smallest racial group was comprised of Native American/Alaskan Natives (0.3%,  $n = 1$ ). Eight percent ( $n = 28$ ) were multiracial/multiethnic, which consisted of Black and White, and Hispanic and White to name a few. Nearly 2% ( $n = 6$ ) were “other,” which included Bosnian, Native Hawaiian, and South Asian. Race is presented (see Table 4).

Participants were prompted to write in their ethnicities. The most frequent self-described ethnicities included American (4.4%,  $n = 15$ ), Mexican (4.1%,  $n = 14$ ), Black (2.7%,  $n = 9$ ), Italian (2.4%,  $n = 8$ ), Irish (2.1%,  $n = 7$ ), Filipino (1.8%,  $n = 6$ ), Chinese (1.5%,  $n = 5$ ), and Puerto Rican (1.5%,  $n = 5$ ). Twenty-three percent ( $n = 77$ ) of respondents were graduate students



Table 1

*Type of Student Organizations Advised*

Organization Type	n	%	Valid %
Greek	60	17.8	17.9
Cultural	114	33.7	34.0
Academic	24	7.1	7.2
Social	53	15.7	15.8
Other	84	24.9	25.1
Total	335	99.1	100.0
Not Answered	3	0.9	
Grand Total	338	100.0	

Table 2

*Age*

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Age	n	%	Valid %
20-24	41	12.1	12.2
25-29	104	30.8	31.0
30-34	72	21.3	21.4
35-39	56	16.6	16.7
40-44	21	6.2	6.3
45-49	19	5.6	5.7
50-54	13	3.8	3.9
55-59	4	1.2	1.2
60-64	5	1.5	1.5
65+	1	0.3	0.3
Total	336	99.4	100.0
Not Answered	2	0.6	
Grand Total	338	100.0	

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Table 3

*Gender and Sexual Orientation*

Variable	Description	n	%
Gender	Male	110	32.6
	Female	217	64.4
	Gender Nonconforming	10	3.0
	Total	337	100.0
Sexual Orientation	Heterosexual	251	75.4
	Homosexual	43	12.9
	Bisexual	39	11.7
	Total	333	100.0

*Note.* One participant did not answer the gender question, and 5 participants did not answer the sexual orientation question. This table was created using the custom tables feature in SPSS, which excludes missing cases.

Table 4

*Race*

Race	n	%	Valid %
African American/Black	85	25.1	25.2
Asian American/Pacific Islander	30	8.9	8.9
Caucasian/White	143	42.3	42.4
Latinx/Chicano(a)/Hispanic	44	13.0	13.1
Native American/Alaskan Native	1	0.3	0.3
Multiracial/Multiethnic (please specify)	28	8.3	8.3
Other (please specify)	6	1.8	1.8
Total	337	99.7	100.0
Not Answered	1	0.3	
Grand Total	338	100.0	

and 77.0% ( $n = 261$ ) were not. Regarding educational attainment, 11.5% ( $n = 39$ ) had bachelor's degrees and 86.1% ( $n = 291$ ) has master's degrees or doctorates.

The remaining "other" included juris doctorates (JD) and doctoral candidates.

Educational attainment is presented (see Table 5).

The field of the highest degrees included higher education (32.3%,  $n = 109$ ), student affairs (26.6%,  $n = 90$ ), and "other" (20.1%,  $n = 68$ ). Specified "other" degrees included public administration, communication, health, and other fields etc. (see Table 6).

Most student affairs professionals (76.3%,  $n = 258$ ) earned their highest degrees within the last 10 years. However, nearly 10% ( $n = 32$ ) earned their highest degrees between the years 2005 and 2008; and 7% ( $n = 24$ ) earned their highest degrees between 2000 and 2004. Year highest degree conferred is presented (see Table 7).

Eight percent of respondents ( $n = 27$ ) were preparing for their first professional positions in student affairs. However, 8.3% ( $n = 28$ ) also had less than one year of experience. Thirty-four percent ( $n = 115$ ) had 1-5 years of experience, and approximately 50% ( $n = 168$ ) had six or more years of experience. Years working as a full-time professional in student affairs are presented (see Table 8).

Approximately half of the participants (53.3%,  $n = 180$ ) held mid-level positions. However, 29.3% ( $n = 99$ ) held entry-level positions. Other positions (3.8%,  $n = 13$ ) included graduate assistants, interns, and a director of health services. Position level is provided (see Table 9).

One-fourth of the respondents (24.9%,  $n = 84$ ) held their current titles for less than one year. However, the remaining three-fourths (75.1%,  $n = 254$ ) held their current titles for one year or longer. Years holding current title are presented (see Table 10).

Table 5

*Educational Attainment*

---

Variable	Description	n	%
Graduate Student	No	261	77.2
	Yes	77	22.8
	Total	338	100.0
Highest Degree Earned	Bachelor	39	11.5
	Master	246	72.8
	Doctorate	45	13.3
	Other (please specify)	8	2.4
	Total	338	100.0

---

Table 6

*Field of Highest Degree*

---

Field	n	%
Higher Education	109	32.2
Student Affairs	90	26.6
Counseling	25	7.4
Educational Administration	27	8.0
Educational Psychology	4	1.2
Law	3	0.9
Social Work	6	1.8
Business	6	1.8
Other (please specify)	68	20.1
Total	338	100.0

---

Table 7

*Year Highest Degree Conferred*

---

Year	n	%	Valid %
2008-Present	258	76.3	77.9
2005-2008	32	9.5	9.7
2000-2004	24	7.1	7.3
1995-1999	5	1.5	1.5
1990-1994	5	1.5	1.5
1980-1989	6	1.8	1.8
1970-1979	1	0.3	0.3
Total	331	97.9	100.0
Not Answered	7	2.1	
Grand Total	338	100.0	

---



Table 8

*Number of Years Working as Full-Time Professional in Student Affairs*

Number of Years	n	%
0*	27	8.0
Less than 1	28	8.3
1	19	5.6
2-3	44	13.0
4-5	52	15.4
6-10	81	24.0
11-15	41	12.1
16-20	24	7.1
20-25	11	3.3
25+	11	3.3
Total	338	100.0

*Note.* \*0=Preparing for the first year as student affairs professional.

Table 9

*Position Level*

Position Level	n	%	Valid %
Entry Level	99	29.3	29.4
Mid-Level	180	53.3	53.4
Senior Level	37	10.9	11.0
Senior Student Affairs Officer	8	2.4	2.4
Other (please specify)	13	3.8	3.9
Total	337	99.7	100.0
Not Answered	1	0.3	
Grand Total	338	100.0	

Table 10

*Years Holding Current Title*

---

Number of Years	n	%
Less than 1	84	24.9
1	64	18.9
2-3	113	33.4
4-5	42	12.4
6-10	25	7.4
11-20	9	2.7
21+	1	0.3
Total	338	100.0

---

Most (65%,  $n = 220$ ) of the respondents held director (25.7%,  $n = 87$ ), coordinator (21%,  $n = 71$ ), and assistant director (18.3%,  $n = 62$ ) positions of various student affairs jobs. Some student affairs professionals were deans (0.9%,  $n = 3$ ), executive directors (1.8%,  $n = 6$ ), and vice presidents (1.5%,  $n = 5$ ). Position title is presented (see Table 11).

Regarding type of institution, most respondents (61.8%,  $n = 209$ ) were at 4-year public institutions; 34.3% ( $n = 116$ ) were at 4-year private institutions; and 3.3% ( $n = 11$ ) were at 2-year public institutions. Other (5%,  $n = 17$ ) institution types included religious affiliated and faith-based organizations. Institution type is presented (see Table 12).

Regarding total institution enrollment, half of the student affairs professionals (50.1%,  $n = 169$ ) were at institutions with 15,000 students or less, and half (49.9%,  $n = 168$ ) were at institutions with more than 15,000 students. Total institution enrollment is presented in Table 13.

Student affairs professionals were asked what percentages of their institutions' student populations were comprised of people of color. The results showed about 9% ( $n = 29$ ) did not know. Sixteen percent ( $n = 53$ ) had 10% or less; and 25.1% ( $n = 85$ ) had 11-20%. Thirteen percent ( $n = 44$ ) of the participants reported that 51-100% of their students were people of color. Student population percentage of color is presented (see Table 14).

Student affairs professionals were asked if they were in the minority or the majority on their campuses. More than half (52.7%,  $n = 178$ ) stated that they were in the minority and 46.4% ( $n = 157$ ) indicated that they were in the majority. Three (0.9%) did not answer the question.

Most respondents (89.4%,  $n = 302$ ) had diversity/multicultural competency training within the past year consisting of at least one hour to more than six hours. About 10% ( $n = 33$ ) received no diversity/multicultural competency training during the same timeframe. Specific percentages and amount of training are presented (see Table 15).

Table 11

*Position Title*

Position	n	%	Valid %
Advisor	21	6.2	6.3
Assistant Dean	6	1.8	1.8
Assistant Director	62	18.3	18.7
Associate Dean	7	2.1	2.1
Associate Director	23	6.8	6.9
Coordinator	71	21.0	21.4
Dean	3	0.9	0.9
Director	87	25.7	26.2
Executive Director	6	1.8	1.8
Graduate Assistant	14	4.1	4.2
Other	27	8.0	8.1
Vice President	5	1.5	1.5
Total	332	98.2	100.0
Not Answered	6	1.8	
Grand Total	338	100.0	

Table 12

*Institution Type*

Institution Type	n	%
4-year public	209	61.8
4-year private	116	34.3
2-year public	11	3.3
Historically Black College or University	1	0.3
Predominantly White Institution	81	24.0
Other (please specify)	17	5.0

*Note.* Total percentage is > 100 because participants could select all that applied.

Table 13

*Institutions' Total Enrollment*


---

Enrollment	n	%	Valid %
0-500	2	0.6	0.6
501-1000	4	1.2	1.2
1001-5000	69	20.4	20.5
5001-10,000	53	15.7	15.7
10,001-15,000	41	12.1	12.2
15,001-20,000	32	9.5	9.5
20,001-25,000	25	7.4	7.4
25,001-35,000	49	14.5	14.5
35,000+	62	18.3	18.4
Total	337	99.7	100.0
Not Answered	1	0.3	
Grand Total	338	100.0	

---

Table 14

*Institutions' Student of Color Population*

---

Students of Color Percentage	n	%
0-10%	53	15.7
11-20%	85	25.1
21-30%	56	16.6
31-40%	44	13.0
41-50%	27	8.0
51-60%	13	3.8
61-70%	14	4.1
71-80%	11	3.3
81-90%	4	1.2
91-100%	2	0.6
I don't know	29	8.6
Total	338	100.0

---



Table 15

*Number of Hours of Diversity/Multicultural Competence Training During Past Year*

---

Training Hours	n	%	Valid %
0	33	9.8	9.9
1-2	62	18.3	18.5
3-5	84	24.9	25.1
6 +	156	46.2	46.6
Total	335	99.1	100.0
Not Answered	3	0.9	
Grand Total	338	100.0	

---

Most respondents (95.5%,  $n = 323$ ) had diversity/multicultural competency training within the past five years consisting of at least one hour to more than six hours. About 4% ( $n = 14$ ) received no diversity/multicultural competency training during the same timeframe. Specific percentages and amount of training are presented (see Table 16).

Participants were asked which states where their institutions were located. After data collection, the states were recoded into a different variable with four regions consistent with the U.S. Census Bureau designations for ease of reporting in the current study (U.S. Census Bureau, 2018). States with the largest number of student affairs professionals included California (11.2%,  $n = 38$ ), Texas (6.8%,  $n = 23$ ), and Illinois (6.5%,  $n = 22$ ), which corresponded to the West, South, and Midwest regions of the United States respectively. The largest group of participants (33.1%,  $n = 112$ ) were at institutions located in the South, whereas the Northeast region had the fewest participants (18%,  $n = 61$ ) as indicated (see Table 17).

### **Instrument Reliability for Sample**

Multicultural competence was measured by the Multicultural Competence in Student Affairs-Preliminary 2 (MCSA-P2) Scale. The reliability of the instrument for the sample was tested with Cronbach's alpha. According to generally accepted criteria, DeVellis (2012) argued that reliability coefficients between .60 and .69 are questionable; between .70-.79 is acceptable; .80-.89 is good, and .90 and above is excellent. The MCSA-P2 had excellent reliability ( $\alpha = .93$ ) for the sample of student affairs professionals.

### **Descriptive Statistics**

Scores for multicultural competence on the MCSA-P2 were computed by summing the items and dividing by 34, the number of items on the instrument, to calculate the overall mean responses. Therefore, scores can range from 1(*not accurate*) to 7(*very accurate*). A higher score

Table 16

*Number of Hours of Diversity/Multicultural Competence Training During Past Five Years*

Training Hours	n	%	Valid %
0	14	4.1	4.2
1-2	18	5.3	5.3
3-5	38	11.2	11.3
6+	267	79.0	79.2
Total	337	99.7	100.0
Not Answered	1	0.3	
Grand Total	338	100.0	

Table 17

*U.S. Region Where Institution Is Located*

---

Region	n	%
Northeast	61	18.0
Midwest	81	24.0
South	112	33.1
West	84	24.9
Total	338	100.0

---

represents a higher degree of cultural competence. Scores for the sample ranged from 3.37 to 7.00 ( $M = 5.90$ ,  $SD = 0.67$ ). The sample was generally very multiculturally competent.

