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THE COMPLEX DICHOTOMIES OF STUDENT AFFAIRS PRACTITIONERS' PERCEIVED COMPETENCIES: A QUANTITATIVE EVALUATION OF SELF-AWARENESS

by

JAMI KUHNS HALL

(Under the direction of Brenda Marina)

ABSTRACT

This study examines the perceived competencies and the perceived self-awareness of student affairs practitioners. The purpose of this study was to determine if a relationship exists between the two variables of competencies and self-awareness. The overarching research question for this study was: What is the relationship between self-awareness and perceived competencies for student affairs practitioners? This question was followed by two sub questions: To what degree, if any, does experience in the field as a student affairs practitioner predict one's self-awareness of professional competencies? To what degree, if any, does job level/position in the field as a student affairs practitioner predict one's self-awareness of professional competencies?

Utilizing the competencies identified in the joint publication on student affairs competencies produced in 2015 by the American College Personnel Association (ACPA) and the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA), a descriptive quantitative survey was administered. The survey was sent to student affairs practitioners holding membership in either ACPA or NASPA and who reported residing in Georgia or a state contiguous to Georgia; 2,492 individuals received the survey, some of whom might have overlapped between the two organizations. Of the 2,492 surveys distributed, 174 individuals responded which was enough to produce significant results.

The results were analyzed using SPSS and showed an inverse relationship between the two variables. Overall, the results suggest that professionals with less experience and with an entry-level classification have fewer self-perceived competencies and greater self-awareness. Whereas, those with more experience and a mid to senior-level classification have greater self-perceived competencies and less perceived self-awareness.

Based on the results, the implications for graduate preparation programs, professional development opportunities, professional associations, supervisors, and human resource directors are presented since this study could be beneficial in all of these areas. Finally, recommendations for further research are provided for individuals who are motivated to continue the conversation about competencies and self-awareness beyond what is presented in this research study.

INDEX WORDS: Student Affairs, Higher Education, Competencies, Self-Awareness, Self-Perception, Leadership, Graduate Preparation Programs, Professional Development, and Meaning-Making

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DOCTOR OF EDUCATION
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by

JAMI KUHNS HALL

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	Daniel Calhoun

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DEDICATION

When reflecting on the dedication section of my dissertation, I thought I was going to have a head versus heart challenge. However, just as perceived competencies and self-awareness need to be in agreement, I realized that it is okay for both the head and the heart to be in agreement while also taking a different, yet very important, stance.

Therefore, my head dedicates this work to all the student affairs practitioners who spend countless hours working to do more and be more for the betterment of the profession and the students we serve. Working in student affairs is not always easy nor is it always rewarding; but, personally, it is a calling I never doubted. I hope the work put forth in this research is both timely and beneficial to practitioners looking to grow in the profession. I know it has made a difference in the way I look at my own personal and professional development, and I hope you feel the same.

As for my heart, without a doubt, I know my dissertation should be dedicated to those I consider the most important people in my life, my family. Therefore, without a second thought, I dedicate this work to my husband who has pushed me and encouraged me in unimaginable ways. Zach, you told me "I can and I will" continue along this journey when I wanted so badly to abandon the effort and the work I had already completed. You loved the angry me and the moody me when I knew I had to make edits to my work for what seemed like the thousandth time. Moreover, you sacrificed time, events, and plans you wanted in order to keep the kids so that I could once again hide for hours in my office for the purpose of reading, researching, and writing – or what I so often referred to as "dissertating." Please know that you have always been my heart and you always will be. Thank you for being the selfless you that you have always been. I love you to the moon and back!

Furthermore, I would like to dedicate this dissertation to my beautiful daughter, Hayden, who I love more than life itself. Without knowing it, you have pushed me to complete this journey and, as I have told you over and over, to never give up and never quit something you start. Therefore, I knew wholeheartedly that I needed to be that example for you. You are a ray of sunshine and one who loves to make me smile through your dancing, tumbling, and knock-knock joke-telling. I am thankful I was able to slip out of the house to work on my dissertation while you were still young enough to be entertained by Barbie Dolls and American Girl Dolls during my absence. I hope to be able to love you constantly the way you need to be loved and to be a Christ-like example to you as you grow and mature into a beautiful young woman.

And, to Jason and Jeremiah, our two loves who turned our lives upside down in January 2015. Persevering through this dissertation during this time of newness with you two rambunctious babies has been ever so tiresome and tedious; however, I would not have had it any other way. You two were and are a gift from God, a gift for which Zach and I prayed. You have been fun, exciting, and a breath of fresh air to our home. You have taught me how to live in chaos and that perfection is not always necessary. Moreover, you have taught me how to love unconditionally and the importance of giving back. Most importantly, you have taught me that there is more to life than just me. Thank you and welcome to our family!

Lastly, to my precious Harper, what a miracle you are – from your conception to your birth, God has truly blessed us. While still tiny and growing, I am excited to see the beautiful young lady you will become. If you have even an ounce of Hayden's humor, charm, and beauty, you will continue to melt hearts as you do now. Overall, I know that no matter what, you are "fearfully and wonderfully made" (Psalm 139: 14). I love you more than life itself and I am proud to be your mommy!

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Next, I would like to acknowledge my Georgia Southern University family to whom I am forever indebted. Drs. Theresa and Patrick Novotny continuously opened their home to me so that I would have a place to stay during my long journeys to Statesboro, GA. In addition, their hospitality extended into late night dinners, conversations by the pool, and, most importantly, support and assurance that there was light at the end of this tunnel.

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and individuality. I will miss our Friday night dinners at Mellow Mushroom, our Saturday lunches at McAllister's, and our monthly Sunday dinners in Atlanta. I will also miss our carpool train from Dalton, GA to Statesboro, GA as Renanda and Jenny always kept me in tears with their over-sharing and their non-stop humor. You two are amazing! Finally, I will miss our group texts where we were constantly checking in on one another to make sure no man was left behind during this lonely stage of "dissertating." Good luck to those who are still on this journey and to those who are one (or even two) steps ahead of me. I love you all!

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In conclusion, "Give thanks to the Lord, for He is good; His love endures forever" (Psalms 107:1). I am forever grateful that He allowed me to finish and to finish strong. He has provided me with an unwavering support system at Georgia Southern University, at work, and at home. I am truly blessed.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Possessing professional competency, also known as having the professional knowledge, skills, and disposition to do one's job, is essential to be a successful leader in the 21st century (ACPA/NASPA, 2010). Similarly, successful leaders are self-aware, being mindful of their surroundings and understanding not only their own perceptions but also the perceptions of others (Rochat, 2003). It is crucial for leaders to be aware of what they know and what they do not know. A leader's level of self-awareness and his or her perceived competencies must work in tandem. When a disconnect exists between the two, an individual often finds it difficult to be successful within his or her occupation (Carry & Keppler, 2014). Overall, a misalignment between competencies and self-awareness can be detrimental to the development of leaders and practitioners in student affairs and higher education.

Over the last half century, research shows that occupations, including student affairs, have become more and more professionalized (Wilensky, 1964). Part of this professionalization is linked to competencies and competency awareness. According to Wilensky (1964), "any occupation wishing to exercise professional authority must find a technical basis for it, assert an exclusive jurisdiction, link both skill and jurisdiction to standards of training, and convince the public that its services are uniquely trustworthy" (p. 138).

Most recently, in 2009, two of the larger professional associations that were established specifically as a home for student affairs practitioners sought to assist in professionalization of the field of student affairs by creating a set of competencies. In doing so, both the American College Personnel Association (ACPA) and the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA) produced a collaborative publication for their members entitled

"*Professional Competency Areas for Student Affairs Educators*" (ACPA/NASPA, 2010). This publication includes competency definitions, intersections of competencies, and even outcomes associated with specific levels of competency categorization. In the outcomes section that supplements the publication, student affairs practitioners are able to self-report their knowledge and employment level, leaving one to assume that student affairs practitioners are self-aware and that their overall self-reporting is accurate. However, the challenge some student affairs practitioners faced was having an accurate perception of their levels of competence due to inadequate education and/or training (Cuyjet, Longwell, & Molina, 2009).

Portraying an accurate perception of professional competencies so that one's perceived competencies and self-awareness are in sync is not an easy task; yet, it is a much needed task and a task that is cited as being "extremely important to the field of student affairs" (Herdlein, Riefler, & Mrowka, 2013, p. 256). Competence is a term that has been circulated across many disciplines, but for the purpose of this study, is used in an organizational development context and defined as "professional knowledge, skills, and for some competencies, attitudes expected of student affairs professionals . . . " (http://www.myacpa.org/professional-competencies). Being competent is deemed necessary in order to complete essential job related responsibilities whether the obligation is task-oriented or relationship-oriented.

True self-awareness ensures that an individual must be mindful of his or her surroundings, understanding not only his or her perceptions but the perceptions of others as well (Rochat, 2003). Further, self-awareness is not a skill a person successfully achieves; instead, it is a skill that must be continually tweaked and reevaluated as time passes, experiences occur, and relationships are altered, created, and/or dissolved. According to Rochat (2003), "self-awareness

is arguably the most fundamental issue in psychology, from both a developmental and an evolutionary perspective" (p. 717).

Due to the ever-changing nature of both competencies and self-awareness, student affairs practitioners face a difficult time attempting to maneuver the complex dichotomies that exist. Although being self-aware can be a competency in itself, researchers Herdlein et al. (2013) found that self-awareness is a competency lacking among student affairs practitioners. In the meta-analysis conducted by Herdlein et al., however, 45% of the articles the researchers analyzed cited self-awareness as being a vital characteristic for student affairs practitioners. The recent research of Herdlein et al. further emphasizes the need for uncovering predictors, such as education, professional development opportunities, and/or years of experience in the field, which could possibly contribute to the attainment of self-awareness of competencies among student affairs practitioners.

Background of Study

The importance of competencies continues to evolve as the roles and duties of student affairs practitioners are adjusted to meet the needs and demands of a diverse and ever changing student body (Schuh, Jones, Harper, & Associates, 2011). According to Hendrickson, Lane, Harris, and Dorman (2013), "Over the past several decades, the student body has become increasingly heterogeneous in terms of age, gender, ethnicity, religious association, and sexual identity" (p. 341). Many descriptors are used to label the modern college student. This labeling challenges student affairs practitioners to be knowledgeable about every new stamp or category placed as an identifier on the students with whom they interact on a daily basis. Further, labeling hinders the ability of practitioners to describe a set of unified competencies needed by practitioners in the field to assist modern college students throughout their college careers.

In 2010, the ACPA and the NASPA boards of directors set out to create uniform competencies for student affairs practitioners. Together, both organizations created and endorsed a set of defined competencies for student affairs practitioners to use as a guide for current practice and further professional development as they advance in specific competency areas. This guide was well received by both ACPA and NASPA members and, due to ongoing evolution of the competencies, the publication has been updated (ACPA/NASPA, 2015).

Although the guide produced by ACPA and NASPA is fairly new to the profession, the Council for the Advancement of Standards (CAS) has, for the past several decades, had a set of standards and guidelines for practitioners in specified functional areas. The two tools differ in that the joint publication by ACPA and NASPA is geared more toward student affairs practitioners whereas the CAS standards are geared more toward practitioners working in very specific functional areas such as campus activities programs, career services, and civic engagement and service-learning programs. Regardless, the concept of competencies has been around for centuries. According to Mulder, Gulikers, Biemans, and Wesselink (2009), the concept of competencies has been used in Europe since the 16th century in both education and professional training. Currently, many human resource departments are building competency models to fit their needs in areas such as recruitment and selection, training and development, performance tracking and management, and succession planning (Martin, 2001).