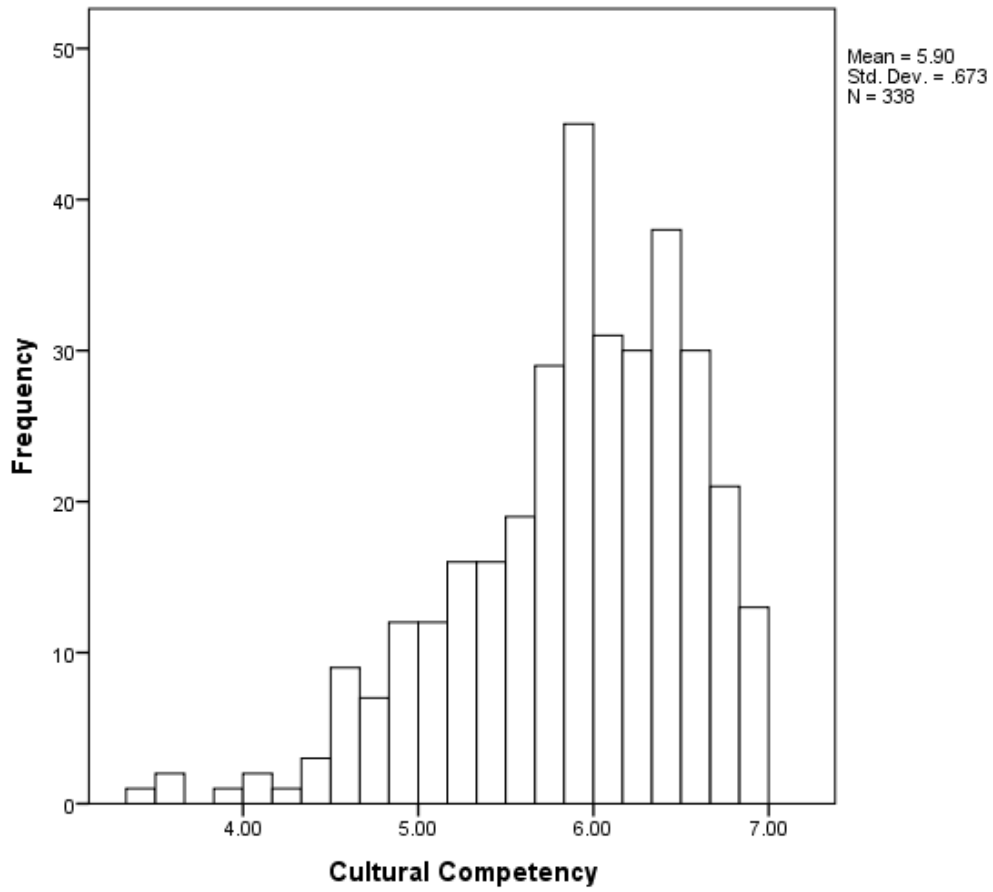
A categorical variable was created based on the continuous data for multicultural competence (Creswell & Plano-Clark, 2011; Owston, 2009). For instance, scores from 1 to 3.49 were labeled as not competent; 3.50 to 4.49 were labeled as somewhat competent, and scores of 4.50 or higher were labeled as very competent. Thus, 0.3% ( $n = 1$ ) were not culturally competent; 2.7% ( $n = 9$ ) were somewhat competent; and 97% ( $n = 328$ ) were very competent.

### **Preliminary Data Screening**

The data were screened for normality with skewness and kurtosis statistics and a histogram. In SPSS, distributions are normal when the absolute values of their skewness and kurtosis coefficients are less than two times their standard errors (Brown, 1997). For cultural competence, the skewness was  $-0.87$  ( $SE = .13$ ) and the kurtosis was  $0.67$  ( $SE = 0.27$ ). This indicated a negative skew which is illustrated by a histogram (see Figure 1). A histogram is an approximation of the probability distribution of a continuous variable. The histogram indicated the possible presence of statistical outliers. Therefore, a box plot was generated. It is a convenient way of visually displaying groups of numerical data through their quartile. Six outliers ( $\leq 4.3$ ) were confirmed. However, no attempts to exclude the outliers were made at this time, and the subsequent analyses proceeded as planned (see Figure 2).

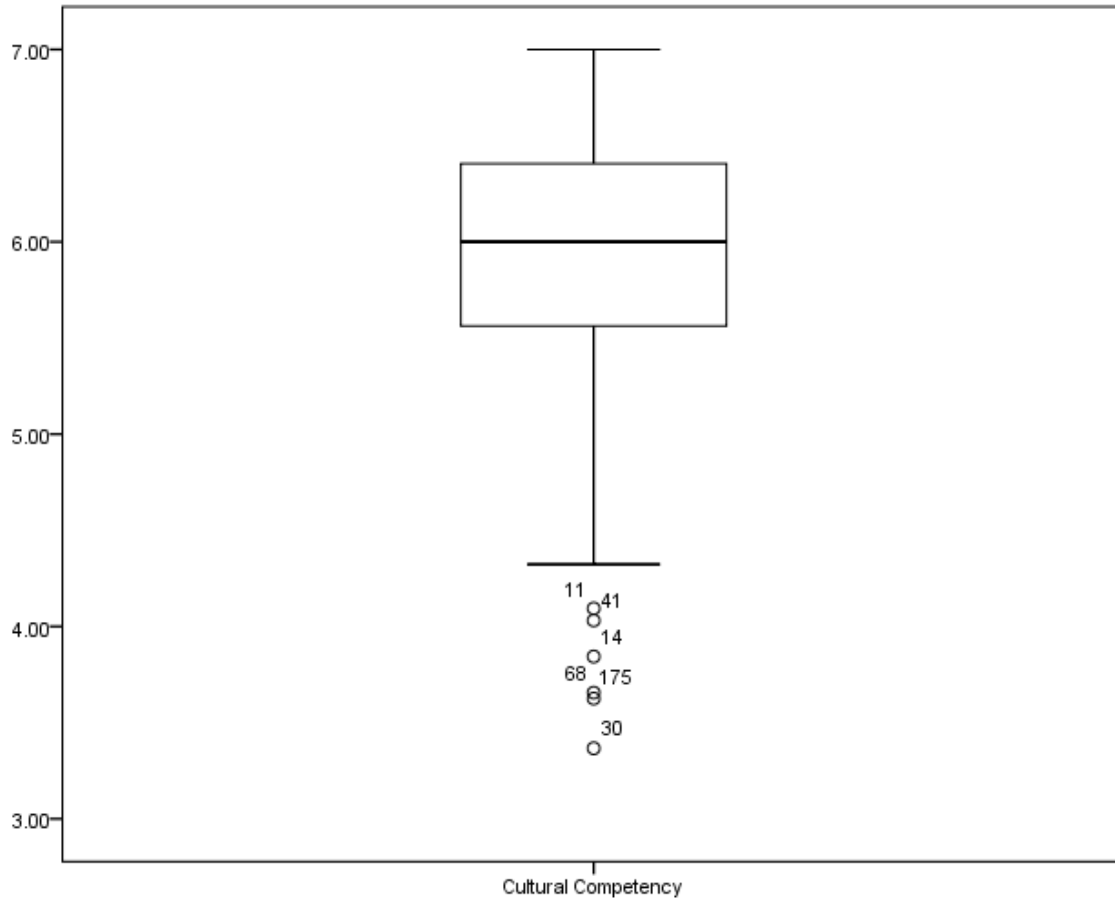
### **Research Question 1 Findings**

To what degree are student affairs advisors of racial and ethnic student organizations multiculturally competent? Research Question #1 was answered with descriptive statistics. For this research question, descriptive statistics were generated on the subgroup of student affairs



*Figure 1.* Histogram for cultural competency.

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*Figure 2.* Box and Whisker Plot for Cultural Competency.

---

advisors of racial and ethnic student organizations ( $n = 195$ ). Cultural competency for student affairs advisors of racial and ethnic student organizations ranged from 3.63 to 6.94 ( $M = 6.01$ ,  $SD = 0.63$ ). The sample was generally very culturally competent. Using the categorical labeling of cultural competency, 1.5% ( $n = 3$ ) were somewhat competent and 98.5% ( $n = 192$ ) were very competent.

In summary, with a percentage of 98.5% ( $n = 192$ ) the sample was generally very culturally competent. This indicated that student affairs professionals who advised racial or ethnic organizations were generally culturally competent.

### **Research Question 2 Findings**

What differences exist in the multicultural competence of student affairs advisors who have advised racial and ethnic student organizations compared to those advisors who have not? Research Question #2 was answered with a one-way ANOVA. The independent variable was advisor status (advising a racial/ethnic student organization). The dependent variable was cultural competency. Group means for the ANOVA are presented (see Table 18).

Levene's Test for Homogeneity of Variances was conducted on the data. A significant  $p$ -value indicates that the variances are not equal and therefore, the results should be interpreted with caution. However, the variances were equal, ( $p = .14$ ). Therefore, the homogeneity of variances assumption was not violated. The ANOVA Summary Table is presented (see Table 19).

There was a significant difference in the multicultural competence of student affairs advisors who have advised racial and ethnic student organizations ( $M = 6.01$ ,  $SD = 0.63$ ) compared to those advisors who have not ( $M = 5.75$ ,  $SD = 0.71$ ),  $F(1, 336) = 13.22$ ,  $p < .001$ .



Table 18

*Group Means for Advisor Cultural Competency by Advisor Status*

Advisor Status	n	M	SD
No	143	5.75	0.71
Yes	195	6.01	0.63
Total	338	5.90	0.67

*Note.* No = Does not advise racial or ethnic-based student organizations, Yes = Does advise racial or ethnic-based student organizations.

Table 19

*ANOVA Summary Table*

---

Source	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p
Between Groups	5.78	1	5.78	13.22	<.001
Within Groups	146.99	336	0.44		
Total	152.77	337			

---

*Note.* Dependent variable = Cultural competency.

In summary, for this research question, a one-way ANOVA was used. Student affairs advisors who have advised racial and ethnic student organizations ( $M = 6.01$ ,  $SD = 0.63$ ) had significantly higher multicultural competence than student affairs advisors who have not ( $M = 5.75$ ,  $SD = 0.71$ );  $F(1, 336) = 13.22$ ,  $p < .001$ .

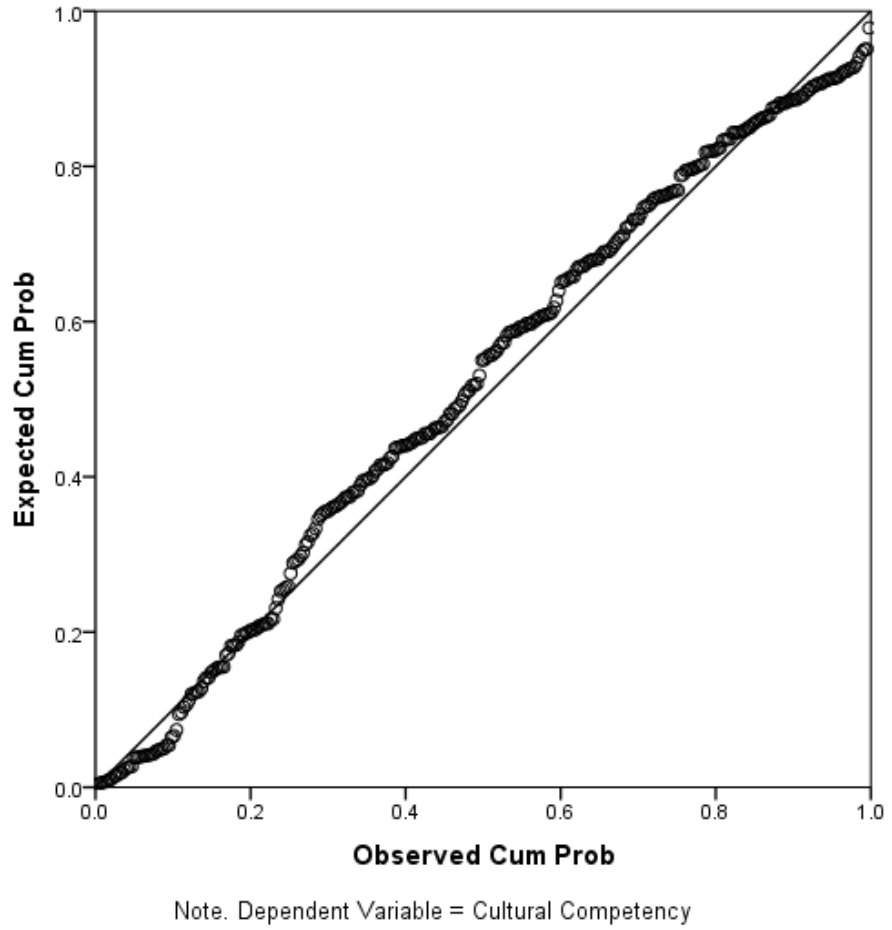
### **Research Question 3 Findings**

How do race/ethnicity, years of experience, level of education, gender, age, advisor status, and sexual orientation influence multicultural competence among advisors? Research Question #3 was answered with multiple linear regression. The predictor variables were race/ethnicity, years of experience, level of education, gender, age, advisor status, and sexual orientation. The dependent variable was multicultural competence. The assumptions of multiple linear regression were also evaluated. The residuals were analyzed. A residual is a difference between the observed and the model-predicted values of the dependent variables.

Standardized residuals that exceeded  $\pm 3$  were candidates for exclusion (Fahlman, Mercer, Gaskovski, Eastwood, & Eastwood, 2009). The initial residuals ranged from -3.45 to 1.92. After excluding the statistical outliers, the residuals ranged from -2.66 to 2.02 and were therefore within normal limits. This left 312 cases. The normal P-P Plot is illustrated in Figure 3. Normality can be assumed when the points are reasonably close to the 45-degree line.

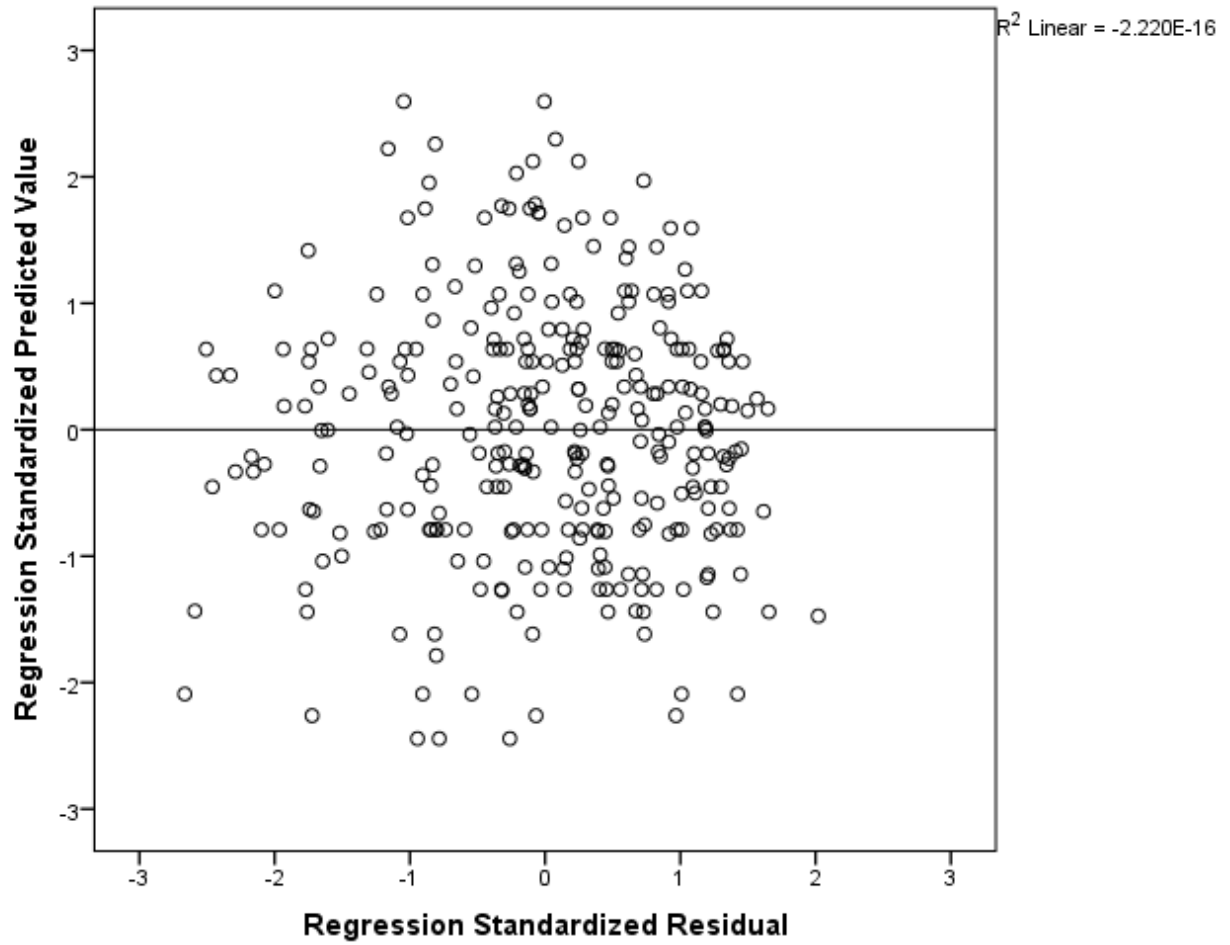
The assumptions of homoscedasticity, linearity, and independence of errors were examined with a scatterplot of regression standardized residuals by standardized predicted values. The residuals are randomly and evenly distributed along the horizontal line in Figure 4.

Multicollinearity was assessed with the variance inflation factor (VIF). VIF values are considered high if they are greater than 10 (Gomez, Perez, Martin, & Garcia 2016). VIF values



*Figure 3.* Normal p-p plot of regression standardized residuals.

---



Note. Dependent Variable = Cultural Competency

*Figure 4.* Scatterplot of regression standardized residuals by standardized predicted values.

---

for the predictor variables ranged from 1.08 to 2.34 and were therefore considered acceptable. VIF values are presented in Table 20. The regression model was statistically significant, [ $F(11, 300) = 3.65, p < .001$ ]; (Adjusted  $R^2 = .09$ ). The model accounts for 9% of the variance of cultural competency.

In multiple linear regression when there is a variable with more than two categories, the researcher has to leave a variable out of the regression table known as the reference category. The reference category is usually the largest variable. The reference categories for this study include Race = White; Sexual Orientation = Heterosexual; and Education Level = Bachelor's Degree.

Examination of the univariate statistics revealed that race, sexual orientation, and advisor status were significant predictors of cultural competency among student affairs advisors. However, African American student affairs advisors did not differ significantly in cultural competence than White student affairs advisors ( $\beta = .13, t = 1.48$ ), ( $p = .14$ ). Latinx student affairs advisors had significantly higher cultural competency than White student affairs advisors ( $\beta = 0.12, t = 2.04$ ), ( $p = .042$ ). Student affairs advisors of “other” races had significantly higher cultural competency than White student affairs advisors ( $\beta = 0.13, t = 2.11$ ), ( $p = .035$ ).

Regarding sexual orientation, student affairs advisors who were homosexuals had significantly higher cultural competency than student affairs professionals who were heterosexuals ( $\beta = 0.16, t = 2.73$ ), ( $p = .007$ ).

Student affairs advisors who were bisexuals had significantly higher cultural competency than student affairs professionals who were heterosexuals ( $\beta = 0.17, t = 3.05$ ), ( $p = .002$ ). Regarding advisor status, student affairs professionals who advised racial and ethnic student organizations

Table 20

*Variance Inflation Factors*

---

Variable	VIF
race=African American/Black	1.36
race=Latinx	1.22
race=Others	1.31
Years of Experience	2.30
Age	2.34
Education=Master	2.06
Education=Doctorate	2.26
Gender	1.20
Homosexual	1.24
Bisexual	1.08
Advisor of Racial/Ethnic Organization	1.18

---

had significantly higher cultural competence than student affairs professionals who did not advise racial and ethnic student organizations ( $\beta = 0.14, t = 2.34, (p = .02)$ ).

Student affairs advisors' years of experience was not a significant predictor of cultural competence ( $\beta = 0.11, t = 1.35, (p = .179)$ ). Student affairs advisors' age was not a significant predictor of cultural competence ( $\beta = -0.03, t = -0.35, (p = .726)$ ). Gender was not a significant predictor of cultural competency ( $\beta = 0.06, t = 0.97, (p = .334)$ ).

Relative to education, student affairs advisors with master's degrees did not have significantly different cultural competency than student affairs advisors with bachelor's degrees ( $\beta = 0.12, t = 1.60, (p = .111)$ ). Student affairs professionals with doctoral degrees did not have significantly higher cultural competency than student affairs professionals with bachelor's degrees, ( $\beta = 0.06, t = 0.76, (p = .446)$ ). Regression coefficients are provided (see Table 21).

In summary, Research Question #3 - How do race/ethnicity, years of experience, level of education, gender, age, advisor status, and sexual orientation influence multicultural competence among advisors? For this research question, a multiple linear regression was used. The data analysis revealed that race, sexual orientation, and advisor status were significant predictors of cultural competency among student affairs advisors. Latinx student affairs advisors had significantly higher cultural competency than white student affairs advisors. Student affairs advisors who were bisexuals had significantly higher cultural competency than student affairs professionals who were heterosexuals.

Student affairs advisors' years of experience, age, and gender was not a significant predictor of cultural competence. Student affairs professionals with masters and doctoral degrees did not have significantly higher cultural competency than students with bachelor's degrees.



Table 21

*Regression Coefficients*

Variable	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	$\beta$	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
(Constant)	5.38	0.13		42.86	.000
Race					
race=African American/Black	0.13	0.09	0.09	1.48	.141
race=Latinx*	0.23	0.11	0.12	2.04	.042*
race=Others*	0.22	0.10	0.13	2.11	.035*
Years of Experience	0.14	0.10	0.11	1.35	.179
Age	-0.04	0.11	-0.03	-.35	.726
Education					
Education=Master	0.18	0.11	0.12	1.60	.111
Education=Doctorate	0.11	0.15	0.06	.76	.446
Gender	0.08	0.08	0.06	.97	.334
Sexual Orientation					
Homosexual**	0.31	0.11	0.16	2.73	.007**
Bisexual**	0.34	0.11	0.17	3.05	.002**
Advisor Status*	0.18	0.08	0.14	2.34	.020*

*Note.* African American/Black: 1=Yes, 0=No, Latinx: 1=Yes, 0=No; Others: 1=Yes, 0=No; The reference category is White. Years of Experience: 0=0-5 years, 1=6 or more years. Age Recoded: 0=20-29 years of age, 1=30 years or older; Master's Degree: 0=No, 1=Yes; Doctorate: 0=No, 1=Yes; The reference category is Bachelor's Degree. Gender: 0=Male, 1=Female. Homosexual: 0=No, 1=Yes; Bisexual: 0=No, 1=Yes. The reference category is heterosexual. Advisor Status: 1= Yes, 0= No. \* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$ .  $N = 312$ .  $R = .34$ ,  $R^2 = .12$ , Adjusted  $R^2 = .09$ ,  $F = 3.65$ . The dependent variable = cultural competency.

### **Predominately White Institutions Data Analyses**

Additional analyses were conducted using data from student affairs professionals that attended predominantly White Institutions (PWIs) ( $n = 81$ ). Specifically, descriptive statistics, an ANOVA, and multiple linear regression were conducted on the data. Multicultural competence scores for PWIs ranged from 4.45 to 6.91 ( $M = 6.00$ ,  $SD = 0.62$ ). With a mean score of 6.00, the sample was generally very multiculturally competent. An ANOVA was conducted on the data to determine if a significant difference existed in multicultural competence relative to student affairs professionals who advised racial or ethnic-based student organizations and student affairs professionals who do not. Group means for the ANOVA are presented in Table 22. The ANOVA Summary Table is presented (see Table 23).

The results of the ANOVA revealed that student affairs professionals at PWIs who have advised racial and ethnic student organizations ( $M = 6.15$ ,  $SD = 0.61$ ) scored significantly higher in multicultural competence than those advisors at PWIs who have not ( $M = 5.75$ ,  $SD = 0.56$ );  $F(1, 79) = 8.58$ ,  $p = .004$ .

Multiple linear regression was conducted on the data to determine if and to what extent do race/ethnicity, years of experience, level of education, gender, age, advisor status, and sexual orientation influence multicultural competence among advisors at PWIs. Standardized residuals were analyzed. Standardized residuals ranged from  $-2.56$  to  $1.64$  and were therefore determined to be within normal limits. The normal P-P Plot is illustrated in Figure 5. Normality can be assumed because the points are reasonably close to the 45-degree line.

The assumptions of homoscedasticity, linearity, and independence of errors were examined with a scatterplot of regression standardized residuals by standardized predicted

Table 22

*Group Means for ANOVA on PWIs*

---

Advisor Status	n	M	SD
No	30	5.75	0.56
Yes	51	6.15	0.61
Total	81	6.00	0.62

---

*Note.* No = Does not advise racial or ethnic-based student organizations, Yes = Does advise racial or ethnic-based student organizations.

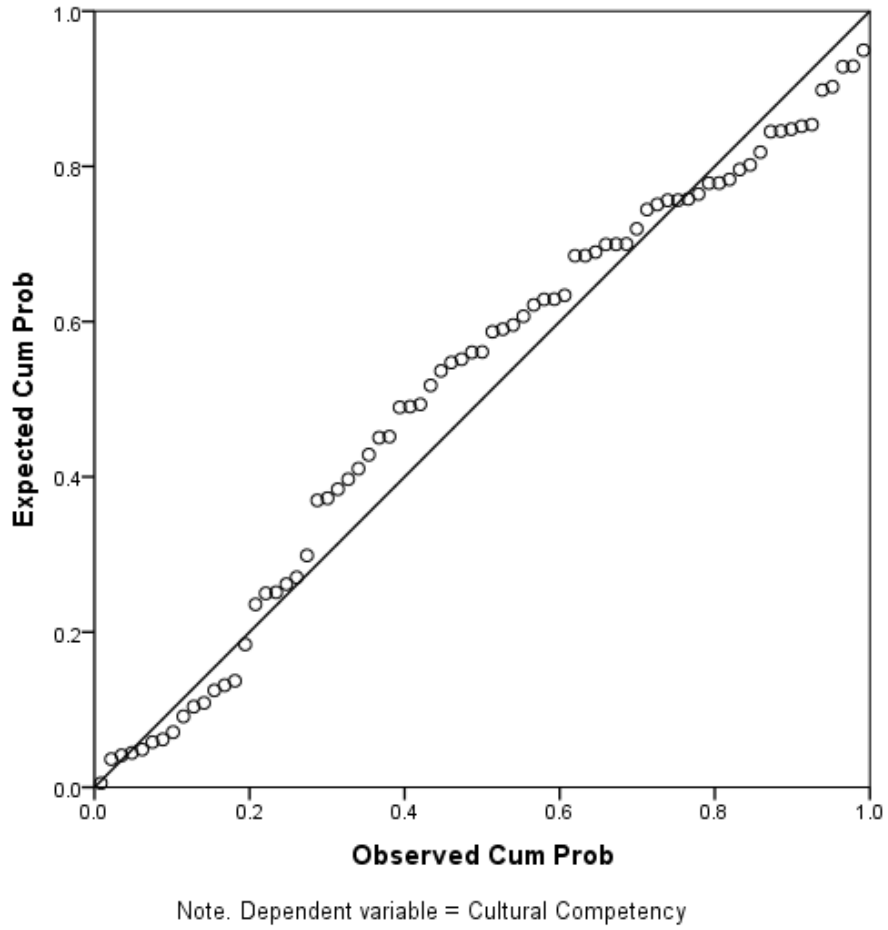
Table 23

*ANOVA Summary Table for PWIs*

---

Source	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p
Between Groups	3.01	1	3.01	8.58	.004
Within Groups	27.72	79	0.35		
Total	30.73	80			

---



*Figure 5.* Normal p-p plot of regression standardized residuals for PWIs.

---

values. The residuals are randomly and evenly distributed along the horizontal line (see Figure 6).

Multicollinearity was assessed with the variance inflation factor (VIF). VIF values for the predictor variables ranged from 1.18 to 2.64 and were therefore considered acceptable. VIF values are presented (see Table 24).

The regression model was not statistically significant,  $F(11, 63) = 1.82$ , ( $p = .07$ ); (Adjusted  $R^2 = .11$ ). African American student affairs advisors did not differ significantly in cultural competence than white student affairs advisors ( $\beta = -0.05$ ,  $t = -0.37$ ),  $p = .712$ . Latinx student affairs advisors did not differ significantly in cultural competency from white student affairs advisors ( $\beta = 0.24$ ,  $t = 1.98$ ), ( $p = .052$ ). Student affairs advisors of “other” races did not significantly differ in cultural competency from white student affairs advisors ( $\beta = -0.14$ ,  $t = -1.01$ ), ( $p = .315$ ).