Competencies in higher education are continually redefined as researchers identify an array of skills and traits they deem essential to the profession (ACPA/NASPA, 2010; Dickerson et al., 2011; Herdlein et al., 2013; Pope & Reynolds, 1997; Reynolds, 2011; and Schuh et al., 2011). Furthermore, researchers (Arellano & Martinez, 2009; Herdlein et al., 2013) have continued to find a disconnect between competencies needed by student affairs practitioners and

the competencies taught in graduate preparation programs and the competencies imparted to participants in professional development opportunities. Moreover, there has been a continued divide between competencies and self-awareness (Cuyjet et al., 2009; Dickerson et al., 2011; Herbst & Conradie, 2011). An employee's perception of his or her own competencies appears to differ from the perceptions of his or her direct reports and/or supervisor, creating an overall lack of self-awareness.

With changes in higher education, such as online delivery of academic courses and the increase in for-profit institutions whose primary focus is academics, student affairs practitioners need to reevaluate their roles in higher education. For student affairs practitioners' work to be seen as critical for student success, competent individuals must be available for successful student development (Schuh et al., 2011). Student development, student services, and co-curricular opportunities do not necessarily take place in online classes nor are these services always available at for-profit institutions. Therefore, conflicting goals and ambiguous expectations are no longer acceptable when preparing professionals for the field of student affairs.

Significant decreases in state funding along with substantial increases in expectations for visible and documented student achievement reinforce the need for stakeholders to become more insistent on accountability from institutions. Complete College America was founded in 2009 as a "national nonprofit with a single mission: to work with states to significantly increase the number of Americans with quality career certificates or college degrees and to close attainment gaps for traditionally underrepresented populations" (www.completecollege.org, 2014). Complete College America's focus is on performance funding. The establishment of Complete

College America has put more attention on retention, progression, and graduation rates than ever before, leaving little room for professional development and personal reflections to take place.

Accountability has become the new buzzword in higher education. Today, more than ever, higher education leaders are held to standards put forth by state and federal government agencies, external stakeholders including community businesses, and internal stakeholders including students and employees of higher education institutions (Kretovics, 2011). Politicians and others who are evaluating our campuses from the sidelines deem quantifiable results from student learning as essential (Kretovics, 2011). According to Cowan (2013):

> Type in an Internet search for "accountability" and "higher education," and the top results will form a pattern all too familiar to college and university leaders: Nearly every one details some kind of accountability being imposed from an external source on higher education. (p. 1)

President Obama's implementation of scorecards rating institutions of higher education in order to match affordability and fit for students as they search for the right college or university (Cowan, 2013) has further emphasized the accountability of higher education institutions. The new stressors surrounding accountability have prompted institutions to step up their reporting game and become more transparent with their data. To assist institutions with the challenges that accompany accountability, the American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU) and the Association of Public Land-grant Universities (APLU) have created their own tool, known as the Voluntary System of Accountability (VSA), for public four-year institutions to self-report viable data about their performance. This data is collected and entered in a web profile called the College Portrait of Undergraduate Education (Cowan, 2013).

The pressures surrounding institutions of higher education demand competent practitioners. The changing student, the call for affordability and accountability, and the decreased funding provided by the state and federal governments will neither cease nor decelerate in the coming years thus putting added pressure on the leadership in higher education.

According to Goleman (2013), self-awareness is linked to leadership, and self-awareness—also seen as understanding one's strengths and limitations—is needed to understand competence. However, leadership in higher education is changing and the skills required to perform today's jobs successfully are much different than they were decades ago. In 1950, the average tenure of a college president was 11 years (Bennis, 1989); however, the American Council on Education (2012) reported that a college president's average tenure decreased to seven years in 2011. While the reason for this decline in tenure is currently unknown, speculation can yield many possible causes. According to Carry and Keppler (2014), almost 50% of competent executives fail when making an exectutive transition in student affairs, usually within 18 months of taking on a new job. The literature offers potential reasons for this failure with Carry and Keppler citing "lack of self-awareness" (p. 9) as their first topic of discussion. Bennis (1989) echoes Carry and Keppler's findings. In his research, he found that without understanding their strengths and limitations, leaders burn out; they quit, they retire, or they give-up, and ". . . as the quality of leaders declines, the quantity of problems escalates" (p. 66).

Theoretical Framework

Research abounds on the topics of meaning-making (Carlsen, 1988; Kegan, 1982: Schuh et al., 2013), self-evolution (Kegan, 1982; Schuh et al., 2013), self-authorship (Magolda, 2008), self-management (Goleman, 2013), and self-awareness (Duval & Wicklund, 1972; Ferrari & Sternberg, 1998; Goldman, 2013; Rochat, 2003; Urdang, 2010), and how these components are

essential to the make-up of a competent person and professional (Goleman, 2013; Schuh et al., 2011). While many studies have focused specifically on students' development throughout their tenure in higher education, everyday learning experiences continue into adulthood and an individual's professional career; thus, self-awareness is a "dynamic process, not a static phenomenon" (Rochat, 2003, p. 728). Awareness of self is ongoing, whether personal or professional, and an individual's awareness of self can fluctuate depending on his or her stage in life (Crisp & Turner, 2010; Rochat, 2003).

Education and professional development opportunities, along with interactions among entry-level, mid-level, and senior level professions, can be experiences that subdue or heighten self-awareness. Furthermore, these experiences, in and of themselves, can provide opportunities for acquisition or enrichment of the competencies needed to effectively complete job-related tasks and assignments. These experiences assist individuals in becoming "critical thinkers and decision makers (epistemological development), become self-aware and appropriately confident (intrapersonal development), and socially responsible citizens (interpersonal development)" (Schuh et al., 2011, p. 209). Reflection is a necessary tool for self-awareness and to master the art of meaning-making. Being motivated to reflect on and discern the meaning of these experiences can draw out awareness of assumptions that might otherwise remain buried deep within (Schuh et al., 2011).

Meaning-making can take place when one has "freedom from coercion and distorting self-deception; openness to alternative points of view; great awareness of the context of ideas and, more critically, reflectiveness of assumptions, including their own" (Mezirow, 2000, p. 13). Robert Kegan believed that the self is ever evolving and that this evolution comes with time and

experience. Kegan is adamant that meaning-making is an essential part of the evolving self and that it must be intentional. Kegan (1982) stated,

> Thus it is not that a person makes meaning, as much as that the activity of being the person is the activity of meaning-making. There is thus no feeling, no experience, no thought, no perception, independent of a meaning-making context in which it *becomes* a feeling, an experience, a thought, a perception, because we *are* the meaning-making context. (p. 11)

Therefore, meaning-making does not just happen. As humans, we must organize what occurs in our daily lives through the happenings, our encounters, and our feelings and judgements in order to, literally, make sense of and compose meaning (Kegan, 1982).

Kegan's self-evaluation theory has five orders of consciousness, each relating to the art of meaning-making based on a specific subject-object relationship (Schuh et al., 2011). Each order of consciousness encompasses three dimensions: epistemological (coming to know); intrapersonal (forming an identity); and interpersonal (framing social interactions) (Schuh et al., 2011). Kegan's orders move from adolescence to adulthood with the third and fourth orders being most relevant to reflection and self-authorship and their relationship to both the perceptions of self and the perceptions of others. Figure 1 provides a visual of Kegan's five stages of development:

Developmental Stage/ Order of Mind (typical ages)	What can be seen as *object* (the content of one's knowing)	What one is *subject* to (the structure of one's knowing)	Underlying Structure of Meaning-Making
1st Order: Impulsive Mind (~2-6 years-old)	one's reflexes	one's impulses, perceptions	Single Point
2nd Order: Instrumental Mind (~6 years-old through adolescence)	one's impulses, perceptions	one's needs, interests, desires	Categories
3rd Order: Socialized Mind (post-adolescence)	one's needs, interests, desires	interpersonal relationships, mutuality	Across Categories
4th Order: Self-Authoring Mind (variable, if achieved)	interpersonal relationships, mutuality	self-authorship, identity, ideology	Systemic
5th Order: Self-Transforming Mind (typically > ~40, if achieved)	self-authorship, identity, ideology	the dialectic between ideologies	System of Systems

Figure 1. Kegan's five stages of development. Reprinted from *In Over Our Heads: The Mental Demands of Modern Life*, by P. W. Pruyn, 1994, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, pp. 314-315. Copyright 1995 by Harvard University Press.

This research examined the relationship among predictors of self-awareness of competencies among student affairs practitioners. Kegan's self-evolution theory was used to guide this study since it explores how age/time, experiences, learning, and development work in tandem with an individual's journey of making meaning. Overall, the art of meaning-making can be seen as the intersection of the heart and mind, where integration of "internal commitments with external realities and merging knowledge and sense of self into a confident approach to life" take place and a competent student affairs practitioner emerges (Schuh et al., 2011, p. 212).

Furthermore, Kegan's framework was used in this study to consider the way individuals construct or make sense of their reality. It is important to see how people organize their experiences, others' experiences, and life's events in order to shape themselves and/or the development of their skills. Development, in the context of meaning-making, is less about information learning and more about transformational learning. According to *Focus on the Basics* (2001), transformational learning is "learning which enables people to take broader perspectives on themselves (seeing and understand different aspects of the self) and others" (p. 6).

Rationale and Purpose Statement

For practical purposes, student affairs professionals must show that they are aware of the competency areas in which they have basic knowledge and understanding as well as the areas in which they have an intermediate or advanced level of knowledge and understanding. A lack of self-awareness of one's competences can hinder an individual's growth and development. For student affairs practitioners to acquire and enhance competencies as well as develop self-awareness, essential competencies need to be stressed in graduate programs, professional development opportunities, and through direct leadership at institutions of higher education.

However, more demands are being placed on student affairs practitioners when it comes to both levels of competence and accountability. Professional development funds are declining and, in many cases, have been completely depleted leaving little to no room for practitioners to attain and enhance their competencies. The consumerism of higher education has become heightened. Both parents and students see higher education as a business, as it is truly an investment in their future success (Humphreys, 2013). If colleges and universities are not

meeting the needs of parents and students, they will take their business to another institution that is ready and willing to fulfill their desired needs.

The need to satisfy the demands of students has intensified the need for an accurate self-perception of competencies. Yet, little to no research exists on predictors of self-awareness of practitioners in relation to competencies in the field of student affairs. This study is intended to bridge that gap.

The purpose of this study was to determine if a relationship exists between perceived self-awareness of student affairs practitioners and their perceived professional competencies, and if so, what variables assist in the formation of the relationship. According to ACPA and NASPA (2010), "professional competencies are professional knowledge, skills, and in some cases, attitudes expected of student affairs professionals" (p. 3). This study also ought to determine if student affairs professionals are self-aware of their competencies, and if not, what could be done, specifically in terms of education and experiences, to initiate congruence of the two.