Regarding sexual orientation, student affairs advisors who were homosexuals did not differ significantly in cultural competency from student affairs professionals who were heterosexuals ( $\beta = -.006$ ,  $t = -0.49$ ), ( $p = .961$ ). Student affairs advisors who were bisexuals did not differ significantly in cultural competency from student affairs professionals who were heterosexuals ( $\beta = 0.13$ ,  $t = 1.10$ ), ( $p = .278$ ). Regarding advisor status, student affairs professionals who advised racial and ethnic student organizations had significantly higher cultural competence than student affairs professionals who did not advise racial and ethnic student organizations ( $\beta = 0.35$ ,  $t = 2.98$ ), ( $p = .004$ ).

Student affairs advisors’ years of experience was not a significant predictor of cultural competence ( $\beta = -0.09$ ,  $t = -0.51$ ), ( $p = .613$ ). Student affairs advisors’ age was not a significant

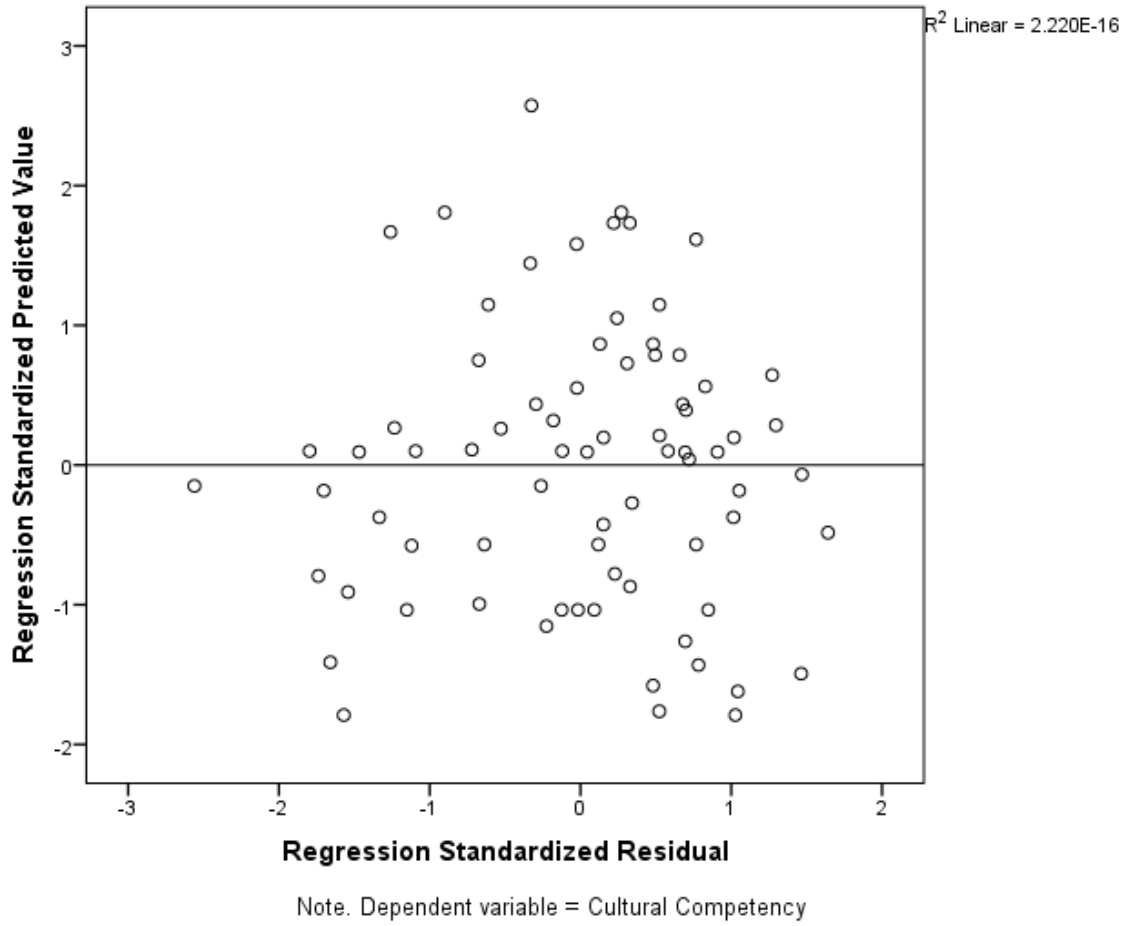


Figure 6. Scatterplot of regression standardized residuals by standardized predicted values for PWIs.

---

Table 24

*Variance Inflation Factors for PWIs*

---

Variable	VIF
race=African American/Black	1.40
race=Latinx	1.25
race=Others	1.47
Years of Experience	2.39
Age Recoded	2.64
Education=Master	2.04
Education=Doctorate	2.37
Gender	1.33
Homosexual	1.29
Bisexual	1.24
Advisor of Racial/Ethnic Organization	1.18

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predictor of cultural competence ( $\beta = -0.03$ ,  $t = -0.16$ ), ( $p = .873$ ). Gender was not a significant predictor of cultural competency ( $\beta = 0.14$ ,  $t = 1.11$ ), ( $p = .27$ ).

Relative to education, student affairs advisors with master's degrees did not have significantly different cultural competency than student affairs advisors with bachelor's degrees ( $\beta = 0.08$ ,  $t = 0.52$ ), ( $p = .607$ ). Student affairs professionals with doctoral degrees did not have significantly higher cultural competency than students affairs professionals with bachelor's degrees, ( $\beta = 0.03$ ,  $t = 0.20$ ), ( $p = .841$ ). Regression coefficients are provided (see Table 25).

In summary, additional analyses were conducted using data from student affairs professionals that attended predominantly white institutions (PWIs) ( $n = 81$ ). Descriptive statistics, an ANOVA, and multiple linear regression were conducted on the data. The descriptive statistics indicated the sample was generally very multiculturally competent. The results of the ANOVA revealed that student affairs professionals at PWIs who have advised racial and ethnic student organizations scored significantly higher in multicultural competence than those advisors at PWIs who have not. Multiple linear regression was conducted on the data to determine if and to what extent do race/ethnicity, years of experience, level of education, gender, age, advisor status, and sexual orientation influence multicultural competence among advisors at PWIs.

The multiple linear regression results indicated that African American student affairs advisors did not differ significantly in cultural competence than White student affairs advisors. Latinx student affairs advisors did not differ significantly in cultural competency from White student affairs advisors. Student affairs advisors of "other" races did not significantly differ in cultural competency from White student affairs advisors.

Table 25

*Regression Coefficients for PWIs*

Variable	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	$\beta$	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
(Constant)	5.51	0.27		20.71	.000
Race					
race=African American/Black	-0.07	0.18	-0.05	-0.37	.712
race=Latinx	0.39	0.20	0.24	1.98	.052
race=Others	-0.24	0.24	-0.14	-1.01	.315
Years of Experience	-0.11	0.21	-0.09	-0.51	.613
Age	-0.04	0.22	-0.03	-0.16	.873
Education					
Education=Master	0.12	0.23	0.08	0.52	.607
Education=Doctorate	0.07	0.33	0.03	0.20	.841
Gender	0.18	0.16	0.14	1.11	.27
Sexual Orientation					
Homosexual	-0.01	0.21	-0.006	-0.05	.961
Bisexual	0.23	0.21	0.13	1.10	.278
Advisor Status**	0.44	0.15	0.35	2.98	.004**

*Note.* African American/Black: 1=Yes, 0=No, Latinx: 1=Yes, 0=No; Others: 1=Yes, 0=No; The reference category is White. Years of Experience: 0=0-5 years, 1=6 or more years. Age Recoded: 0=20-29 years of age, 1=30 years or older; Master's Degree: 0=No, 1=Yes; Doctorate: 0=No, 1=Yes; The reference category is Bachelor's Degree. Gender: 0=Male, 1=Female. Homosexual: 0=No, 1=Yes; Bisexual: 0=No, 1=Yes. The reference category is heterosexual. Advisor Status: 1= Yes, 0= No. \*\* $p < .01$ ,  $N = 75$ .  $R = .49$ ,  $R^2 = .24$ , Adjusted  $R^2 = .11$ ,  $F = 1.82$ . The dependent variable = cultural competency.

Regarding sexual orientation, student affairs advisors who were homosexuals or bisexuals did not differ significantly in cultural competency from student affairs professionals who were heterosexuals. Regarding advisor status, student affairs professionals who advised racial and ethnic student organizations had significantly higher cultural competence than student affairs professionals who did not advise racial and ethnic student organizations.

Student affairs advisors' years of experience, age, and gender was not a significant predictor of cultural competence. Relative to education, student affairs advisors with master's degrees did not have significantly different cultural competency than student affairs advisors with bachelor's degrees. Student affairs professionals with doctoral degrees did not have significantly higher cultural competency than students with bachelor's degrees.

### **Summary**

Three research questions were developed for investigation. The first research question was answered with descriptive statistics. It was determined that the student affairs professionals who advised racial or ethnic organizations were generally very culturally competent.

The second research question was answered with a one-way ANOVA. Student affairs professionals who did not advise racial or ethnic organizations had significantly lower cultural competency than professionals who advised cultural student organizations.

The third research question was answered with multiple linear regression. It was determined that student affairs advisors' race, sexual orientation, and advisor status were significantly related to their cultural competency. Latinx student affairs advisors had significantly higher cultural competency than white student affairs advisors. Student affairs advisors of "other" races had significantly higher cultural competency than white student affairs advisors. Student affairs advisors who were homosexuals had significantly higher cultural

competency than student affairs professionals who were heterosexuals. Student affairs advisors who were bisexuals had significantly higher cultural competency than student affairs professionals who were heterosexuals. Regarding advisor status, student affairs professionals who advised racial and ethnic student organizations had significantly higher cultural competence than student affairs professionals who did not advise racial and ethnic student organizations. These variables collectively accounted for 9% of the variance in cultural competency among student affairs advisors.

Additional analyses were conducted on the sub-sample of student affairs professionals who attended PWIs. Student affairs professionals at PWIs who have advised racial and ethnic student organizations scored significantly higher in multicultural competence than those advisors at PWIs who have not. Multiple linear regression was conducted on the data to determine if and to what extent do race/ethnicity, years of experience, level of education, gender, age, advisor status, and sexual orientation influence multicultural competence among advisors at PWIs. The regression model was not statistically significant. Implications and recommendations will be discussed in Chapter 5.

## CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

As diversity on college campuses increases, the challenge to create a multiculturally responsive and affirming environment for all students, especially students of color, has become crucial in higher education institutions (Pope et al., 2009). For underrepresented students, especially students of color, a welcoming and open campus climate can help combat the challenges they face (Griffin et al., 2008). According to Turner (1994), students of color at predominately white institutions often experience feelings of alienation and disconnection from their campuses due to the lack of iconography or artifacts that reflect their presence and represent their cultural backgrounds.

Several researchers have identified incidents of racism on campuses where the educational curriculum is not inclusive of a diversity perspective. Feelings of exclusion and marginalization among students of color occur when their race or ethnicity is not sufficiently represented among faculty, staff and peer populations (Griffin et al., 2008; Kuh, Kinzie, Schuh, & Whitt, 2010). Students of color perceive non-racial and ethnic student organizations as exclusive and insensitive to their social needs (Person & Christensen, 1996). Ethnic and cultural organizations composed of students with similar racial and ethnic backgrounds offer peer support and a sense of belonging for students of color (Dunkel & Schuh, 1998; Guiffrida, 2003). When students of color do not have a sense of belonging at a predominately white institution, they can begin to have feelings of stress (Smedley, Myers, & Harrell, 1993). As phrased by Turner (1994), students of color can develop a sense of being “guests in someone else’s house” (p. 356) and that students of color on predominately white campuses find it “a cold and lonely place” (p. 335). In this vein, racial and ethnic student organizations continue to have a role for student

support. Moreover, it is important advisors of these organizations to be multiculturally competent, thus leading to the purpose of this study.

The purpose of this quantitative study was to determine if and to what extent racial and ethnic identity, years of experience, education level, age, gender, advisor status, and sexual orientation were related to multicultural competence among student affairs professionals who were responsible for advising racial and ethnic student organizations at predominantly white institutions. Student organizations used for this study are distinguished by type: fraternities and sororities (Greek letter organizations); racial or ethnocultural advocacy and community organizations; and academic or social organizations. They include but were not limited to Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, Incorporated; Lambda Theta Alpha Latin Sorority, Incorporated; Black Student Union; Asian American Association; Caribbean Student Association; Student Government Association; French Club; and Black Engineer Student Society.

The following research questions guided this study:

Research Question 1: To what degree are student affairs advisors of racial and ethnic student organizations multiculturally competent?

Research Question 2: What differences exist in the multicultural competence of student affairs advisors who have advised racial and ethnic student organizations compared to those advisors who have not?

Research Question 3: How do race/ethnicity, years of experience, level of education, gender, age, advisor status, and sexual orientation predict multicultural competence among advisors?

This chapter will discuss (a) summary of the findings of the present study; (b) the results of each research question; (c) the implications of the findings; (d) the limitations of this research; (e) recommendations and suggestions for future research; and (f) a chapter summary.

### **Summary of Procedure**

The participants in this study were student affairs professionals who met the following criteria: (a) were student affairs professionals responsible for advising a student organization and were members of NASPA; (b) advising a student organization were a primary responsibility of the participant's job description/position; (c) participants were full-time student affairs professionals including a full-time graduate student (master or doctoral); and finally (d) had earned a bachelor's degree.

The survey responses were entered into a browser-based survey software known as Qualtrics, then downloaded into SPSS for data analysis. Data were analyzed with SPSS 23.0 for Windows. Four hundred ninety participants attempted the survey. However, there were 338 usable responses for the final sample. The researcher received a spreadsheet of 11,801 members from NASPA. Out of the 11,801 NASPA members, only 2,585 participants met the requirements for the study. The 2,585 NASPA members were invited by email to participate in this study. This study yielded a 19.0% response rate.

The data for this study were collected using two, self-reporting instruments administered to the participants: (1) Multicultural Competence in Student Affairs-Preliminary 2 (MCSA-P2) Scale and (2) Personal Demographic Form created by the researcher. This study used the MCSA-P2 instrument to measure the multicultural competence of student affairs advisors. Scores for multicultural competence on the MCSA-P2 were computed by summing the items and dividing by 34, the number of items on the instrument, to calculate the overall mean responses. Therefore,

scores could range from 1(not accurate) to 7(very accurate). A high score represented a high degree of multicultural competence.

A categorical variable was created based on the continuous data for multicultural competence. This included information as such: scores from 1 to 3.49 were labeled as “not competent;” 3.50 to 4.49 were labeled as “somewhat competent;” and scores of 4.50 or higher were labeled as “very competent.” These categorical variables were created because this instrument does not have a pre-determined score which identified a participant’s multicultural competence level. This instrument will “more appropriately assess the overarching construct of ‘general multicultural competence’” (Pope & Mueller, 2000, p. 603). Due to no pre-determined score for multicultural competence, one can derive at the suggested score ranges with a priori knowledge.

For this study, descriptive statistics, an ANOVA, and multiple linear regression were conducted on the data. Additional analyses were conducted using data from student affairs advisors that worked at predominantly white institutions (PWIs) ( $n = 81$ ). Specifically, descriptive statistics, an ANOVA, and multiple linear regressions were conducted on the data for PWIs.

Demographic information was collected using the personal demographic form created by the researcher. Information that was gathered from participants included: age, gender, sexual orientation, advisor status, race, ethnicity, highest level of education, field of highest degree, position level, professional job title, years of experience, name of student organization/ type of student organization participant advised, and other institutional variables such as enrollment numbers, type of institution (private, public, HBCU or PWI), percentage of participants'



institution's student population in students of color, percentage of school/work environment that was the same race/ethnicity as the participant, and state of their institution.

Multicultural competence was measured by the Multicultural Competence in Student Affairs-Preliminary 2 (MCSA-P2) Scale. The reliability of the instrument for the sample was tested with Cronbach's alpha. According to generally accepted criteria DeVellis (2012) argued that reliability coefficients between .60 and .69 are questionable; between .70-.79 is acceptable; .80-.89 is good, and .90 and above is excellent (DeVellis, 2012). The MCSA-P2 had excellent reliability ( $\alpha = .93$ ) for the sample of student affairs professionals

### **Summary of Findings**

#### **Research Question One**

To what degree are student affairs advisors of racial and ethnic student organizations multiculturally competent?

Descriptive statistics were generated on the subgroup of student affairs advisors of racial and ethnic student organizations ( $n = 195$ ). Cultural competency for student affairs advisors of racial and ethnic student organizations ranged from 3.63 to 6.94 ( $M = 6.01$ ,  $SD = 0.63$ ). With a mean score of 6.01, the sample was generally very culturally competent. Using the categorical labeling of cultural competency, 1.5% ( $n = 3$ ) were somewhat competent and 98.5% ( $n = 192$ ) were very competent.

The findings from this study showed that advisors of racial and ethnic student organizations were considered very multiculturally competent which could be a result of the participants overrating themselves. The advisors could be overrating themselves because they are aware of their needed growth in the area of multicultural competence (King & Howard-Hamilton, 2003). This is known as social desirability and can be determined by using the Social

Desirability Scale of the Marlowe-Crowne Social Desirability-Short Form C (MC-SDS) (Crowne & Marlowe, 1960; Reynolds, 1982). The purpose of the MC-SDS is to determine if participants answered a survey honestly. The SDS can be used to determine how much influence social desirability can have on participants' responses.

Typically, the SDS is used along with self-reporting instruments due to the possibility of social bias (Crowne & Marlowe, 1960). The SDS has been used along with the MCSA-P2 instrument in several studies to determine how much influence social desirability had on participant's responses. Cook (2016) conducted a study that used the SDS along with the MCSA-P2 to analyze the correlation between the SDS and the MCSA-P2. The results indicated no statistically significant correlation between the two instruments and that social desirability did not significantly alter participant's responses to the MCSA-P2. Therefore, the SDS will measure social desirability without significantly altering participants' responses.

### **Research Question Two**

What differences exist in the multicultural competence of student affairs advisors who have advised racial and ethnic student organizations compared to those advisors who have not?

An ANOVA test was performed for question #2. The independent variable was advisor status (advising a racial/ethnic student organization). The dependent variable was cultural competency. Student affairs advisors who had advised racial and ethnic student organizations ( $M = 6.01$ ,  $SD = 0.63$ ) had significantly higher multicultural competence than student affairs advisors who have not ( $M = 5.75$ ,  $SD = 0.71$ );  $F(1, 336) = 5.78$ ,  $p < .001$ .

These results could be an indicator that advisors of race and ethnic student organizations seek out opportunities to become more multiculturally competent. These opportunities could include but are not limited to diversity trainings, workshops, conferences, and other opportunities

deemed as professional development. Student affairs professionals who participate in diversity trainings and workshops have higher multicultural competency levels compared to those that do not (Porter, 2011, Wilson, 2015). Research has shown that continual learning and development of multicultural competencies help ensure advisors are prepared to help students of color succeed (Roberts, 2005).

### **Research Question Three**

How do race/ethnicity, years of experience, level of education, gender, age, advisor status, and sexual orientation influence multicultural competence among advisors?

A multiple linear regression was performed for question #3. The independent variables were race/ethnicity, years of experience, level of education, gender, age, advisor status, and sexual orientation. The dependent variable was multicultural competence. The assumptions of multiple linear regression were also evaluated. The regression model was statistically significant,  $F(11, 300) = 3.65, p < .001$ ; Adjusted  $R^2 = .09$ . This meant that at least one of the predictor variables was related to the outcome variable of cultural competence.

It was determined that student affairs advisors' race, sexual orientation, and advisor status were significantly related to their cultural competency. Latinx student affairs advisors had significantly higher cultural competency than White student affairs advisors. Student affairs advisors of "other" races had significantly higher cultural competency than White student affairs advisors. The earlier research supports race significantly correlating with multicultural competence. Research studies indicated that people of color reported higher multicultural competence scores compared to White people (Cook, 2016; King & Howard-Hamilton, 2003; Miklitsch, 2005; Porter, 2011). However, in this study, African American student affairs advisors

did not differ significantly in cultural competence than White student affairs advisors ( $\beta = .13$ ,  $t = 1.48$ ), ( $p = .14$ ). Future research related to this finding could help further the research literature.

Student affairs advisors who were homosexuals had significantly higher cultural competency than student affairs professionals who were heterosexuals. Student affairs advisors who were bisexuals had significantly higher cultural competency than student affairs professionals who were heterosexuals. These findings support earlier research that found statistically significant differences in the multicultural competence scores of participants based on sexual orientation. Cook (2016) conducted a study that found gay male participants had “significantly higher multicultural competence scores than did the heterosexual/straight male and female participants” (p. 128). The results also concluded that “bisexual male and female participants, while not statistically significant, had a mean score that was over 11 points higher than the heterosexual male and female participants” (Cook, 2016, p. 128).

Regarding advisor status, student affairs professionals who advised racial and ethnic student organizations had significantly higher cultural competence than student affairs professionals who did not advise racial and ethnic student organizations. Strayhorn and McCall (2012) conducted a study on advisors of Black Greek Letter Organizations (BGLO). Some of the results concluded that part-time advisors scored higher on cultural awareness compared to full-time advisors while advisors who work mostly with sororities scored higher on cultural skills compared to those advisors who work mostly with fraternities.

Student affairs advisors’ years of experience was not a significant predictor of cultural competence ( $\beta = 0.11$ ,  $t = 1.35$ ),  $p = .179$ . Student affairs advisors’ age was not a significant predictor of cultural competence ( $\beta = -0.03$ ,  $t = -0.35$ ),  $p = .726$ . Gender was not a significant predictor of cultural competence ( $\beta = 0.06$ ,  $t = 0.97$ ),  $p = .334$ . These findings support earlier

research that shows these three variables years of experience (Cook, 2016; Miklitsch, 2005; Porter, 2011); age (King & Howard-Hamilton, 2003; Mastrodicasa, 2004; Miklitsch, 2005); and gender (Cook, 2016; Miklitsch, 2005; Mueller, 1999) were not significantly related to multicultural competency.

Relative to education, student affairs advisors with master's degrees did not have significantly different cultural competence than student affairs advisors with bachelor's degrees ( $\beta = 0.12$ ,  $t = 1.60$ ), ( $p = .111$ ). Student affairs professionals with doctoral degrees did not have significantly higher cultural competence than student affairs professionals with bachelor's degrees, ( $\beta = 0.06$ ,  $t = 0.76$ ), ( $p = .446$ ). These findings were different compared to some earlier research. According to Strayhorn and McCall (2012), advisors of race-based greek letter organizations with higher education degrees scored higher on cultural awareness compared to advisors with a bachelor's degree or no degree. Miklitsch (2005) conducted a study, and the results indicated participants with a Master's ( $n = 239$ ,  $M = 183.05$ ) or Doctorate ( $n = 11$ ,  $M = 191.18$ ) degree had higher multicultural competence scores; meaning, those with advanced academic degrees reported higher multicultural competence scores.

### **Predominately White Institution Data Analyses**

Descriptive statistics, an ANOVA, and multiple linear regression were conducted on the data from student affairs professionals that attended predominantly white Institutions (PWIs) ( $n = 81$ ).f. Multicultural competence scores for PWIs ranged from 4.45 to 6.91 ( $M = 6.00$ ,  $SD = 0.62$ ). With a mean score of 6.00, the sample was generally very multiculturally competent. The results of the ANOVA revealed that student affairs professionals at PWIs who have advised racial and ethnic student organizations ( $M = 6.15$ ,  $SD = 0.61$ ) scored significantly higher in

multicultural competence than those advisors at PWIs who have not ( $M = 5.75$ ,  $SD = 0.56$ );  $F(1, 79) = 8.58$ ,  $p = .004$ .

The regression model was not statistically significant,  $F(11, 63) = 1.82$ , ( $p = .07$ ); (Adjusted  $R^2 = .11$ ). African American student affairs advisors did not differ significantly in cultural competence than White student affairs advisors. Latinx student affairs advisors did not differ significantly in cultural competency from White student affairs advisors. Student affairs advisors of “other” races did not significantly differ in cultural competency from White student affairs advisors.

Regarding sexual orientation, student affairs advisors who were homosexuals did not differ significantly in cultural competency from student affairs professionals who were heterosexuals. Student affairs advisors who were bisexuals did not differ significantly in cultural competency from student affairs professionals who were heterosexuals. Regarding advisor status, student affairs professionals who advised racial and ethnic student organizations had significantly higher cultural competence than student affairs professionals who did not advise racial and ethnic student organizations. Student affairs advisors’ years of experience was not a significant predictor of cultural competence. Student affairs advisors’ age was not a significant predictor of cultural competence. Gender was not a significant predictor of cultural competence.

Relative to education, student affairs advisors with master’s degrees did not have significantly different cultural competency than student affairs advisors with bachelor’s degrees. Student affairs professionals with doctoral degrees did not have significantly higher cultural competency than students with bachelor’s degrees. These results could indicate that education level has no impact on multicultural competency. Additionally, perhaps multicultural competency cannot only be learned in the classroom but through personal interactions.

These findings revealed that student affairs professionals at PWIs who have advised racial and ethnic student organizations ( $M = 6.15, SD = 0.61$ ) scored significantly higher in multicultural competence than those advisors at PWIs who have not ( $M = 5.75, SD = 0.56$ );  $F(1, 79) = 8.58, p = .004$ . The results could be because advisors of racial and ethnic student organizations participate in more opportunities to learn about diversity. One role of advisors is to promote diversity and inclusion among students. Promoting culturally inclusive activities and student organizations have been shown to help reduce feelings of alienation and isolation among students of color at predominantly white institutions (Chambers, 2017; Sutton & Kimbrough, 2001). A culturally inclusive environment is of vital importance because it plays a valuable role in how students of color adjust to campus life and in their retention rates on college campuses (Pope et al., 2004; Turner, 1994; Wilson, 2012).

### **Limitations of the Study**

This study had four limitations that should be examined. These limitations included: (1) the participants' self-reported responses, thus causing the overall results to be biased possibly or otherwise compromised; (2) the instrument was a fairly new instrument within research and had limited reliability and validity research published; (3) participants were NASPA members only; and (4) not all participants who were sent the survey responded.

Self-reporting assessment measures had a possibility of having response biases. Response biases included social desirability bias, acquiescence, opposition extremity or mid-point response set, carelessness and inconsistency (Wrightsman, 1977). When participants respond to a self-reporting instrument, the participants may respond in a way that distorts their behavior. This misrepresentation of the participant's behavior may be positive or negative. The misrepresentation of the participant's behavior has impacted the creation of social desirability

instruments and items that can measure responses to reduce or statistically regulate scores on measures of primary interest (Barger, 2002).

Due to the importance of validity and reliability of self-reporting assessment, continued strategies have been created to help combat the threat of response biases. Pope and Mueller (2000) conducted a research study to test the reliability and validity of the MCSA-P2 instrument. MCSA-P2 demonstrated a high consistency of a coefficient alpha of .91. For this study, the reliability of the instrument for the sample was tested with Cronbach's alpha. The MCSA-P2 had excellent reliability ( $\alpha = .93$ ) for the sample of student affairs professionals.

This study only included participants who were members of NASPA. NASPA is not the only professional association that includes student affairs professionals who advise student organizations. Other professional associations included, but were not limited to ACPA and AFA. Additionally, not all potential participants who were sent the survey participated in this study. However, this study did have a 19% response rate.

### **Implications**

To work more efficiently with the increasingly diverse student populations there is a call for student affairs professionals to obtain multicultural competence in the categories of knowledge, awareness, and skills (Muller & Pope, 2001). To help support the idea of multicultural competence for student affairs professionals, this study used the MCSA-P2. This instrument was developed into three categories of multicultural competence including knowledge, awareness, and skills (Pope & Mueller, 2000). Multicultural knowledge is "the information individuals have about various cultures" (Pope & Reynolds 1997, p. 270). Multicultural awareness is "the attitudes, beliefs, values, assumptions, and self-awareness necessary to serve students who are culturally different" (Pope & Reynolds 1997, p. 270).