Significance of the Study

According to the ACPA and NASPA joint publication, *Professional Competency Areas for Student Affairs Practitioners* (2010), "All student affairs professionals should be able to demonstrate their ability to meet the basic list of outcomes under each competency area regardless of how they entered the profession" (p. 3). However, being able to demonstrate such ability requires self-awareness. Therefore, this study sought to determine the predictors of self-awareness of competencies for student affairs professionals. If predictors, such as education and/or professional development, can be determined, then student affairs practitioners may be more intentional with their own personal development. In turn, they may be able to better meet the needs of the students they serve and achieve their professional accountability measures.

Per Schuh et al. (2011), "being competent is relevant to all student affairs educators" (p. 476). As increased accountability is demanded from student affairs professionals, it is essential for them to continually acquire needed competencies and perfect previously acquired competencies. The alignment of learning outcomes in graduate and professional development programs with both the CAS standards and the ACPA/NASPA competencies will enhance practitioners' competencies as well as their self-awareness of those competencies.

The attempt to standardize the competencies of student affairs practitioners has proven that professionalization of the student affairs field is on the rise. Wilensky (1964) stated that there were two norms in established professions:

(1) Do what you can to maintain professional standards of work.

(2) Be aware of the limited competence of your own specialty within the profession, honor the claims of other specialties, and be ready to refer clients to a more competent colleague. (p. 141)

The role of a passionate student affairs practitioner is to continually develop himself or herself by enhancing professional skills that will better assist the practitioner in day-to-day functions. This is not a linear process or a process that takes place without the need for self-reflection.

This study is significant in that it fills a void in the literature by exploring paths to competency acquisition and development through graduate preparation programs and professional development opportunities. This study also provides suggestions on how to enhance self-awareness for the betterment of both personal and professional development.

Along with direct benefits to student affairs practitioners and the students they serve, this study may also be significant to other entities. Graduate preparation programs can use this research as they develop curriculum content. Graduate preparation programs can also use this

research to identify beneficial practicum experiences, graduate assistantships, internships, and as program requirements for professional development opportunities in which their students must participate. Supervisors and human resource directors may benefit by using this study to conduct performance evaluations and to develop performance enhancement plans for their staff. Practitioners' goals may be linked directly to competencies in which they are either deficient or not as proficient in as other competency categories. Last, professional organizations like ACPA and NASPA can use the data produced from this study as a guide to evaluate their current professional development opportunities and to build new and much needed opportunities for professionals in the field.

Research Questions

The overarching research question for this study was: What is the relationship between self-awareness and perceived competencies for student affairs practitioners? The competencies used in this study were identified in the most recent publication of *Professional Competency Areas for Student Affairs Educators* by ACPA and NASPA (2015). Throughout this study, the researcher sought to answer the following sub questions:

1. To what degree, if any, does experience in the field as a student affairs practitioner predict one's self-awareness of professional competencies?
2. To what degree, if any, does job level/positon in the field as a student affairs practitioner predict one's self-awareness of professional competencies?

A non-directional hypothesis guided this study in that the researcher believed a relationship existed between competencies and self-awareness. However, the literature does not currently support whether the relationship is positive or negative in nature.

Methods

Research Design

For this study, a quantitative approach was taken in which the guiding philosophy was positivistic. The delivery method was prescribed by the design of the study. Additionally, the delivery method was standardized allowing for control of variables. This provided several advantages for the researcher as well as for the study. First, the researcher was able to generalize research findings given that there was an adequate sample size. Second, the researcher's epistemology was detached, allowing the researcher to be objective in nature, having little to no influence on the study's variables. Finally, in quantitative research, data collection can be relatively quick providing accurate numerical data that can speak volumes when presented to an institution's administration and/or academic journals.

Instrumentation

To aid in answering the research questions, the researcher aimed to utilize a combination of two different instruments developed by other researchers. One instrument focused on student affairs competencies while the other instrument focused on self-awareness. Anthony Christopher Gutierrez researched and defended his dissertation, entitled *Student Affairs Standards and Competencies: Examining the Professional Standards and Competencies of California Community College Student Government Advisors*, in December 2012. His research utilized a self-developed survey as the primary instrument (Appendix C) to obtain quantitatively the needed data. According to the researcher (Gutierrez, 2012), his study found that while a great deal of redundancy existed surrounding the topic of competencies, there were also extensive discrepancies among the competencies identified by some of the professional organizations in student affairs. Moreover, his research found a gap in the respondents' rating of the perceived

importance of specific competencies versus their actual perceived competence that could potentially indicate a need for further professional training.

The other survey instrument for this study, that was adapted and replicated, met the researcher's needs to explore the concept of self-awareness. Dr. Charles Carver and Dr. Michael Scheier (1985) revised the original Self-Consciousness Scale created by Fenigstein, Scheier, and Buss in 1975. The intent of revising the original version was to create an amended survey that would to be more easily understood by research participants and to create a tool that could be used when gathering information from populations other than college students. Both the original Self-Consciousness Scale and the revised Self-Consciousness Scale assess private and public self-consciousness along with social anxiety, all of which are factors of self-awareness.

The researcher's study of the complex dichotomies of student affairs practitioners' competence did not employ a pilot study using the researcher's newly adapted instrument due to the time consuming nature of pilot studies. The researcher understood the need to be mindful of the reliability and validity of the survey instrument as this affects inferences and conclusions drawn from data collected. To address the issue of validity and reliability, the researcher reported all internal consistency reliability coefficients and conducted exploratory factor analyses to validate the adapted measures.

The researcher proceeded with a combination of these two surveys in order to construct one comprehensive instrument. These two tools together formed the ideal instrument for discovering the relationship between perceived self-awareness and perceived competencies for student affairs practitioners. Furthermore, combining the two surveys into one instrument assisted the researcher in answering the two sub questions that followed the primary research question. Overall, both the instrument utilized in Dr. Gutierrez's research and the instrument

utilized in Dr. Carver and Dr. Scheier's research appeared to be methodologically appropriate given this study's research objective.

Population, Sample, and Sampling

The researcher surveyed student affairs practitioners in the southeast region of the United States who held membership in ACPA or NASPA. ACPA is known for having external and internal state chapters whereas NASPA is known for having regional chapters. With two organizations having different locality parameters for members, the researcher searched other larger organizations to find a common definition for the southeast region. However, the U.S. Census Bureau lacked a common definition and organizations such as the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) and the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) included states as far to the west as Texas.

The researcher further examined the South Eastern Division of the Association of American Geographers (SEDAAG), a regional subdivision of the Association of American Geographers, as a guide to defining the southeast. The SEDAAG includes Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia, and West Virginia in their subdivision (http://geography.vt.edu/sedaag/). For the purpose of this study, the sample size was even further simplified. The researcher decided to survey student affairs practitioners in the Georgia and the states contiguous to Georgia. This specified area included all of SEDAAG's subdivisions except Kentucky, Mississippi, Virginia, and West Virginia.

The researcher worked with Tricia A. Fechter Gates, ACPA's Deputy Executive Director, and Schawn Walters, ACPA's Expeditor, Global Community Interchange, in addition to Alexis Wesaw, NASPA's Senior Research Analyst, in order to receive full permission from the organizations to survey their members. As a current member of both ACPA and NASPA, in

June 2015, the researcher was able to gather the following information from the online membership directories in order to approximate a predictable sample size. At the time, ACPA reported having 924 members in the six identified states. The breakdown was as follows: Alabama: 32 members; Florida: 310 members; Georgia: 171 members; North Carolina: 203 members; South Carolina: 133 members; and Tennessee: 75 members. NASPA, on the other hand, had 1,206 members in the six identified states as of June 2015. The breakdown for NASPA was as follows: Alabama: 89 members; Florida: 456 members; Georgia: 198 members; North Carolina: 233 members; South Carolina: 115 members; and Tennessee: 115 members. Between the two organizations, the estimated population size totaled 2,130. However, some members may have overlapped between the two organizations, and the membership numbers fluctuated slightly between obtaining the anticipated sample size in June 2015 compared to the actual sample size obtained in January 2016 when the survey was distributed.

Data Collection and Analysis

The researcher sought Exempt Review status from Georgia Southern University's Institutional Review Board (IRB) during fall 2015. The research that was conducted used survey procedures; therefore, the method identified was Category B2, which stated, "Research involving only the use of educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures or observation of public behavior…" (http://research.georgiasouthern.edu/researchintegrity/276-2/). Once the IRB application was approved, the researcher identified the sample population and began data collection via an online questionnaire constructed in Qualtrics.

An e-card/email was sent to the sample population identified from the membership in ACPA and NASPA. The e-card/email introduced the purpose of the study, requested voluntary

participation in the study, and provided an online survey link to for immediate access for willing participants. Data collection ran for 3 weeks in January 2016. Data analysis and reporting started in February 2016 once data collection closed on January 31, 2016.

The researcher used an ordinary least squares regression to analyze data for the first research question. Although an analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) was initially intended to analyze the second question, in the end, a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was the preferred statistical analysis utilized to analyze this research question. Overall, a one-way ANCOVA was not feasible either because of a violation to the homogeneity of regression coefficients assumption or because the covariate in question had no effect on the outcomes. Additionally, the researcher used descriptive statistics, such as age, gender, and years of experience, to describe briefly the sample population. Further, the researcher performed a correlation of variables on the data collected to determine which variables, if any, were connected.

Delimitation and Limitations of Study

Delimitations are self-imposed factors that help the researcher narrow the study's scope (Roberts, 2010). According to Bryant (2004), "Delimitations are the factors that prevent you from claiming that your findings are true for all people in all time and places" (p. 57). These self-imposed factors are within the researcher's control and are imposed by the design of the study (Bryant, 2004). The time of the study, the location of the study, and the sample of the study are all delimitations that will be discussed further.

The time of this study was limited due to the strict timeline imposed by the researcher, leaving only a small window of opportunity for participants to participate in the questionnaire. The location of the study was also controlled, with questionnaires distributed electronically only

to ACPA and NASPA members within the southeast region given that the sample size needed to be manageable for the researcher. Finally, the sample of the study was limited to members of ACPA and NASPA who self-identified as being full-time student affairs practitioners and whose primary job fell within a functional area in student affairs. Due to constraints imposed by the researcher, length of time for the study, location of the study, and the sample of the study were all narrow in scope in order to adhere to the researcher's strict schedule.

Limitations, unlike delimitations, are beyond the researcher's control and they will remain constant for years to come (Bryant, 2004). Limitations are restrictions imposed by the methodology as opposed to the research design (Bryant, 2004). The lack of a descriptive narrative is briefly discussed below; however, the only limitation of this study was the disadvantage of self-reported data.

In quantitative research, the researcher focuses on numbers and statistics which claim to be free of biases. When the results are analyzed, thick, rich descriptions were not generated due to the method. Additional narrative information can usually assist the researcher in substantiating the quantitative results, and this narrative typically accompanies the quantitative research in a mixed-methods study. While the numbers themselves speak volumes, there is no story behind the numbers to provide details as to the "why" when answering the research questions. However, the need for narrative inquiry is not seen as a limitation to this quantitative study and this topic is addressed further in the recommendations section.

The only limitation to this study was that the researcher analyzed self-reported data. While self-reporting is "the field's most commonly used mode of assessment" (Robins, Fraley, & Krueger, 2009, p. 224), it has a tendency to be inaccurate due to unethical responses such as exaggeration, lack of participants' perception of self, and/or the current mood of the participant

during the time of the evaluation (Robins et al., 2009). Therefore, self-reported data does not always prove to be credible. In addition to the preceding examples, self-reporting participants may agree with statements without fully understanding or caring about the meaning behind the statement. The statement may be beyond their scope of comprehension or experience and/or the responder may have no regard for the content presented. Rather, he or she answers the question(s) haphazardly. Robins et al. (2009) also discussed extreme responding which occurs when the participant responds rapidly and either rates factors extremely high or extremely low causing significant ambiguity in the scores.