Multicultural skill is the ability to “allow for effective and meaningful interaction such as seeking consultation as necessary with people who differ from them culturally” (Pope & Reynolds, 1997, p. 270). Therefore, this section focuses on the implications of multicultural competence for student affairs advisors in the categories of awareness, skills, and knowledge.

### **Multicultural Awareness**

A multiculturally sensitive professional pursues diversity training and resources that will help them become culturally competent (Pope et al., 2004). Pope et al. (2004) state that not many student affairs professionals have received adequate training to be prepared to handle multicultural issues in higher education. However, those professionals who are willing to admit they are not multiculturally aware will be more likely to increase their cultural perceptiveness (Pope et al., 2004). Developing cultural awareness involves a student affairs professional understanding their heritage, family background, personal experiences, and cultural influences affecting their interactions with others who are culturally different (Pope et al., 2004).

Reflecting on their multicultural awareness and views toward multiculturalism is essential and will help student affairs professionals when working with underrepresented groups. Even though advisors may have become culturally sensitive to underrepresented groups; their family may still have negative ideas about underrepresented groups causing feelings of uncomfortableness.

Addressing racist or discriminatory incidents can be uncomfortable (Pope et al., 2004). Gaining the skills needed are discussed in the multicultural skills section of this chapter. In this study, research question 1, asked, *to what degree are student affairs advisors of racial and ethnic student organizations multiculturally competent?* Descriptive statistics were generated on the subgroup of student affairs advisors of racial and ethnic student organizations ( $n = 195$ ). The

sample was found to be generally very culturally competent. Professionals who are presumed more multiculturally competent would more likely be able to address insensitive cultural situations compared to those who are not.

King and Howard-Hamilton (2003) conducted a study that examined the multicultural competence of diversity educators, student affairs professionals, and student personnel graduate students. Study results indicated that these three groups scored highest in multicultural awareness and lowest in multicultural knowledge. Furthermore, 69% of the participants of color thought about their racial and ethnic backgrounds daily while the White participants did not (King & Howard-Hamilton, 2003). Thinking about one's race and ethnicity does not determine multicultural competency but does influence how student affairs professionals engage with students who could be the same racially or ethnically (Castellanos et al., 2007).

Part of becoming more multicultural aware involves diversity training. How much diversity training is needed to be considered multiculturally competent? Becoming multiculturally competent is a lifelong process (Pope et al., 2004), perhaps there is not a specific number of diversity hours one must possess. Chancellor, R. Bowen Loftin left the University of Missouri at Columbia after being accused of not fighting racism on campus. Before resigning from his position, he required diversity training for faculty, staff, and students (Kolowich, 2015). One large research university in the Southeast provides its faculty and instructional staff the opportunity to attend diversity training over the summer at the Summer Diversity Institute (SDI).

SDI provides best practices based on research to help faculty incorporate diversity into their curriculum. It is a five-day institute with over a dozen 60-90 minute sessions on multicultural awareness and education (Booker, Merriweather, & Campbell-Whatley, 2016). Implementing diversity training programs tend to be one way this university and others are trying

to promote social change on campuses. According to CAS (2015b, 2015c), multicultural student programs and services must ensure all staff has received diversity, equity, and access training.

In this study, participants were asked the number of hours of diversity/multicultural competence training they had during in the past year/five years? The results indicated most respondents (89.4%,  $n = 302$ ) had diversity/multicultural competency training within the past year consisting of at least one hour to more than six hours. About 10% ( $n = 33$ ) received no diversity/multicultural competency training during the same timeframe. Most respondents (95.5%,  $n = 323$ ) had diversity/multicultural competency training within the past five years consisting of at least one hour to more than six hours. About 4% ( $n = 14$ ) received no diversity/multicultural competency training during the same timeframe.

Implications for student affairs advisors not receiving diversity training could lead to false or inappropriate awareness of cultures based on stereotypes and biases that create false assumptions. These beliefs have to be transformed before multicultural development can continue (Pope & Reynolds, 1997). CAS (2015b, 2015c) states student affairs professionals should have an awareness of the importance of valuing cultural differences and a commitment to social change.

The starting point for multicultural awareness starts with oneself (Pope et al., 2004). While becoming multiculturally aware, a student affairs professional should consider their own self-awareness. Self-awareness is the ability to be aware of those values and assumptions that hold incorrect views of a particular culture in the form of prejudices (Pope et al., 2004). Developing an awareness skill will help student affairs professionals learn to respect cultural differences among others and to acknowledge the complexities within themselves and others.

How does multicultural awareness impact student affairs professionals? One can assume that a student affairs professional who has a more recent degree or more years in their current position title could be considered more multiculturally competent compared to a student affairs professional who has a degree from decades ago and fewer years in their current position title.

The literature does show research that explores this idea. A study conducted by Miklitsch (2005) examined the connection between multicultural education, experiences, racial identity, and multicultural competence among student affairs professionals. The study explored the relationship between multicultural competence and demographic variables which included age, socioeconomic status while growing up, year degree was conferred, educational major, years as a professional, years in current title, and current position level. The results indicated that none of these variables were significantly correlated to multicultural competence.

Transitioning from Miklitsch's 2005 study to this study, data were collected on age, year of highest degree conferred, the number of years in current title, current position level, the field of highest degree, and years of experience. This study shared a few of the same research results as Miklitsch's (2005) study. The results indicated that student affairs advisors' years of experience was not a significant predictor of cultural competence ( $\beta = 0.11$ ,  $t = 1.35$ ), ( $p = .179$ ). Student affairs advisors' age was not a significant predictor of cultural competence ( $\beta = -0.03$ ,  $t = -0.35$ ), ( $p = .726$ ).

This study showed that most student affairs professionals (76.3%,  $n = 258$ ) earned their highest degrees within the last 10 years. However, nearly 10% ( $n = 32$ ) earned their highest degrees between the years 2005 and 2008; and 7% ( $n = 24$ ) earned their highest degrees between 2000 and 2004. One-fourth of the respondents (24.9%,  $n = 84$ ) held their current titles for less than one year. The remaining three-fourths (75.1%,  $n = 254$ ) held their current titles for one year

or longer. The field of the highest degrees included higher education (32.3%,  $n = 109$ ), student affairs (26.6%,  $n = 90$ ), and “other” (20.1%,  $n = 68$ ). Specified “other” degrees included public administration, communication, health, and other fields. Approximately half of the participants (53.3%,  $n = 180$ ) held mid-level positions. However, 29.3% ( $n = 99$ ) held entry-level positions. Other positions (3.8%,  $n = 13$ ) included graduate assistants, interns, and a director of health services. Position level data were collected. One-fourth of the respondents (24.9%,  $n = 84$ ) held their current titles for less than one year. The remaining three-fourths (75.1%,  $n = 254$ ) held their current titles.

However, in this study, no analysis was completed to determine if there was a correlation between year of the highest degree, the number of years in current title, current position level, and field of highest degree and multicultural competence. Future research could help further the research literature.

### **Multicultural Skills**

A student affairs professional is uncomfortable when students and other professionals make stereotypical remarks or inappropriate jokes, yet she is not comfortable confronting their behavior. She wants to challenge the remarks but is worried about offending the other individuals or making the situation worse. (Pope et al., 2004, p. 25)

A multiculturally skilled professional can communicate with others who are culturally different from themselves and knows how to apply their multicultural skills in the appropriate environment (Pope et al., 2004). In this study, research question 2 asked, *what differences exist in the multicultural competence of student affairs advisors who have advised racial and ethnic student organizations compared to those advisors who have not?* The participants in this study included 57.7% ( $n = 195$ ) advised racial or ethnic-based student organizations and 42.3% ( $n = 143$ ) did not. There was a significant difference in the multicultural competence of student affairs

advisors who had advised racial and ethnic student organizations ( $M = 6.01, SD = 0.63$ ) compared to those advisors who had not [ $(M = 5.75, SD = 0.71), F(1, 336) = 5.78, p < .001$ ].

Advisors of nonracial or ethnic-based student organizations or mainstreamed (predominately white) organizations should ensure use of their multicultural skills when working with students of color in their organizations. In these types of organizations, students of color can be used as "token members." Having an unrealistic expectation that students of color in the organization will represent and speak for all students of color is culturally insensitive. Using students of color as token members can have implications on their college experience. This could lead to the students decreasing their participation in mainstream organizations and resulting in their lack of developing cross-cultural communication skills that can benefit them after college (Harper & Quaye, 2007). According to Harper and Quaye (2007), supporting and developing cultural programming and advocacy should be a part of White student leaders and advisors of mainstream organizations expectations. Many student organizations value diversity so much that they include diversity in their mission statements; however, not many White student leaders are subjected to accountability measures for not advocating for diversity (Harper & Quaye, 2007).

Research studies report that advisors who work with students of color are more likely to be considered more multiculturally competent than those that do not. This study does support that research. Regarding advisor status, student affairs professionals who advised racial and ethnic student organizations had significantly higher cultural competence than student affairs professionals who did not advise racial and ethnic student organizations ( $\beta = 0.14, t = 2.34$ ), ( $p = .02$ ).

Implications for not being a multiculturally skilled professional when working with students can have dire consequences. Staff can advise students against their cultural values and

traditions, which could lead to students not trusting staff and not utilizing them for resources. For example, making direct eye contact has different meanings in certain cultures, or certain topics are not to be spoken about directly because they can cause feelings of embarrassment (Pope et al., 2004). A multiculturally skilled professional will know how to apply their multicultural skills when needed. They will be able to evaluate verbal and non- verbal signs and will be able to determine what is affecting a student's communication, their personality or cultural customs (Pope et al., 2004).

Addressing multicultural issues and confronting culturally inconsiderate behavior will not be easy, therefore developing the multicultural skills needed is very important. Over time, one may become more comfortable in addressing these types of situations. When addressing culturally inconsiderate behavior, it is important for one to remember it will not be easy and do not negatively provide feedback. If an advisor, "has awareness and the knowledge but doesn't know how to make culturally sensitive and appropriate interventions with individuals and in organizations, [their] ability to be a social change agent is comprised" (Pope et al., 2004, p. 26). Furthermore, an advisor who is multiculturally skilled will ask for feedback and or assistance when faced with culturally challenging situations (Pope et al., 2004).

This literature can be applied directly to the participants in this study because a majority of the participants were advisors of racial and ethnic student organizations. This study included approximately 18.0% ( $n = 60$ ) advised Greek student organizations; 33.7% ( $n = 114$ ) advised cultural student organizations; and 7.1% ( $n = 24$ ) advised academic student organizations. Other types of student organizations advised included the Black Student Union, Residence Hall Associations or Councils, Student Activities Boards, Student Government Associations, and various other student organizations.

Advisors in this study advised the following top three student organizations: fraternities and sororities (Greek-letter), cultural, and academic. It is the responsibility of the advisors to apply their skills to ensure all student organizations are successful (CAS, 2015d). It is important for advisors to know the expectations set for them by their governing board, (ACPA & NASPA, 2010; CAS, 2015c, 2015d) and the implications if these expectations are not met. According to CAS (2015d, 2015e), advisors of these organizations should have the following skills and competencies (a) advocate for diversity inclusion and cultural sensitivity; (b) obtain the knowledge and skills needed when working with all students; especially, underrepresented populations; (c) hold a graduate or professional degree in an area relevant to their job; (d) have expertise in the topic for which the student group is engaged; (e) have adaptive advising styles in order to be able to work with students with a variety of skill and knowledge levels; and (f) be knowledgeable of student development theory and philosophy to appropriately support students and also to encourage learning and development.

### **Multicultural Knowledge**

Competencies were created to help support advisors. The competencies were developed to help advisors meet the needs of the changing student population. ACPA and NASPA (2010) created 10 competency areas intended to guide the professional knowledge, skills, and attitudes expected of student affairs professionals despite their functional area within the profession. These competencies are relevant to this study because the participants included student affairs professionals whose functional area/responsibility was advising a student organization currently or in the past. The list of competencies can be found in Chapter 2.

Each competency has a list of outcomes that are considered basic, intermediate, or advanced level. All student affairs professionals are expected to demonstrate at least a basic



competency level in all areas. The competency levels of student affairs professionals are determined by their ability to demonstrate to others their knowledge, skills, and attitudes at a specific time. Furthermore, depending on the work and the functional area of the professional, it would be beneficial to have advanced knowledge in specific competency areas. Based on this information, student affairs professionals (advisors) working with students of color should demonstrate advanced knowledge in the competency areas of equity, diversity, and inclusion and advising and helping (ACPA & NASPA, 2010). Equity, diversity, and inclusion and advising and helping are 2 out of the 7 competency areas for ACPA and NASPA (2010).

A student affairs professional who is working... with diverse student groups becomes aware of the lack of information she has about many cultural groups. She begins to feel it is affecting her advisement and her ability to form close and meaningful relationships with these students (Pope et al., 2004, p. 22).

According to Pope et al. (2004), many student affairs professionals have not been accurately exposed to the cultural differences of others, and they are unable to understand others without obtaining the appropriate knowledge effectively. More grounded and multifaceted experiences and comprehension can be obtained through direct relationships with others who are culturally different from themselves. When looking to expand one's cultural knowledge, limiting one to only using books as a resource for cultural development may lead to developing stereotypes and disregarding individuality of others.

Knowledge is needed concerning the "history, traditions, values, customs, and issues of diverse groups" (Pope et al., 2004, p. 22) to help student affairs professionals understand themselves and other cultural groups. For example, when student affairs professionals advise students of color such as Latinx students knowing that family connections and closeness is significant to this cultural group will ensure better advisement when working with them (Delgado-Romero & Hernandez, 2002; Pope et al., 2004). Additionally, advising students who

identify as lesbian, gay, or bisexual with an understanding of the challenges they face is important as well. Many of these students could join "surrogate families" (Pope et al., 2004, p. 23) due to their traditional families not accepting them. Implications of student affairs professionals who do not know the cultural differences and identities of the students they advise may affect how they interpret the students' behavior and if they accurately meet the specific needs of the students (Pope et al., 2004). If the advisors of these groups are not aware of cultural norms, have not received adequate training in diversity, or gathered the appropriate knowledge, working as advisors may negatively impact the students with whom they work. Students have been shown to respond poorly to advisory professionals who direct them in ways contrary to their cultural norms (Pope & Mueller, 2011).

As the student population changes on college campuses, the way in which students identify is also changing. It is important to know that when working with students, they have various social identities that may be impacted by "race, gender, sexual orientation, and religion" (Pope et al., p. 23). Ignoring any of the students' identities that makeup students diminish the complexity of who the students are. The main part of becoming a culturally sensitive professional is obtaining the knowledge that understanding the identities of students will help professionals become more efficient in their work (Pope et al., 2004).

While students have been discussed with great depth, it is important to understand how advisors who identify with intersecting identities are influenced by multicultural competency? In this study, research question 3 asked, *how do race/ethnicity, years of experience, level of education, gender, age, advisor status, and sexual orientation predict multicultural competence among advisors?* The results of this study indicated that race and sexual orientation were significant predictors of multicultural competency among student affairs advisors. Latinx student

affairs advisors had significantly higher cultural competency than White student affairs advisors ( $\beta = 0.12, t = 2.04, p = .042$ ). Regarding sexual orientation, student affairs advisors who were homosexuals had significantly higher cultural competency than student affairs professionals who were heterosexuals ( $\beta = 0.16, t = 2.73, p = .007$ ). Student affairs advisors who were bisexuals had significantly higher cultural competency than student affairs professionals who were heterosexuals ( $\beta = 0.17, t = 3.05, p = .002$ ).

Regarding advisor status, student affairs professionals who advised racial and ethnic student organizations had significantly higher cultural competence than student affairs professionals who did not advise racial and ethnic student organizations ( $\beta = 0.14, t = 2.34, p = .02$ ). Student affairs advisors' years of experience was not a significant predictor of cultural competence ( $\beta = 0.11, t = 1.35, p = .179$ ). Student affairs advisors' age was not a significant predictor of cultural competence ( $\beta = -0.03, t = -0.35, p = .726$ ). Gender was not a significant predictor of cultural competency ( $\beta = 0.06, t = 0.97, p = .334$ ).

Additionally, other implications for not being knowledgeable about cultural differences when working with students of color may include systematic racism, oppression, power, and prejudice that leads to barriers to access and success in higher education for these students (Pope et al., 2004). According to CAS (2015), staff must know what societal and institutional limits underrepresented groups face when gaining access to higher education institutions. Delgado-Romero and Hernandez, (2002) stated that advisors of Hispanic organizations should be prepared to support students dealing with racism and oppression. Frye (1995) created the birdcage metaphor to help explain when studying "isms" (i.e., racism, sexism, heterosexism) alone will not help one to comprehend in what way oppression works as a system that uses "ism" to oppress others. Gayles and Kelly (2007) conducted a study in which participants shared topics such as

racism, oppression, power, gender, and class should be infused in diversity courses in the student affairs graduate programs.

Implications for having a lack of knowledge of cultural differences can lead to student affairs professionals becoming unintentional participants to students' discrimination and failure (Pope et al., 2004). Due to the contrary and discriminatory ideas that society portrays many students of color have adopted this outlook for themselves which affect their higher education success. If student affairs professionals began to understand these ideas in society, they would more likely understand the systemic oppression of students of color (Pope et al., 2004).

According to Frey (2014), Whites under the age of 30 are projected to lose population majority status after 2040. This numerical change may be reflected in the increasing diversity on college campuses. The national college enrollment rates for students of color are currently increasing. As diversity on college campuses increases, the debate over student affairs professionals prepared to work with student of color continues. This has also lead to more research on the preparation of graduate programs on diversity and multiculturalism in the student affairs profession. Specifically, research has been conducted on (1) requirements and impact of diversity courses (Flowers, 2003; Mastrodicasa, 2004); (2) multicultural competency skills (Pope & Reynolds, 1997), (3) multicultural experiences (King and Howard-Hamilton, 2003) and perception of diversity curriculum (Gayles & Kelly, 2007) in student affairs graduate programs.

Pope and Reynolds (1997) created a list of 33 characteristics to help student affairs professionals develop multicultural competency. Additionally, the Dynamic Model of Student Affairs Competence (Pope & Reynolds, 1997; Pope et al., 2004), the theoretical framework used for this study included seven competency areas in which the seventh competency area included multicultural awareness, knowledge, and skills. These competencies were created to help student

affairs professionals become more successful in their work. According to Pope et al. (2004), the competency area of multicultural awareness, knowledge, and skills should be infused in all student affairs professional work to become more multiculturally competent.

Are student affairs graduate programs preparing students to work with a diverse student population? The results of this study indicated relative to education, student affairs advisors with master's degrees did not have significantly different cultural competency than student affairs advisors with bachelor's degrees ( $\beta = 0.12, t = 1.60, (p = .111)$ ). Student affairs professionals with doctoral degrees did not have significantly higher cultural competency than student affairs professionals with bachelor's degrees, ( $\beta = 0.06, t = 0.76, (p = .446)$ ). However, the research does show that diversity courses and education are needed to help student affairs professionals to become more multiculturally competent (Pope & Reynold, 1997).

Flowers (2003) conducted a study that examined diversity course requirements in student affairs graduate programs. From the data obtained 39 out of 53 (74%) of student affairs graduate programs had a diversity course requirement in their master program. Out of the remaining 26% that did not have a diversity course requirement, 8% indicated they were in the process of implementing a diversity course requirement. There were 18% of the graduate programs that did not have a diversity course requirement and were not in the process of implementing a requirement. The overall results of this study suggest that graduate programs are making changes to their curriculum that could positively impact graduate students' multicultural knowledge and skills. According to Pope Mueller (2005), student graduate programs have a responsibility to guarantee student affairs professionals are prepared to handle the academic and social needs of the increasing multicultural student population.

In this study, student affairs professionals were asked what percentages of their institutions' student populations were comprised of people of color. The results showed that about 9% ( $n = 29$ ) did not know. Sixteen percent ( $n = 53$ ) had 10% or less; and 25.1% ( $n = 85$ ) had 11-20%. Thirteen percent ( $n = 44$ ) of the participants reported that 51-100% of their students were people of color. As the student diversity population is changing, the expectation to be multiculturally competent should not lie exclusively on student affairs professionals on college campuses. In efforts to show continued institutional support for students of color, attention can be shifted from the student affairs practice to include more inclusive institutional policies.

Institutional support can be fostered by increasing enrollment for students of color as a way to help diversify the campus. The research shows that an inclusive diversity campus can have positive effects on retention rates and academic development of students of color. (Pope et al., 2004; Turner, 1994; Wilson, 2012). In addition, research has shown that retention rates and enrollment numbers are adversely affected by higher education institutions that do not adapt to the changing diverse student population (Talbot, 2003). An institution can show interest in changing multicultural issues on campus by creating policies and procedures that advocate for and are inclusive of, individuals traditionally underrepresented in higher education (Pope et al., 2004). There must be an institutional effort to move towards a system with practices and policies that work for the betterment of all students.

### **Recommendations**

The recommendations outlined are best practices determined by the results and literature presented in this study. The literature showed that diversity on college campuses is increasing thus causing the cultural competency of student affairs advisors to be questioned. Additionally, the literature showed cultural insensitivity, and lack of multicultural competency can negatively

impact students of color and the success of student affairs advisors. When advisors are multiculturally competent, relationships among students and professional colleagues may improve the campus climate. The recommendations presented are in the areas of diversity training, graduate diversity curriculum, and practice.

### **Diversity Training**

There is no ending point for multicultural competency because it is a lifelong learning process. Diversity training should be a critical part of advisement because this will help support the need for cultural sensitivity and multicultural awareness, knowledge, and skills. Roberts (2005) believed that student affairs professionals should engage in their professional development and improvement. The research has shown that continual learning and development of cultural competencies helps ensure advisors are prepared to help students of color succeed (Robert, 2005). Given that student affairs professionals work with an increasingly diverse student body, there is an overwhelming need for professionals to be multiculturally competent, prepared to work with students of color, and receive training on cultural differences (Pope et al., 2004; Roscoe, 2015). A recommendation for diversity training on a continual basis should be considered based on the positives implications. Additionally, further research can be done to examine the best type of training that yields the most competent student affairs professionals as well as conduct a qualitative study interviewing student affairs professionals about the types of training they have received and how it has impacted their relationships with students.

### **Graduate Diversity Curriculum**

Many graduate programs are striving to prepare graduate students within the student affairs profession to become multiculturally competent (Pope & Reynolds, 1997). There is a consensus among student affairs professionals that graduate school training is vital in preparing

professionals to work in the profession and to work with students (Pope & Reynolds, 1997; Waple, 2006). When developing and teaching student affairs course curricula, it is important to incorporate multicultural courses and diversity content into the program of study (Pope et al., 2004). The research has shown that student affairs graduate students in master programs are not appropriately being trained on how to work with minority students, plan programs that meet the needs of minority students, communicate and engage with diverse populations, and support the development of diversity students in higher education (Talbot, 1996; Talbot & Kocarek, 1997). Incorporating multiculturalism into graduate programs is influential due to their part in determining the “values, knowledge, and experiential base, and culture of new student affairs professional” (Pope et al., 2004, p. 150). The recommendation that a graduate diversity curriculum is incorporated into student affairs graduate programs is based on the presented research. Additionally, a type of evaluation of the program should be implemented to determine the effectiveness of the diversity curriculum. Evaluations will allow for the voice of the students to be heard.

While the recommendations for this study include graduate diversity curriculum, a plea for an undergraduate diversity course requirement could be made, due to all participants in this study had at least a Bachelor’s degree. A study conducted by Chang (2002) included a public university that required all admitted undergraduate students to take a diversity course. The results indicated that students who were about to complete their undergraduate diversity requirement, compared to those who were beginning it, showed significantly less bias and made more positive judgments about Blacks (Chang, 2002). The literature continues to support the value of diversity curriculum in higher education and how it contributes to the success of all students.



## **Practice**

The student affair profession has three governing associations that have developed guidelines and competencies for all student affairs professionals to follow. These associations give professional development opportunities for student affairs professionals at regional and national conferences. These governing associations all have value statements, competencies and expectations that all advisors support, advocate and promote diversity with their students and colleagues. They provide resources on diversity in the forms of workshops and conference sessions, to help educate student affairs professionals. Therefore, a recommendation that these governing associations develop an online diversity module or a type of certificate program that is recommended for student affairs professionals who are advising student organizations. The advisors would take and pass an appropriate test before advising a student organization.

Not all student affairs professionals have the resources available to attend conferences; therefore, a recommendation is for the division of student affairs on college campuses to ensure multicultural training and chances for dialogue among advisors. If this recommendation is implemented, it may help professionals gain skills by putting what they have learned from their graduate programs into everyday use at work. Graduate students should be able to take a theory they have learned and discussed in graduate school and be able to apply that knowledge to practical use when working with students. For advisors who have not obtained a student affairs graduate degree, this recommendation would allow them opportunities to learn and gain knowledge where needed by interacting and engaging with other advisors. Also, this recommendation would help improve multicultural awareness, knowledge, and skills among advisors. This will allow advisors to work together to develop an opportunity for mutual language among themselves and campus partners. Additionally, it would develop the advising

and facilitation skills of student affairs professionals. This need can be addressed through workshops that include scripts and or dialogues that could lead to open lines of communication for advising staff to discuss situations and brainstorm potential solutions (Ashe, 2012).

### **Future Research**

First, future research can be conducted on this study using the current participants. In this study, information was gathered on the types of student organizations the participants advised. A future researcher may repeat this study but conduct data analysis to determine advisors of which student organizations are considered more multiculturally competent. This may provide other professionals the information they need to be able to identify advisors who may need additional diversity training. Additionally, it may encourage advisors to seek out advising opportunities to advise student organizations that may be racially or ethnically different from them. Second, a researcher could repeat this study and use the same participants. This study would not be anonymous and would include interviewing the students of the advisors who participated in the study to determine the perceptions the students have of their advisor's multicultural competency. Third, the researcher of this study poorly designed one of the questions on the personal demographic form, the question that identified the type of institution where the participants worked. A researcher can repeat this study but redesign this question on the personal demographic form so it will clearly identify the type of institution where the participants worked. The researcher of this study designed the question with too many options, for example, the participants could select, 4-year public, 4-year private, 2-year public, historically black college and university, and predominately white institution. The participants were able to select all that applied, causing the percentage to equal more than one hundred percent. This study examined predominately white institutions, however, the way in which the question was designed it only

totaled ( $n = 81$ , PWIs). The study could have benefited from more PWI cases to conduct data analysis on advisors' multicultural competency. Fourth, repeat this study with White student affairs advisors only at Historically Black Colleges and Universities, Hispanic Servicing Institutions, and predominately white institutions. Among these types of universities, the researcher would select universities with routinely high percentages of underrepresented student populations. Fifth, repeat the study with only White student affairs advisors and use different quantitative tools. This study could focus on racial awareness and racial identity of the advisors. An idea for future research could start with three measuring tools. First, the Multicultural Competence in Student Affairs-Preliminary 2 (MCSA-P2) Scale was developed by Pope and Mueller (2000). It measures the multicultural competence in higher education for student affairs professionals (Pope & Mueller, 2000). Second, the White Racial Identity Attitude Scale was developed by Helms and Cater (1990). It can be used as an assessment tool that supports Helm's (1984) White Racial Identity Development Theory. Third, the White Privilege Attitudes Scale developed by Pinterits, Poteat, & Spanierman (2009) is an instrument that measures white privilege attitudes from affective, cognitive, and behavioral dimensions. Finally, repeat this study and use the social desirability scale of the Marlowe-Crowne Social Desirability-Short Form C (MC-SDS) (Crowne & Marlowe, 1960; Reynolds, 1982) to help reduce bias, as self-reporting instruments tend to be biased (Crowne & Marlowe, 1960). This is especially true with sensitive topics like racial identity and multicultural competence (Mueller, 1999). Even though the scale is designed to help reduce bias among participants, there could be a desire by the participants to consider themselves multiculturally competent. As a result, participants may overrate themselves because they are aware of their needed growth in the area of multicultural competence (King & Howard-Hamilton, 2000).