Assumptions

The underlying assumption of this study was that student affairs practitioners in the southeast would be open, honest, and accurate in reporting their perceptions of their competencies in the field. Furthermore, the researcher assumed that the essential information needed would be gathered in the process and that the questions would be fully comprehended by the participants enabling the researcher to answer the intended research questions. The researcher also assumed that student affairs practitioners would be willing to assist in the research by participating in the survey in a timely manner.

Due to data collection from a specific geographic territory with a limited timeframe for responses, the researcher needed to be able to generalize the findings to a larger population. Thus, as Bryant (2004) states, "one must make assumptions about both the representativeness of the sample and about the stability of findings gathered at the point in time. Many factors can impact the stability of one's findings" (p. 56).

Finally, the researcher assumed that her role as a student affairs practitioner would in no way limit the findings. While quantitative research helps eliminate potential bias, the researcher

still has her own perceptions of higher education, the field of student affairs, the influence of both graduate education and professional development, and the need for an accurate perception of one's competencies.

Definition of Terms

The researcher used several specific terms throughout the study. For the purpose of uniformity and understanding, the following terms are defined.

Accountability: State and federal governments are demanding greater accountability from colleges and universities for teaching and learning, strategic planning, transparency in spending and budgeting, and performance reporting when it comes to retention, progression, and graduation rates, as well as enrollment numbers and career placement numbers. Additionally, colleges and universities are also being pushed to ensure performance ratings are made public to students, parents, and the community. However, according to Hendrickson et al. (2013), "The term accountability has become so common that it means everything and nothing" (p. 126). For the purpose of this study, accountability was defined as responsibility for actions, judgements, and/or policies that relate to an individual's or institution's position in a profession that entails reporting, explaining, and/or answering for specific outcomes (Williams, 2006).

American College Personnel Association (ACPA): ACPA is one of two generalist organizations in student affairs with significantly fewer members than NASPA, the other generalist organization. According to ACPA's website, "American College Personnel Association (ACPA) – headquartered in Washington, D.C. at the National Center for Higher Education, is the leading comprehensive student affairs association that advances student affairs and engages students for a lifetime of learning and discovery" (http://www.my

acpa.org/who-we-are). ACPA is referred to often throughout this study since it was part of the joint taskforce with NASPA for establishing professional competencies for the field of student affairs.

Council for the Advancement of Standards (CAS): CAS is the professional organization known for assessment and evaluation of functional areas in student affairs. According to CAS's website (2015), "The Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (CAS) is the pre-eminent force for promoting standards in student affairs, student services, and student development programs" (http://www.cas.edu/). Both ACPA and NASPA are member organizations of CAS.

Competency: The term competency can be used in many contexts, such as organizational competency, core competency, behavioral competency, functional competency, and management competency. These competencies can be categorized as knowledge-based, ability- or skill-based, or trait-based. For the purpose of this study, the term competency is defined as the knowledge, ability, and skills necessary to perform student affairs work as described by ACPA and NASPA as well as research studies related to competencies deemed essential for student affairs practitioners.

Functional areas in student affairs: Functional areas in student affairs can fluctuate depending on the size, scope, and mission of the college or university. For the purpose of this study, functional areas in student affairs encompass departments, programs, offices, or units within a college or university that involve direct service to students outside the classroom. The 44 functional areas identified by the Council for the Advancement of Standards will be used to guide this study (Appendix A).

Graduate preparation programs: Graduate preparation programs are master's degree programs or doctoral degree programs that prepare graduate students to work in the field of higher education. Programs can have a focus or concentration in leadership, student affairs, student services, higher education administration, or student counseling.

Higher education: Higher education is known as post-secondary education and takes place after secondary education has been completed. This formal training typically takes place at institutions of higher education known as colleges, universities, technical schools, or vocational schools. These institutions can be public, private, for-profit, or not for-profit.

Mid-level student affairs professionals: Mid-level student affairs professionals, or mid-managers, usually provide direct leadership and supervision to new student affairs professions while reporting directly to a senior student affairs professional. Mid-level student affairs professionals typically have 5 or more years of experience in the field.

National Association for Personnel Administrators (NASPA): NASPA is one of two generalist organizations in student affairs and has the largest in membership of the two organizations. According to NASPA's website (2015), "We are the leading association for the advancement, health, and sustainability of the student affairs profession. Our work provides high-quality professional development, advocacy, and research for 14,000 members in all 50 states, 25 countries, and eight U.S. territories" (https://www.naspa.org/about). NASPA is referred to often throughout this study since it was part of the joint taskforce with ACPA for establishing professional competencies for the field of student affairs.

New student affairs professionals: New student affairs professionals, or entry-level staff, are individuals who have typically just completed a graduate professional preparation

program and who are employed by an institution of higher education. They have served in a student affairs functional area for less than 4 years.

Practitioner: A practitioner, or professional, "necessitates a commitment to a more specific knowledge base and particular set of skill sets and values. Choosing a profession assumes a commitment to not only an occupation but also to principles that guide a professional and the profession itself" (Schuh et al., 2011, p. 469). Student affairs professionals are known to have knowledge based on student development theories. The terms practitioner and professional are used interchangeably throughout this study.

Professional development: Professional development includes participation in workshops and training, reading and reflecting on recent publications, and being active in and/or attending state, regional, and national conventions such as APCA and NASPA in order to enrich professional and personal (human) development and/or institutional (organizational) development and efficiency (Schuh et al., 2011)

Senior student affairs professional: The senior student affairs professional is the highest-ranking individual in the division, usually reporting directly to the provost or president of the institution. Common titles for this position include chief student affairs officer (CSAO), vice president of student affairs (VPSA), or dean of students. The two most common titles that the CSAO possess are vice president of student affairs or dean of students (affairs).

Self-aware: For the purpose of this study, the researcher defers to Crisp and Turner (2010) who stated, "Self-awareness is a psychological state in which people are aware of their traits, feelings and behavior. Alternately, it can be defined as the realization of oneself as an individual entity" (p. 2). Individuals with strong self-awareness understand themselves

and others. They are neither exceedingly judgmental when it comes to expectations nor exceedingly optimistic, yet they "recognize how their feelings affect them, other people, and their job performance" (Goleman, 2004, p. 84).

Student affairs: Student affairs is just one critical aspect of higher education. At many institutions, student affairs professionals work in tandem with academic affairs to develop students holistically. An array of functional areas encompasses student affairs and the primary goal focuses on the growth and development of students. According to NASPA's website, "Encouraging an understanding and respect for diversity, a belief in the worth of individuals, and supporting our students in their needs are just some of the core concepts of the profession" (https://www.naspa.org/about/ student-affairs). The terms student affairs and student services are used interchangeably throughout this study.

Chapter Summary

Student affairs is comprised of practitioners who devote the majority of their time to assisting and developing students in one context or another. Therefore, the field relies heavily on competent individuals. According to Schuh et al. (2011),

> Without competent people, student learning is likely to be stifled, habitual ways of doing are likely to be preferred over more innovative programs and practices, and student affairs educators are likely to be continually misperceived as "the fun and games people who babysit students outside of class." With competence comes credibility. (p. 335)

This statement emphasizes the need for competencies and competency awareness. However, the literature review showed a disconnect between the two.

This chapter provided the background of the study followed by the theoretical framework used to guide the study. The purpose of the study was to determine if a relationship exists

between perceived self-awareness of student affairs professionals and their perceived professional competencies. The significance of the study was discussed and indicated the need to produce a competent student affairs professional who is self-aware of his or her strengths and limitations for the betterment of the students and institution. The researcher concluded Chapter 1 by detailing the research design, research questions, study limitations, assumptions made by the researcher, and the definition of terms.

Organization of the Study

The remaining chapters of this study are organized in a traditional format. Chapter 2 provides a thorough examination of the literature to support the study. In Chapter 2, the literature is integrated to support an accurate depiction of the problem. Chapter 3 details the methodology of the study, including the setting and participants, instrumentation, procedures, and data collection and analysis. Chapter 4 provides a thorough presentation of the material and highlights relevant quantitative data and demographics. Chapter 4 also answers the research questions. Chapter 5 concludes the study by providing a summary and discussion of the research, implications for further research, recommendations, and a conclusion.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Competency in a wide array of functional areas in student affairs has become the new norm for the profession, and the term *transferable skills* has become prevalent in the vocabulary of student affairs practitioners as they describe and/or sell their skill set to others. In *A Handbook for Teaching and Learning in Higher Education*, Kneale (2009) discussed competencies currently used in academic job advertisements. Kneale went on to say that practitioners seeking employment should be able to "talk about their motivation, energy to promote and start new initiatives, perseverance with difficult tasks, and ensuring tasks are completed on schedule. Keywords might include self-awareness, initiative, innovation, decision-making, flexibility, patience, care, rigor, meticulous" (p. 106). To underscore Kneale's statement, it is evident that both competence and active awareness are required for practitioners to talk successfully about their competencies when prompted.

When looking at the professional competencies adopted by the American College Personnel Association (ACPA) and the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA), NASPA's website (2015) stated,

> This set of Professional Competency Areas is intended to define the broad professional knowledge, skills, and, in some cases, attitudes expected of student affairs professionals. It's expected that as a student affairs professional you have the ability to meet the basic outcomes of each area, regardless of how you entered the profession. (https://www.naspa.org/about/student-affairs, para. 7)

This bold statement puts a tremendous amount of pressure on student affairs practitioners to rise up and take personal responsibility for their knowledge, skills, and attitude in areas of deficiency;

yet, in order to do so, self-awareness is a must. Without a thorough understanding of one's inner feelings, along with an understanding of one's strengths, weaknesses, values, and goals, it is difficult to fully understand one's level of competence in the areas deemed necessary by the profession.

The literature review in this chapter includes a search of relevant material across disciplines to identify the past history and current research regarding the topics of student affairs, competencies, and self-awareness. ProQuest, DISCOVER@GeorgiaSouthern, the GIL Universal Catalog, InterLibrary Loan (ILL), the Digital Commons, and Google Scholar were all utilized as resources and search engines to assist in the process. Key words used in the search were: student affairs, higher education, competencies, self-awareness, self-perception, emotional intelligence, leadership, graduate preparation programs, professional development, and the theory of meaning-making.

To take a deeper look at the interwoven dichotomies of student affairs practitioners' competencies and self-awareness, this chapter begins by reviewing the evolution of student affairs, followed by an explanation of why the development of the profession was needed, and what the current make-up of student affairs encompasses. In addition to the functional areas that fall under student affairs, major issues that student affairs practitioners currently face are addressed. Next, the history of competencies is discussed including their relevance to student affairs. The acquisition of competencies through both graduate preparation programs and professional development opportunities is also explored in this section. Last, the topic of self-awareness is studied along with the relationship needed between self-awareness and competencies in order to be an effective student affairs practitioner. Chapter 2 concludes with a summary of the literature review which also includes any prevalent gaps noted in the literature.

To help the reader better understand the flow of the literature review, Figure 2 provides an overview of the conceptual framework for the review.

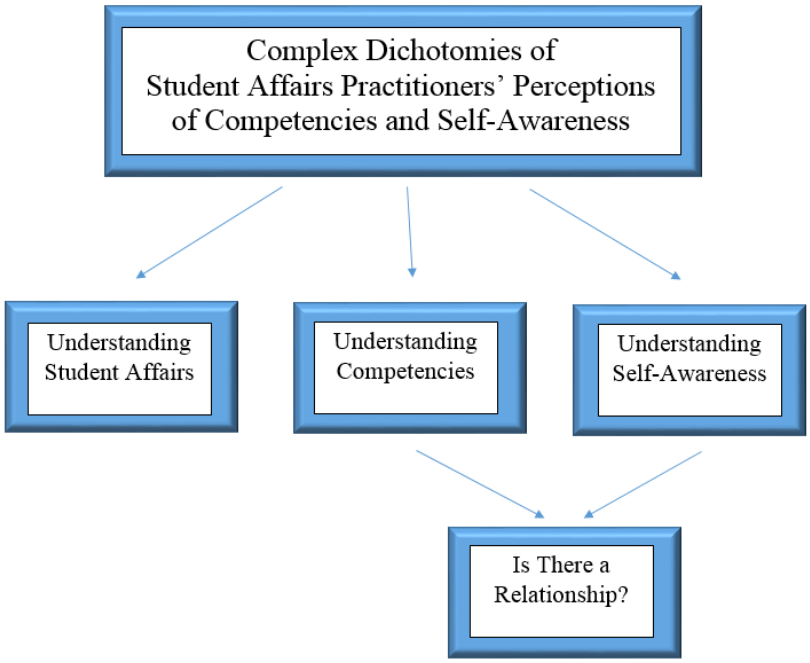

Figure 2. Conceptual framework for the literature review.

The Field of Student Affairs

Student affairs is the component of higher education that provides support and services, typically non-academic, to students at colleges and universities. Since the field is so diverse, a brief history of student affairs is provided, followed by a discussion on where student affairs is today which includes an overview of the functional areas and the top issues facing practitioners the field. Finally, professional organizations specific to student affairs are explored.

History of Student Affairs

According to Rudolph (1990), "Higher education in America began with Harvard" (p. 3). Harvard, along with a proliferation of other colleges, such as the College of William and Mary, Yale University, Queen's University, and Dartmouth College, came into existence prior to 1770

(Rudolph, 1990). It was not long before these institutions were viewed as having more than just academics. As higher education continued to grow, so did students' appetites. They wanted more from their universities. The students wanted athletic teams, Greek life, social clubs, and student media. Students desired activities, and in turn, these student activities helped make higher education more effective by developing a more holistic student (Nuss, 2003; Rudolph, 1990). Additionally, extracurricular activities taught students responsibility, time management, leadership, problem-solving skills, decision-making skills, and social skills, skills which were seen as skills not necessarily developed in the classroom.

Yale was the first institution to recognize student organizations and clubs beginning in 1753, followed by Princeton University and Harvard University (Rudolph, 1990). As American colleges continued to grow, so did the student bodies and student activities. Parent chapters of Greek letter fraternities were founded in the late 1820s and 1830s at Union and Hamilton. Outdoor gymnastics appeared at Yale University, Amherst College, Williams College, Brown University, Bowdoin College, and Dartmouth College between 1826 and 1828 (Rudolph, 1990). In 1869, Rutgers University and Princeton University played the first intercollegiate football game which is currently recognized in the United States as soccer (Nuss, 2003)

As student services offered on college campuses continued to grow, so did the conduct problems that occurred among the students and/or events taking place. Administrators were charged with *in loco parentis*, or acting in the place of the parent (Fenske, 1989), and this task was not an easy one for administrators to tackle in addition to their day-to-day duties of running the institution. Along with conduct challenges, Lenard (1956) and Rudolph (1990) cited changing roles and expectations of the faculty, the increased existence of co-education, amplified demands placed on college presidents, and the need for residential housing, health care, and

additional student services as prerequisites that lead to the first appointed student personnel officer. Faculty were being prodded and pushed by administrators to produce more scholarship and research while students were prodding and pushing administrators to develop a flourishing and varied campus life outside the classroom.

In 1870, Harvard University appointed its first student dean who was primarily an academic dean. Nonetheless, the dean was provided course release from his teaching load in order to take on some of the president's disciplinarian duties (Nuss, 2003; Schuh et al., 2011). Shortly thereafter, in 1890, the first dean of men was appointed at Harvard University to assist with development of students (Schuh et al., 2011). Challenges similar to those at Harvard University were faced by institutions of higher education that enrolled female students, and in 1892, the University of Chicago was the first institution to use the title dean of women (Schuh et al., 2011). By 1925 times had changed and countless conspicuous student personnel functions had developed. Student personnel officers were either being appointed or hired to assume the role of director of student personnel or dean of students on many college campuses (Nuss, 2003). These personnel were now the front line for managing student well-being which included their "social, physical, moral, and spiritual well-being" (Fenske, 1989, p. 6).

While the initial student personnel officers were appointed to relieve faculty of unpleasant tasks such as functioning as disciplinarians on campus, according to *The Student Personnel Point of View* (1937), student personnel officers' responsibilities quickly expanded to include other tasks such as counseling, financial aid, career services, student health, student activities, and social programs among many other duties depending on the size and scope of the institution (American Council on Education, 1937). *The Student Personnel Point of View* (1937), a report produced by The American Council on Education (ACE), became the foundation

document for the field of student affairs. During this time of transition in higher education, the term *student personnel officer* was new to higher education and essentially led to formation of student affairs. Yet, *The Student Personnel Point of View* (1937), pointed out that while the job title may have been new to higher education, "The philosophy behind their work, however, is as old as education itself" (p. 40).

The Student Personnel Point of View (1949) followed *The Student Personnel Point of View* published in 1937. Both documents helped create an understanding of the purpose of the role of student affairs in academia. This time, however, the newer publication placed a heavier emphasis on development of the student as a whole person as opposed to only intellectual development of the student (American Council on Education, 1949). According to the 1949 edition of *The Student Personnel Point of View*, part of student personnel officers' responsibility was to assist in "the individual's full and balanced development involved [in] the acquisition of a pattern of knowledge, skills, and attitudes consistent with his abilities, aptitudes, and interests" (p. 19). Further, this responsibility necessitated the need for a balanced staff to be in place. The *Student Personnel Point of View* (1949) described this balanced staff as personnel specialists and personnel administrators "chosen for their personal and professional competence to discharge their responsibilities" (p. 33).

As time passed, academia continued to blossom in the United States. More classes were added and students were strongly encouraged to attend classes on a regular basis. Many more majors and minors became available, and students were no longer allowed to take classes randomly (Rudolph, 1990). Courses of study were targeted to certain interests based on age, gender, and ethnicity. Special programs also were implemented including Black studies, Hispanic studies, gay studies, and women's studies. These special programs helped to broaden

the diversity and demographics on college campuses. Additionally, institutions were required to hire more female and minority faculty and staff. More student personnel administrators were employed to keep up with the growing number of students. Some student affairs personnel included deans, residence hall directors, academic and career counselors, admissions counselors, financial aid counselors, and fraternity and sorority advisors. Since colleges and universities were finally becoming fully staffed, students were encouraged to ask more questions and take advantage of different activities such as athletics, social clubs, the campus newspaper, and Greek life. Thanks to these changes, by the end of the 1960s, students' satisfaction was finally on the rise and development of student affairs had peaked (Rudolph, 1990).

Student Affairs Today

Student affairs has come a long way since the early 1900s. Today, student affairs, often referred to as student services, is an essential division within higher education and includes a wide array of functional areas. These functional areas directly assist students outside the classroom. Staffing these functional areas are practitioners who are typically classified as entry-level, mid-level, or senior-level based on their years of experience in the field. As the functional areas in student affairs have grown, so has the scope of many of these positions, and as student affairs continues to evolve so do the top concerns on campus. However, before moving into the functional areas of student affairs and some of the top concerns currently facing the field, this literature review will examine the next generation of student affairs professionals.

Student affairs practitioners. Student affairs practitioners span a wide age range, especially depending on their years of experience. When looking at student affairs today, a large focus is placed on practitioners entering the field. Some researchers attribute this emphasis on entry-level practitioners to the fact that 20% of the entire student affairs workforce is comprised

of new professionals (Pittman & Foubert, 2016). Furthermore, Renn and Jessup-Anger (2008) and Tull (2006), estimate that 50-60% of these new professionals leave the field with their first 5 years. Therefore, much of the following discussion focuses on student affairs practitioners currently entering the field.

Entry-level practitioners who enter the field via the traditional route, go to college immediately after completing high school, and then enroll in graduate school upon earning a baccalaureate degree. Those that entered the field this way are student affairs practitioners who are accepting their first job in the field, and they were born in 1991 or within a few years of 1991, leading to their classification as millennials. Millennials are known to be (a) "conventionally motivated and respectful," (b) "structured rule followers," (c) "protected and sheltered," (d) "cooperative and team-oriented," (e) "talented achievers," and (f) "confident and optimistic about their futures" (Elam, Stratton, & Gibson, 2007, p. 23). Because of these characteristics, many new student affairs practitioners find meaningful time for reflection limited and they are often quick to find themselves over-involved and over-committed.

According to Magolda and Carnaghi (2014), millennials are entering the field at a time when the world economy has been unstable for years, leaving higher education in financial uncertainty and leading to downsizing or consolidation of student affairs on many campuses. Therefore, the economic instability has led to stressful job searches and, once on the job, more work with less staff. Second, Magolda and Carnaghi discussed heightened campus scandals resulting from the increase in social media as a new issue for entering student affairs practitioners. This hypersensitivity leaves new student affairs practitioners questioning their decision to enter the field and also shakes the public's confidence in higher education.

The rapid expansion of technology has led to newer media outlets, such as Twitter, YouTube, Facebook, Yik Yak, and Snap Chat, taking over as a means of communication. According to Freeman and Taylor (2009), "these technologies dramatically alter the work responsibilities of entry-level educators." Last, entering student affairs professionals are also expected to enter the field fully competent to deal with the dramatically changing demographics of the student body.

While the demographics of today's student affairs practitioners are diverse and span entry-level, mid-level, and senior-level positions, it is important to understand the characteristics of the next this generation of student affairs practitioners. The importance of these characteristics will be examined further as graduate preparation programs and professional development opportunities are explored later in this chapter. However, first the wide array of functional areas within student affairs will be addressed.

Functional areas. In *The Chief Student Affairs Officer*, a report produced on behalf of NASPA, authors Sponsler and Wesaw (2014) stated, "Beyond just the presence of a specific functional area, there is a lack of data that provide detailed information about the administration of functional areas" (p. 33). The researchers surveyed college and university chief student affairs officers concerning their responsibilities, opinions, and professional pathway and collected 858 responses (Sponsler & Wesaw, 2014). Within the 858 respondents, six different sectors of higher education were represented (public, 4-year; private not-for profit, 4-year; private for-profit 4-year; public, 2-year; private not-for profit, 2-year; and private for-profit, 2-year). As part of the project, 39 functional area profiles were created which included traditional job titles for individuals in specific functional areas along with average salaries and potential reporting lines (Sponsler & Wesaw, 2014). All this information is housed on NASPA's Research and Policy

Institute's website (https://www.naspa.org/rpi). While these profiles help advance the knowledge of functional areas by providing a foundational baseline, Sponsler and Wesaw (2014) warned readers not to take all the data as concrete because it can fluctuate based on campus culture, geographic location, and/or instructional scope and size.