## **Summary**

In summary, becoming multiculturally competent is a lifelong process. Therefore, advisors of racial and ethnic student organizations should have adequate training while working with students. Graduate programs may be an excellent way for student affairs professionals to acquire the knowledge they need to become multiculturally competent. Culturally knowledgeable professionals educate themselves about institutional and student oppression. They seek out professional development opportunities that focus on cultural differences. Furthermore, they work to understand how important direct relationships are from those who are culturally different from them (Pope et al., 2004). The recommendations and future research ideas in this chapter encourage and promotes continual diversity training and graduate diversity curriculum for student affairs professionals.

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# APPENDIX A: INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL

Page 1 of 2



EAST CAROLINA UNIVERSITY  
**University & Medical Center Institutional Review Board**  
4N-64 Brody Medical Sciences Building · Mail Stop 682  
600 Moye Boulevard · Greenville, NC 27834  
Office 252-744-2914 · Fax 252-744-2284  
[www.ecu.edu/ORIC/irb](http://www.ecu.edu/ORIC/irb)

## Notification of Exempt Certification

From: Social/Behavioral IRB  
To: [Dorothea Mack](#)  
CC: [Crystal Chambers](#)  
Date: 1/12/2018  
Re: [UMCIRB 17-002697](#)  
Examining Multicultural Competencies of Student Affairs Professionals Who Advise Student Organizations of Color

I am pleased to inform you that your research submission has been certified as exempt on 1/11/2018. This study is eligible for Exempt Certification under category #2.

It is your responsibility to ensure that this research is conducted in the manner reported in your application and/or protocol, as well as being consistent with the ethical principles of the Belmont Report and your profession.

This research study does not require any additional interaction with the UMCIRB unless there are proposed changes to this study. Any change, prior to implementing that change, must be submitted to the UMCIRB for review and approval. The UMCIRB will determine if the change impacts the eligibility of the research for exempt status. If more substantive review is required, you will be notified within five business days.

The Chairperson (or designee) does not have a potential for conflict of interest on this study.

IRB00000705 East Carolina U IRB #1 (Biomedical) IORG0000418  
IRB00003781 East Carolina U IRB #2 (Behavioral/SS) IORG0000418



# APPENDIX B: STUDENT AFFAIRS ADMINISTATORS IN HIGHER EDUCATION



## MEMBERSHIP LIST REQUEST FORM FOR RESEARCH PURPOSES

### CONTACT INFORMATION

NASPA Member ID Number: 1008150  Student  Faculty  
 Professional  Other \_\_\_\_\_  
 Name: Dorothea Mack  
 Institution/Organization: East Carolina University  
 Address: 224 Mendenhall Student Center  
 City: Greenville State/Province: NC Zip/Postal Code: 27838 Country: United States  
 Phone: 252-328-2776 Email: mackdo13@students.ecu.edu or mackdo@ecu.edu

### RESEARCH PROJECT

**Purpose of Project:**  
 Master's Degree Thesis  
 Doctoral Degree Dissertation  
 Institution Sponsored Research Project  
 Other \_\_\_\_\_

**Description of Project:**  
 On a separate page, please briefly describe your study (include purpose and methodology). Please also describe the connection of your research to NASPA's mission. If your study is a requirement of an educational degree, please have your advisor submit a letter stating your study has been approved and that they will be supervising your work. If your study requires approval from your Institutional Review Board, please submit a letter stating your study has been approved.

### LIST CHARACTERISTICS

- |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|
| <p><b>NASPA REGION</b></p> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> All<br><input type="checkbox"/> Region I<br><input type="checkbox"/> Region II<br><input type="checkbox"/> Region III<br><input type="checkbox"/> Region IV-E<br><input type="checkbox"/> Region IV-W<br><input type="checkbox"/> Region V<br><input type="checkbox"/> Region VI<br><input type="checkbox"/> Specific States: _____ | <p><b>PROFESSIONAL LEVEL</b></p> <input type="checkbox"/> All<br><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> New Professional<br><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Mid-Level Professional<br><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Senior Level<br><input type="checkbox"/> AVP/"Number Two"<br><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Senior Student Affairs Officer<br><input type="checkbox"/> Faculty<br><input type="checkbox"/> Retired | <p><b>STUDENT MEMBERS</b></p> <input type="checkbox"/> All<br><input type="checkbox"/> Undergraduates<br><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Master's<br><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Doctoral<br><input type="checkbox"/> NONE |
| <p><b>GENDER</b></p> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> All<br><input type="checkbox"/> Female<br><input type="checkbox"/> Male<br><input type="checkbox"/> Transgender   | <p><b>RACE/ETHNICITY</b></p> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> All<br><input type="checkbox"/> African American<br><input type="checkbox"/> Asian Pacific Islander<br><input type="checkbox"/> Caucasian<br><input type="checkbox"/> Hispanic/Latino<br><input type="checkbox"/> Native American<br><input type="checkbox"/> Multiracial/Multiethnic   |  |



I would like to have members outside of the United States included (Yes/No): NO

Random Sample Size: ~3,000 Special Request: members with functional areas: campus activities  
or as many as possible Greek life, multicultural services, Advisors of organizations

AGREEMENT AND PROCEDURE

I agree to use this list only for the purpose stated; and agree to abide by ethical and non-discriminatory research practices.

Dorothea Mack  
Signature

4/12/18  
Date

**PROCEDURE**

1. Complete the request form and submit it to [awesaw@naspa.org](mailto:awesaw@naspa.org), along with a description of your study, advisor letter (if applicable), and IRB approval (if applicable).
2. NASPA will contact you to confirm that your form has been received, and at that time dialogue with you about any further clarifications needed on your request.
3. Your request will be fulfilled no later than seven business days following the finalization of the request. Lists will be remitted via email as a Microsoft Excel Spreadsheet. *Please note, NASPA never provides member e-mail addresses or phone numbers for any reason.*

**APPENDIX C: MULTICULTURAL COMPETENCE IN STUDENT AFFAIRS-  
PRELIMINARY 2 SCALE**

The MCSA-P2 is copyrighted by Raechele L. Pope and John A. Mueller and cannot be duplicated or used without their written consent. Raechele L. Pope may be contacted at the Department of Educational Leadership and Policy, 468 Baldy Hall the University at Buffalo, State University of New York, Buffalo, NY 14260-1000 (716) 645-1098. John A. Mueller may be contacted at the Department of Student Affairs in Higher Education, 222 Stouffer Hall, Indiana University of Pennsylvania, Indiana, PA, 15705, (724) 357-4541.

For more information, refer to:

Pope, R. L. & Mueller, J. A. (2000). Development and initial validation of the Multicultural Competence in Student Affairs-Preliminary 2 Scale. *Journal of College Student Development*, 41, 599-607.

## APPENDIX D: PERSONAL DEMOGRAPHIC FORM

### Multicultural Competency Survey for Student Affairs Advisors

---

#### Start of Block: Beginning Of Survey

Q1 Direction: Do you consent to taking this survey?

- Yes (5)  
 No (6)

*Skip To: End of Survey If Direction: Do you consent to taking this survey? = No*

Q2 Do you currently advise or have you advised a student organization?

- Yes (1)  
 No (2)

*Skip To: End of Survey If Do you currently advise or have you advised a student organization? = No*

#### End of Block: Beginning Of Survey

---

#### Start of Block: Advisory and Demographics

Q3 Do you advise a racial or ethnic based student organization?

- Yes (5)  
 No (6)
- 

Q4 What type of student organization do you advise?

▼ Greek (1) ... Other (5)

---

Q5 What is the name of the student organization that you advise?

---

---

Q6 Age?

▼ 20-24 (1) ... 65+ (10)

---

Q7 Gender

- Male (1)
  - Female (2)
  - Gender nonconforming (3)
- 

Q8 Sexual orientation

- Heterosexual (23)
  - Homosexual (24)
  - Bisexual (25)
- 

Q9 Race? (Please read all choices before selecting one)

- African American/Black (1)
  - Asian American/Pacific Islander (2)
  - Caucasian/White (3)
  - Latinx/Chicano(a)/Hispanic (4)
  - Native American/Alaskan Native (5)
  - Multiracial/Multiethnic (please specify) (9)  
\_\_\_\_\_
  - Other (please specify) (10) \_\_\_\_\_
- 

Q10 Ethnicity? (e.g. Haitian, Italian, Caribbean, Irish, Arab, etc.?)

\_\_\_\_\_

**End of Block: Advisory and Demographics**

---

Start of Block: Education and Institution

Q11 Graduate Student

Yes (1)

No (2)

---

Q12 Highest Degree Earned?

Bachelor (3)

Master (4)

Doctorate (5)

Other (please specify) (6) \_\_\_\_\_

---

Q13 Field of Highest Degree?

Higher Education (1)

Student Affairs (2)

Counseling (3)

Educational Administration (4)

Educational Psychology (5)

Law (6)

Social Work (7)

Business (8)

Other ( please specify) (9) \_\_\_\_\_

---

Q14 Year Highest Degree Conferred?

▼ 2008-Present (1) ... Before 1960 (9)

---

Q15 How many years have you worked as a full-time professional in student affairs? (If you are preparing for your first professional position in student affairs, choose "0" below.)

- 0 (1)
  - Less than 1 (2)
  - 1 (3)
  - 2-3 (4)
  - 4-5 (5)
  - 6-10 (6)
  - 11-15 (7)
  - 16-20 (8)
  - 20-25 (9)
  - 25+ (10)
- 

Q16 Which of the following best describes your position level?

- Entry Level (2)
  - Mid Level (3)
  - Senior Level (4)
  - Senior Student Affairs Officer (5)
  - Other (please specify) (6) \_\_\_\_\_
-

Q17 How many years have you held your current title?

- Less than 1 (1)
  - 1 (2)
  - 2-3 (3)
  - 4-5 (4)
  - 6-10 (5)
  - 11-20 (6)
  - 21+ (7)
- 

Q18 What is your job position title?

\_\_\_\_\_

---

Q19 Institution Type? [click all that apply]

- 4-year public (1)
  - 4-year private (2)
  - 2-year public (3)
  - 2-year private (4)
  - Historically Black College or University (5)
  - Predominantly White Institution (6)
  - Other (please specify) (7) \_\_\_\_\_
-



Q20 Total institution Enrollment?

- 0-500 (1)
  - 501-1000 (2)
  - 1001-5000 (3)
  - 5001-10,000 (4)
  - 10,001-15,000 (5)
  - 15,001-20,000 (6)
  - 20,001-25,000 (7)
  - 25,001-35,000 (8)
  - 35,000+ (9)
- 

Q21 What percentage of your institution's student population is people of color?

▼ 0-10% (1) ... I don't know (11)

---

Q22 On my campus, I am in the racial/ethnic

- Majority (1)
  - Minority (2)
- 

Q23 Number of hours of diversity/multicultural competence training, in the past year?

- 0 (1)
  - 1-2 (2)
  - 3-5 (3)
  - 6 + (4)
-

Q24 Number of hours of diversity/multicultural competence training, in the past five years

- 0 (1)
  - 1-2 (2)
  - 3-5 (3)
  - 6+ (4)
- 

Q25 In which state is your institution located?

▼ Alabama (1) ... Wyoming (53)

End of Block: Education and Institution

---

Start of Block: Multicultural Competence in Student Affairs - Preliminary 2

**APPENDIX E: CHARACTERISTICS OF A MULTICULTURALLY COMPETENT  
STUDENT AFFAIRS PRACTITIONER**

<b>Multicultural Awareness</b>	<b>Multicultural Knowledge</b>	<b>Multicultural Skills</b>
A belief that differences are valuable and that learning about others who are culturally different is necessary and rewarding	Knowledge of diverse cultures and oppressed groups (i.e., history, traditions, values, customs, resources, issues.)	Ability to identify and openly discuss cultural differences and issues
A willingness to take risks and see them as necessary and important for personal and professional growth	Information about how change occurs for individual values and behaviors	Ability to assess the impact of cultural differences on communication and effectively communicate across those differences
A personal commitment to justice social change, and combating depression	Knowledge about the ways that cultural differences affect verbal and nonverbal communication	Capability to empathize and genuinely connect with individuals who are culturally different from themselves
A belief in the value and significance of their own cultural heritage and worldview as a starting place for understanding others who are culturally different	Knowledge about how gender, class, race, ethnicity, language, nationality, sexual orientation, age, religion or spirituality, and disability and ability affect individuals and their experiences	Ability to incorporate new learning and prior learning in new situations
A willingness to self-examine and, when necessary, challenge and change their own values, worldview, assumptions, and biases	Information about culturally appropriate resources and how to make referrals	Ability to gain to trust and respect of individuals who are culturally different from themselves
An openness to change, and belief that change is necessary and positive	Information about the nature of institutional oppression and power	Capability to accurately assess their own multicultural skills, comfort level, growth, and development

An acceptance of other worldviews and perspectives and a willingness to acknowledge that, as individuals, they do not have all the answers	Knowledge about identity development models and the acculturation process for members of oppressed groups and their impact on individuals, groups, intergroup relations, and society	Ability to differentiate among individual differences, cultural differences, and universal similarities
A belief that cultural differences do not have to interfere with effective communication or meaningful relationships	Knowledge about within-group differences and understanding of multiple identities and multiple oppressions	Ability to challenge and support individuals and systems around oppression issues in a manner that optimizes multicultural interventions
Awareness of their own cultural heritage and how it affects their worldview, values, and assumptions	Information and understanding of internalized oppression and its impact on identity and self-esteem	Ability to make individual, group, and institutional multicultural interventions
Awareness of their own behavior and its impact on others	Knowledge about institutional barriers that limit access to and success in higher education for members of oppressed groups	Ability to use cultural knowledge and sensitivity to make more culturally sensitive and appropriate interventions
Awareness of interpersonal process that occurs within a multicultural dyad	Knowledge about systems theories and how systems change	

Source: Pope and Reynolds (1997). Pope, Reynolds, and Mueller (2004). Multicultural Competence in Student Affairs, Table 1.1 (pp.18-19)

**APPENDIX F: DYNAMIC MODEL OF STUDENT AFFAIRS COMPETENCE**