The Council for the Advancement of Standards (CAS), another prominent professional organization in the field of student affairs, was founded to promote standards in student affairs, student services, and student development programs. CAS currently has standards for 44 different functional areas of higher education, most of which could fall under the umbrella of student affairs depending on institutional organization. Academic advising programs, college unions, housing and residential life programs, fraternity and sorority advising programs, multicultural student programs and services, and service-learning programs are just a few examples of the functional area standards listed by CAS (http://www.cas.edu/standards). A complete list can be found in Appendix A.

ACPA, on the other hand, has 21 commissions which student affairs practitioners can join upon gaining membership in the organization. The commissions "present the job/functional areas or professional specializations in which ACPA members are employed or have an interest" (http://www.myacpa.org/get-involved). Although ACPA has about half the functional areas identified compared with NASPA's functional area profiles and CAS's functional area standards, ACPA's commissions combine several functional areas into one, such as the Commission for Admissions, Orientation, and First Year Experience Programs or the Commission for Student Involvement which encompasses campus activities, leadership programs, student organizations, and student service/volunteerism.

Depending on institutional type, size, and mission, a college or university division of student affairs can be extremely large and many of these functional areas are represented and/or stand alone (Manning, Kinzie, & Schuh, 2014). Divisions can also be small, and some functional areas, such as housing and residential life programs, are not needed or several functional areas may be grouped together under one central umbrella. The difference in the size of student affairs divisions is a result of the size of the staff and scope of job responsibilities. Small campuses are more likely to have staff with job descriptions encompassing diverse responsibilities as opposed to content specialists who are more often housed on larger campuses.

Top student affairs concerns. As the functional areas in student affairs have continued to expand in order to meet the needs of today's students, so have the top concerns faced by student affairs practitioners in their day-to-day jobs. Attempting to assist students while also tackling administrative tasks deemed as necessary is not an easy charge and is often seen as daunting by student affairs practitioners. Many concerns appear more complex than in the past because of federal regulations and state mandates surrounding assessment and accountability, budgets and finance, and student rights and responsibilities (Complete College America, 2014; NASPA, ACPA, 2004; Schuh et al., 2011; Sponsler & Wesaw, 2014). Additionally, top concerns addressing today's students' needs have expanded because the topics surrounding diversity, inclusion, and social justice encompass far more issues than those experienced by the typical white male student enrolled in the early 1900s.

Overall, access to higher education has expanded (ACPA/NASPA, 2010; Schuh et al., 2011). According to Schuh et al. (2011), as a result of this expanded access, "student affairs administrators were needed to help campus communities prepare and manage the challenge of

serving first-generation college students, economically challenged students, and racially and ethnically underrepresented students" (p. 71).

NASPA's report, *The Chief Student Affairs Officer* (Sponsler & Wesaw, 2014), collected data from chief student affairs officers about their opinions on the most pressing issues facing their campuses today. The responses were grouped into four categories: (a) health, wellness, and campus safety issues on campus, (b) campus culture issues, (c) administrative issues, and (d) student learning and success issues. Under the category of health, wellness, and campus safety, mental health concerns, alcohol abuse, and illicit drug abuse were the top concerns. Changing student demographics, diversity, equity and inclusion, and campus safety were the top concerns under campus culture issues. The administrative issues category encompassed concerns about diminishing resources, compliance with regulatory requirements, and strategic planning. Finally, the category for student learning and success issues included completion/graduation rates, persistence, and assessment and accountability as the top most pressing issues (Sponsler & Wesaw, 2014).

While very much a present day concern, health, wellness, and campus safety issues on campus date back to the inception of higher education (Delworth, Hanson, & Associates, 1989; Rudolph, 1962). As already noted in the review of the history of student affairs, student affairs originated because faculty members were experiencing difficulty juggling their primary task as professors with governance of student behavior outside the classroom. With student freedom came challenges. The dual role of professor and *in loco parentis* became too much to handle when it came to issues such as mental health, alcohol abuse, excessive partying, and experimentation with illicit drugs. Unfortunately, these issues are still a top concern cited by chief student affairs officers (Sponsler & Wesaw, 2014).

Campus culture is also a common concern of student affairs practitioners; as noted above, student demographics, diversity, equity and inclusion, and campus safety are cited as the top issues among chief student affairs officers in this category (Sponsler & Wesaw, 2014). The post 9/11 GI Bill opened the door for an influx of veterans to enroll on college campuses. In 2010, 819,200 veterans were enrolled in U.S. colleges and universities (Hamrick, Rumann, & Associates, 2012). According to Schuh et al. (2011), some of these students returned from war with "severe physical injuries, with serious mental health problems, and with a need for assistance in making the transition from the military to college" (p. 72). This, in turn, added new stressors to the roles of student affairs practitioners who were not equipped to handle these new challenges.

Today's student population is no longer heterogeneous when it comes to race, gender, or sexual orientation/identification. In the 1990s, according to national enrollment data, more than three-fourths of students enrolled in college self-identified as white (NCES, 2011). Currently, however, Hispanic enrollment is one the rise, with a 10% percent increase expected between 1990 and 2020 making the Hispanic population the fasting growing population in terms of college enrollment (NCES, 2011). Along with race, the lesbian, bisexual, gay, and transgender communities have become more visible on college campuses (Banks, Hammond, & Hernandez, 2014). With the help of social media outlets and national headlines surrounding topics such as activism, discrimination, inclusivity, and marriage equality, these groups are demanding that colleges take notice of them and include the necessary amenities to meet their needs.

These subpopulations are just some of the expanding populations that make campus culture a top issue among chief student affairs officers. Yet, there are still other student subpopulations that are not currently getting as much attention but that might also be seen as a

challenge. Since some instituions are seeking to recruit more globally, international students can also be a subpopulation (Banks et al., 2014) in addition to student athletes, and students who belong to Greek letter organizations. Overall, it is difficult and complex to describe modern day college students. According to Hendrickson et al. (2013), "One of the challenges with trying to describe the 21st-century college student is that no one summary can paint a holistic picture," (p. 343) proving that few typical characteristics exist when referring to modern college students and, therefore, making it difficult to create a campus culture that meets the needs of all students.

Administrative issues, or the call to do more with less, comprise the third category of concern. Budgets on many college campuses are dwindling while expectations are sky rocketing. There is a call for colleges and universities to begin linking strategic planning and assessment to budgeting in order to have a greater impact on the future of the institution (Hendrickson et al., 2013). Many practices focusing on accountability are necessary in order to comply with regulatory requirements such as accreditation standards and state and federal mandates.

The top three concerns related to student learning and success include completion/ graduation rates, persistence, and assessment and accountability. In fall 2005, the Commission on the Future of Higher Education convened with the intent to hear public depositions and possible recommendations on "access, affordability, accountability, and quality in higher education . . . " (Schuh et al., 2011, p. 73). Following the meeting, the Commission produced a report which called for increased transparency among colleges and universities. As a result, student affairs practitioners have heightened their assessment standards and placed greater focus on learning outcomes and objectives in order to justify the value of their programs and services.

Such assessments assist in validating holistic student development because these assessments have the potential to spotlight learning progression outside the classroom (Schuh et al., 2011).

In 2009, Complete College America was founded "to work with states to significantly increase the number of Americans with quality career certificates or college degrees and to close attainment gaps for traditionally underrepresented populations" (http://completecollege.org/about-cca/). Currently, Complete College America has 35 alliance members which includes 33 of the 50 states, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, and the District of Columbia. Members of the alliance are committed to five game changers. The first game changer is *performance funding*, where colleges and universities are compensated based on student retention, progression, and graduation rates as opposed to enrollment numbers. The second game changer is *corequisite remediation*, where college level gateway courses are the default for many students and will provide students with the additional support needed to be successful. *Full Time if 15* is the third game changer. This game changer is supposed to serve as an incentive for students to attend full-time. Not only does Complete College America push for 15 credit hours per semester, it also caps credit hours per degree and ensures that all classes transfer to most other institutions of higher learning. The last two game changers include structured schedules and guided pathways to success. Structured scheduling helps students to balance busy lifestyles so they can attend full-time while pursuing fast degree completion. Guided pathways to success utilizes technology to assist students in making informed decisions about their majors and advising.

Overall, concerns related to health, wellness, and safety issues, campus culture issues, administrative issues, and student learning and success are not new to student affairs practitioners. Many of these concerns have recycled in some form or fashion over the years.

Further, many of the issues ranked under the four categories can easily be seen in other categories since the strengths or weaknesses of one issue may impact the strengths or weaknesses of another. For example, mental health concerns, in the category of health, wellness, and campus safety, could also directly affect campus safety concerns that fall under the category of culture issues on campus. Therefore, all areas and issues must be nurtured so that the entire institution runs smoothly and properly while also ensuring that student learning takes place and the institution's mission is fulfilled. Clearly, not an easy task nor one that many student affairs practitioners feel competent in taking on which is why responsibility for many of these tasks defaults to the leadership in higher education (Hendrickson et al., 2013; Sponsler & Wesaw, 2014).

In the face of significant challenges in the field of student affairs, competent leadership is essential as well as networking and professional development opportunities so that practitioners can remain current in the field. Both higher education and student affairs have a bounty of professional organizations which many practitioners consider their home or go-to outlet for current and relevant information. The following discussion examines the role and importance of professional organizations.

Professional Organizations in Student Affairs

To keep up with the new trends and research and to remain relevant in the field, many student affairs practitioners join professional organizations. These organizations serve an array of purposes, such as aiding practitioners in networking with their peers and staying abreast of recent news articles, state and federal regulations, and current research that may impact how they conduct their work. Additionally, professional organizations provide an outlet for student affairs

practitioners to exchange ideas with like-minded individuals who share a common interest in higher education and student development.

Many functional areas in student affairs have at least one, if not more than one, professional organization with which their day-to-day work aligns. StudentAffairs.com (2015) currently has 68 professional organizations linked to its site for practitioners to connect with. This website is not a comprehensive list of all the available student affairs professional organizations. Besides organizations for specific functional areas, higher education also has many overarching professional organizations such as the Association for the Study of Higher Education (ASHE) and the American Council on Education (ACE). Further, particular types of institutions may belong to organizations or governing bodies that provide guidance for their institutional classification such as the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) and the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U). Therefore, the list of organizations in which a student affairs practitioner may have an affiliation is endless.

This study focused on the competencies identified by two of the largest student affairs professional organizations. ACPA – College Student Educators International and NASPA – Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education are the two largest professional umbrella organizations for student affairs practitioners in the United States. While some members and institutions may belong to both ACPA and NASPA, these two associations are a primary resource for knowledge, leadership, and professional development for more than 20,000 members and more than 2,500 colleges, universities, and other organizations of higher education (ACPA, 2013; NASPA, 2013). Undoubtedly, these two organizations are influential in higher education in the United States.

In 1919, NASPA was formed out of a conference of deans and advisors of men and was initially named the National Association of Deans and Advisers of Men (NADAM) (Schuh et al., 2011). In 1951, NADAM changed its name to the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA). Upper-level administrators and student affairs leadership teams comprise the majority of NASPA's membership.

ACPA was founded in 1924, shortly after NASPA, and began as the National Association of Appointment Secretaries (NAAS) (Schuh et al., 2011). In 1929, NAAS became the National Association of Placement Personnel Officers (NAPPO), and in 1952, NAPPO played a pivotal role in the creation of the American Personnel and Guidance Association (APGA) but later withdrew from the association and became the American College Personnel Association (ACPA) (Schuh et al., 2011). Both NASPA and ACPA draw student affairs professionals from every functional area with the field (Nuss, 2003).

Competencies

Competencies directly relate to job performance are becoming the new norm in many industries including student affairs. However, the concept of competencies can be difficult to navigate. According to Hoge, Tondora, and Marrelli (2005), at first glance, competencies can be "both simple and compelling" (p. 510). Yet, in actuality, the practice of demonstrating and achieving competence can be extremely complicated.

The language used to describe and define competencies differs among researchers, leaving various competency theorists and practitioners to describe capabilities subjectively (Hoge et al., 2005; Marrelli, 1998). Some definitions of competency are work related and focus on job responsibilities, day-to-day tasks, and overall outputs and results (McLagan, 1997). Other definitions focus on the characteristics of the individuals completing the work. Hoge et al.

(2005) shape their definition of competency based on the individuals performing the work. According to these researchers competency can be defined as:

> . . . a measurable human capability that is required for effective performance. It is comprised of knowledge, a single skill or ability, or personal characteristics – or a cluster of these building blocks of work performance. Successful completion of most tasks requires the simultaneous or sequenced demonstration of multiple competencies. (Hoge et al., 2005, p. 517)

Grouping of different competencies under one umbrella, referred to as knowledge, skills, abilities, and personal characteristics (KSAPs), results in some overlap as the categorization of competencies can fluctuate depending on the researcher. For example, a researcher or an employer may place a particular capability in a category different from the one another researcher or employer might use. Further, depending on the particular capability, a competency may be categorized in multiple categories at the same time. In practice, groupings or categorization of where competencies fall (e.g. under knowledge, skills, abilities, and/or personal characteristics) have little importance as long as everyone in the organization understands the meaning behind the competency and why it is classified as such (Marrelli, 2005). In the end, both common understanding and consistency are key when using competencies for workforce standards and development in relation to job performance.

Knowledge, typically gained through education, training, and experience, can be defined as the information needed to complete a task successfully (Hoge et al., 2005; Marrelli, 1998; Northouse, 2013). Knowledge is usually based on the comprehension of facts, policies, procedures, principles, and guidelines—all things that are identifiable, measurable, and concrete. A skill is a learned talent that leads to completing a task with a recognizable outcome (Hoge et

al., 2005; Marrelli, 1998). Hoge et al. (2005) refers to skills as "surface" (p. 518) competencies because they are seen as the simplest competencies to develop. Abilities require cognitive or physical capability to complete a task that has the potential to have a wide of array of outcomes (Hoge et al., 2005; Marrelli, 1998). Abilities can be multifaceted and complex such as problem solving, analytical thinking, and strategic planning. Finally, personal characteristics such as behavior, values, attitudes, and traits can be perceived as abstract constructs (Hoge et al., 2005), making them more difficult to measure but still essential for effective job performance.

The history of competencies will be discussed next, followed by the evolution of competencies in student affairs. The discussion will look more deeply at how an individual acquires competencies such as through graduate preparation programs, professional development opportunities, or other avenues including years of experience.

History of Competencies

Mulder et al. (2009) defined competencies as a set of capabilities needed by individuals in order to function in a particular profession or organization. The concept of competencies initially evolved in business and industry and eventually navigated into education. According to Mulder et al.:

> The concept of competence can be dated back to Persian (in the code of Hamurabbi), Greek (in Lydia of Plato) and Roman times (in general language), has been used in Europe from the sixteenth century and entered professional literature in law (competence of courts and witnesses), public administration (competence of institutions), organizational structure (competence of departments or functions), management (core competence, competence management), and education and training (competence-based education) from the seventies of the last century. (p. 756)

Anastasi (1968) and Hoge et al. (2005) dated the concept of competence back more than 3,000 years when the Chinese utilized written civil service exams for job selection instead of recommendations by supervisors. Eventually, job shadowing and apprenticeships became popular in the workforce. Beginning with medieval guilds, apprenticeships allowed skills and trades to be learned and credentials awarded after on-the-job training was successfully completed (Horton, 2000; McLagan, 1997). This type of training still occurs today in some professions such as welding and cosmetology.

While competency models have been around for centuries, there has been an increase in their usage in the United States over the past 30 years, and competency models are predominately used in human resource related tasks such as, recruitment, evaluation, advancement, and training and development (McLagan, 1997). In the 1930s, the Roosevelt administration promoted functional job analysis and eventually published a dictionary of occupational titles that corresponded with knowledge and skills required for different occupations (McLagan, 1997). In 1978, the federal government compiled job-related guidelines, entitled *Uniform Guidelines on Employee Selection Procedures* (Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, 1978; Hoge et al., 2005) for use in selecting workers. More recently, in 1994, the Clinton Administration appointed the National Skills Standards Board (NSSB) to create skill standards as part of a voluntary national system. The intent was for "the nation to ensure the development of a high skill, high quality, high performance workforce, including the most skilled frontline workforce in the world" (NSSB, 1998, sec. 502). In 2003, the NSSB became the National Skill Standards Board Institute (NSSBI) but remained committed to skills requirements, assessments, and certifications.

As many of the skill standards were being created, student affairs was also exploring the concept of competencies in higher education. In 2004, Pope, Reynolds, and Mueller developed a set of competences required to serve in higher education, followed by Janosik, Carpenter, and Creamer in 2006, and ACPA's Professional Competencies Task Force in 2007. Much of their work built upon one another's work, and they all used similar categories of competencies (ACPA Professional Competencies Task Force, 2007; Janosik et al., 2006; Marina, 2003; Pope et al., 2004; Schuh et al., 2011). Details on the current status of competencies in student affairs is discussed in the next section.

Competencies in Student Affairs

With the need to identify specific variables for job performance along with unbiased predictors of effectiveness, higher education has turned to the concept of competencies. In 2000, Lovell and Kosten completed a meta-analysis of more than 30 years of studies centered on the importance of competencies in student affairs. Since Lovell and Kosten's study, debates around essential competencies for higher education and the field of student affairs has continued. For example, Herbst and Conradie (2011) researched the perceptions of effective leaders in higher education in South Africa, and Mulder et al. (2009) researched the concept of competencies in higher education at universities in the Netherlands. These studies reflected a demand for proficient and capable human capital, and professional organizations such as ACPA and NASPA honed in on this need, identifying competencies that aligned with their human capital needs in the field of student affairs.

In 2009, ACPA and NASPA formed a joint task force referred to as the ACPA and NASPA Professional Competencies Task Force. This taskforce was charged with investigation, creation, and overall implementation of a set of common professional competencies applicable to

all student affairs professionals in the U.S. The competency model had to be specific to the field of student affairs yet broad enough that area(s) of expertise, area(s) of current employment, and the educational background of professionals would be considered irrelevant. The intent was that student affairs professionals would be held accountable, regardless of the above areas, for the established competencies in the field (American College Personnel Association and the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators, 2010).

During ACPA's 2010 annual convention and NASPA's 2010 annual conference, 10 identified competencies were unveiled to the membership: (a) Advising and Helping, (b) Assessment, Evaluation, and Research, (c) Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion, (d) Ethical Professional Practice, (e) History, Philosophy, and Values, (f) Human and Organizational Resources, (g) Law, Policy, and Governance, (h) Leadership, (i) Personal Foundations, and (j) Student Learning and Development. The 10 competencies identified by ACPA and NASPA (2010) were not categorized as knowledge, skills, and dispositions. ACPA and NASPA made certain that the content in each competency included all three categories. Technology, sustainability, and globalism were three prominent competencies not identified by ACPA and NASPA as stand-alone competencies; yet, they were seen as vital and connected to every competency identified. Therefore, the Task Force considered these three competencies to be threads which were interwoven in each of the 10 identified competencies rather than each one being a standalone competency. Finally, all of the competencies were divided into basic, intermediate, and advanced levels for student affairs professionals to use as a guide as they develop in their careers.

APCA and NASPA (2010) constructed and published a handbook for their members hoping that the defined competencies and levels would have several practical implications.

There are various ways in which these competencies can be utilized by educators and practitioners alike. For example, competencies can be used as a guide for faculty who teach in student affairs graduate preparation programs. Both the learning outcomes and curriculum for the program could be shaped around the competencies. Internship coordinators, graduate assistant supervisors, and practicum directors could use the competencies for mentoring their graduate students and in evaluating their performance. Further, these competencies can be used as a tool by practitioners. Senior student affairs officers (SSAOs) and mid-level managers could also use the competencies in defining job descriptions, creating professional development opportunities, and setting goals for their employees.

ACPA and NASPA (2010) knew that competencies in student affairs would evolve. Therefore, neither organization viewed this publication as final but rather as a living document that can be revised and updated as the profession changes. The Task Force recommended members of both organizations immerse themselves in learning and incorporating these competences in daily practice in order to further develop as student affairs practitioners rather than using them as a checklist of tasks to be accomplished.

In October 2014, a new ACPA and NASPA Professional Competencies Joint Task Force was formed. According to an email sent to the membership of both organizations on April 9, 2015, the Task Force was charged with:

- Scanning the landscape of student affairs and higher education to ensure that the competencies are up-to-date with current scholarship and practice;
- Reviewing the threads of technology, sustainability, and globalism to determine whether these areas of practice require the creation of additional competency areas or a reframing of existing ones; and,

- Determining if any of the content areas should be considered for removal or revision in order to provide a comprehensive set of competencies for student affairs practitioners in the modern era. (http://www.myacpa.org/professional-competencies)

In the email communication sent to the membership, the Task Force linked their current recommended changes to the professional competencies detailed in the current handbook and asked for feedback on the recommended changes from members. Some of the proposed changes included combining Ethical Professional Practice and Personal Foundations into one competency, updating the title of the Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion to Social Justice, and turning the Technology thread into a competency and removing the other two threads.

The Task Force's work culminated in August 2015 with a joint email going out to members of ACPA and NASPA from Gaven Henning, President of ACPA-College Student Educators International, and Frank Lamas, Board Chair of NASPA-Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education. The email, delivered on Monday, August 24, 2015, commended the ACPA/NASPA Professional Competencies Task Force for their hard work and included a link to the electronic version of the Professional Competencies for Student Affairs Educators (2015).

According to the new publication (Professional Competencies Task Force, 2015), "We did not eliminate any of the original 10 competency areas, though we renamed two competency areas, introduced one new competency area, and combined two areas" (p. 4). All the proposed changes were compiled in the new publication. Further, the document replaced the verbiage of "knowledge, skills, and in some cases, attitudes expected of student affairs professionals" (Professional Competency Areas for Student Affairs Practitioners, Professional Competencies Task Force, 2010, p. 3) from ACPA/NASPA's 2010 publication to knowledge, skills, and

dispositions in the 2015 publication. Additionally, the term threads was changed to intersections, and when referring to the three levels of competency areas, basic was changed to foundational. These minor language changes focused on the use of present day student affairs terminology. Lastly, the publication's audience was reviewed with the goal expanded beyond only including practitioners in the United States to also including international student affairs practitioners.

Along with minor changes to the document, the publication continued to focus on acquisition of competencies and competency development. The publication is clear that proficiency within a competency area should not be associated with either years of experience or job title/positon. Depending on graduate preparation programs, professional development opportunities, and/or specific areas of interest, individuals, whether entry-level practioners or senior-level administrators, will have differing competency levels among the 10 competency areas. The acquisition of competencies is examined further in the next section.

Acquisition of Competencies

Competencies in higher education are acquired through both knowledge and experience. As with developing leadership, the acquisition of competencies is a process requiring both time and experience in order for further development to take place. The acquisition of competencies also requires dedication to the field of student affairs. Advancing between levels of competencies should not been seen as a checklist or a process quickly mastered (ACPA/NASPA, 2015). Knowledge and experiences in student affairs traditionally come from graduate preparation programs, hands-on training in graduate assistantships, internships, practicums, one-on-one mentoring, professional development opportunities, on-the-job learning and job shadowing, and personal reading and research. Furthermore, an individual cannot acquire a

competency without fully understanding its importance, application, as well as how it works and interrelates with other professional areas (NASPA/ACPA, 2015). This section looks further at the two possible avenues of acquisition: graduate preparation programs and professional development opportunities.

Graduate preparation programs. In evaluating the research on competencies in higher education, a glaring issue emerged. In particular, there appeared to be a separation between the needed competencies of entry-level professionals and the acquired competencies of new professionals. Some of this disconnect related directly to the competencies taught in graduate preparation programs and the competencies deemed essential for entry-level professionals in the field (Arellano & Martinez, 2009; Cuyjet et al., 2009; Estanek, Herdlein, & Harris, 2011; Herdlein, Kline, Boquard, & Haddad, 2010; Herdlein et al., 2013). Both SSAOs and entry-level professionals believed new student affairs professionals needed extra training in specific competency areas that were not directly taught in graduate preparation programs (Burkard, Cole, Ott, & Stoflet, 2005; Cuyjet et al., 2009; Dickerson et al., 2011).

Since the acquisition of competencies comes with time and maturity, not every student affairs professional will be equipped with the same level of knowledge and experience. Institutional types are complex; graduate preparation programs have different learning outcomes and areas of focus, and no single individual is exactly like another in his or her growth, development, and/or attainment of competencies. When entering the field of student affairs, employers unquestionably expect their employees to arrive on the job armed with a basic set of competencies learned in their graduate preparation programs (Cuyjet et al., 2009). As a result, the governing body of CAS set out to solidify a set of standards and guidelines for master's degree programs in student affairs (CAS, 2012).

The CAS (2013) membership is comprised of 40 professional organizations including both ACPA and NASPA and serves more than 100,000 constituents in these organizations. CAS's knowledge of higher education and student affairs is exceedingly comprehensive, which is why the association has been able to define standards and guidelines for 44 different functional areas in higher education. CAS's mission is "to promote the improvement of programs and services to enhance the quality of student learning and development. CAS is a consortium of professional associations who work collaboratively to develop and promulgate standards and guidelines and to encourage self-assessment" (http://www.cas.edu/index.php/about/mission/).

The CAS standards were updated in 2012. Several *must* statements appear in the *CAS Standards and Guideline for Master's Level Student Affairs Professional Preparation Programs, Part 5. The Curriculum* and are essential to a graduate program. According to CAS:

> All programs of study must include (a) foundational studies, (b) professional studies, and (c) supervised practice. Foundational studies must include the study of the historical and philosophical foundations of higher education and student affairs. Professional studies must include (a) student learning and development theories, (b) student characteristics and the effects of college on students, (c) individual and group strategies, (d) organization and administration of student affairs, and (e) assessment, evaluation, and research. Supervised practice must include practicums and/or internships consisting of supervised work involving at least two distinct experiences. (2012, p. 9)

Consequently, if all master's level student affairs professional preparation programs followed the standards and guidelines set forth by CAS, in general, most entry-level professionals would have the same set of competencies upon entering the field (Cuyjet et al., 2009).

However, the acquisition of needed competencies from graduate preparation programs is debatable. While evaluating graduate preparation programs, Arellano and Martinez (2009) found that entry-level professionals feel as if graduate programs may overstress some competencies while overlooking others. Herdlein et al. (2010) confirmed Arellano and Martinez's research and found that most competencies deemed important by entry-level professionals were rated less important by faculty, showing a lack of congruency with the learning outcomes of the curriculum versus those expressed as needed by new practitioners in the field. Furthermore, an astounding 40% of entry-level professionals were rated as either only prepared or somewhat underprepared by SSAOs at Catholic colleges and universities, and Catholic institutions rated 50% of their new entry-level professionals as less than prepared or unprepared to work at their institutions (Estanek et al., 2011).

Cuyjet et al. (2009) arrived at slightly different conclusions when researching graduate preparation programs. Both recent graduates and supervisors "'somewhat agreed' that the training received in relevant competencies from the graduates' master's programs was a high level of training" (pp. 108-109). Additionally, both recent graduates and supervisors perceived ethics and standards of practice and working in diverse populations to be the most important competencies. Overall, the graduates and supervisors generally agreed on needed competencies and the level of preparation entry-level professionals received from their programs.

An entrance standard is nonexistent when it comes to an entry-level student affairs professional gaining employment in the field just as a uniform model for graduate preparation programs in student affairs is nonexistent. Institutions of higher education are complex as are their programs and faculty. Therefore, creating one unified model for graduate preparation programs is a daunting challenge. CAS did define standards and guidelines for a college student

personnel master's program; however, not all programs follow these guidelines nor does every student master the skills or learning outcomes taught in these programs. This makes it difficult for graduate preparation programs to prepare all entry-level professionals to enter the student affairs profession on a level playing field.

Professional development opportunities. Along with graduate preparation programs, mentors, and supervisors, professional development opportunities are intended to provide experiences where development of competencies can continue to take place. Professional development opportunities offer myriad ways to advance understanding and acquire competencies in the field. These opportunities are traditionally available to student affairs professionals at all levels of development. Through professional development opportunities, entry-level professionals can gain competencies they did not acquire in their graduate preparation programs. Mid-level managers can understand and hone competencies needed to take them to the next step or to advance within specific levels of competencies in which they lack the needed knowledge and experience. Additionally, senior-level administrators can use professional development as a refresher on competencies, as a way to advance in underdeveloped competencies, and/or to discover upcoming changes in policies and procedures.

Both ACPA and NASPA host many of the same professional development opportunities for practitioners in higher education and student affairs. Programs such as the New Professionals Institute (NPI) are geared toward student affairs practitioners who consider themselves entry-level and typically have 5 or fewer years in the field. Mid-Managers Institute (MMI) is a step up from NPI and is typically geared toward assistant directors and directors or practitioners who are caught between supervising and being supervised. Finally, the Institute for Aspiring Senior Student Affairs Officers and the Senior Student Affairs Officers Symposium focus on upper

level leadership in higher education. Yet, all of these opportunities were conceived in order to enhance and contribute to lifelong learning in student affairs. Many of these programs have learning outcomes which pinpoint the competencies that will be gained through participation.

The University System of Georgia (USG), composed of 30 higher education institutions in Georgia, is one of the state higher education systems whose student affairs practitioners were surveyed for this research in terms of their perceived competence and self-awareness. The USG implemented two programs, the Accelerated Leadership Academy (ALA) and the Executive Leadership Institute (ELI), to enhance leadership skills and competencies of vice presidents, chairs, deans, and executive directors at state institutions of higher education (University System of Georgia, 2013). According to the USG's website, "The purpose of the USG Accelerated Leadership Academy (ALA) is to build a leadership culture by providing the next level of structure and continuous executive-level leadership development and certification that extends the initial Executive Leadership Institute experiences" (http://www.usg.edu/leadership_excellence/accelerated_leadership_academy). ELI, which is the stepping stone from ALA, focuses on the competencies of execution, strategy, engagement, and collaboration and assists participants in acquiring these competencies through group learning sessions, assessments, cross mentoring, reflections, and job shadowing.

All of these opportunities are intentional in their purpose. They are also vital to successful learning and advancement for student affairs professionals because they help professionals stay up-to-date on current trends and need-to-know topics. However, to identify the professional development opportunities needed for one's growth and development, it is necessary to be aware of perceived competencies versus actual competencies in order to know what opportunities are appropriate so that needed competencies can be obtained or acquired

competencies perfected. Therefore, self-awareness of competencies is fundamental for the growth and development of student affairs practitioners.

Self-Awareness

Self-awareness, according to Rochat (2003), "is arguably the most fundamental issue in psychology, from both a developmental and an evolutionary perspective" (p. 717). Yet, self-awareness is a much needed competency for individuals in any field of employment and especially for those in leadership roles. Overall, individuals range from having no self-awareness to being extremely self -aware, and levels of self -awareness can oscillate depending on self-exploration and social and/or personal experiences. This section explores the definitions of self-awareness along with the need to recognize self-awareness. The topic of self-awareness and competencies is explored further to determine how the two relate to student affairs practitioners.

Defining Self-Awareness

Self-awareness is an interesting topic that many see as subjective. The idea of self-awareness can be seen as perception versus reality where, in the end, an individual must question whose perceptions or realities are actually accurate. This is where the skills of self-reflection and self-understanding should intertwine with self-awareness. Cox (2001) distinguished between the three stating that "self-reflection is the process of creating 'awareness;' self-understanding is thinking about the implications, rationales and meaning behind one's behavior and relationships; and self-awareness is the character or quality of the behavior that authenticates the reality of self-understanding and efficacy of self-reflections" (p. 9). Cox continues, stating that all three of these components do not always work in tandem and they can either impede or inspire the growth and development of self-awareness in individuals.

In a fashion slightly different from Cox, the former Chairman and CEO of Medtronic Minneapolis, William George (2004), gave the following definition of self-awareness.

> Self-awareness is not a trait you are born with but a capacity you develop throughout your lifetime. It's your understanding of your strengths and weaknesses, your purpose in life, your values and motivations, and how and why you respond to situations in a particular way. It requires a great deal of introspection and the ability to internalize feedback from others. (p. 2)

Rochat (2003) substantiates George's definition. In his research, Rochat (2003) showed that the five levels of self-awareness (differentiation, situation, identification, performance, and self-consciousness or meta self-awareness) unfold early in life; yet, he emphasizes that an individual never fully reaches and remains at level five. According to Rochat, "what changes among mature individuals, is the rhythm and fluctuating patterns of oscillation among these basic levels of self-awareness" (p. 728). Therefore, self-awareness is developmental over time and continually stays in a developmental stage.

Similar to George, Goleman (2004) defined self-awareness as a means of "having a deep understanding of one's emotions, strengths, weaknesses, needs, and drives" (p. 3). Goleman discusses how self-awareness is a critical competency when it comes to emotional intelligence in the work place. People with a strong understanding and sense of self-awareness are well balanced, being "neither overly critical nor unrealistically hopeful. Rather, they are honest – with themselves and with others" (Goleman, 2004, p. 3).

These studies provide varying yet similar definitions of self-awareness and align with the Johari window (1961) which is a graphic model of self-awareness. The Johari window was developed in 1955 by American psychologists Joseph Luft and Harry Ingham to assist with

establishing self-awareness and personal development (Luft & Ingham, 1961). Figure 3 provides a depiction of the Johari window, which was named, based on a combination of Luft's and Ingham's first names.

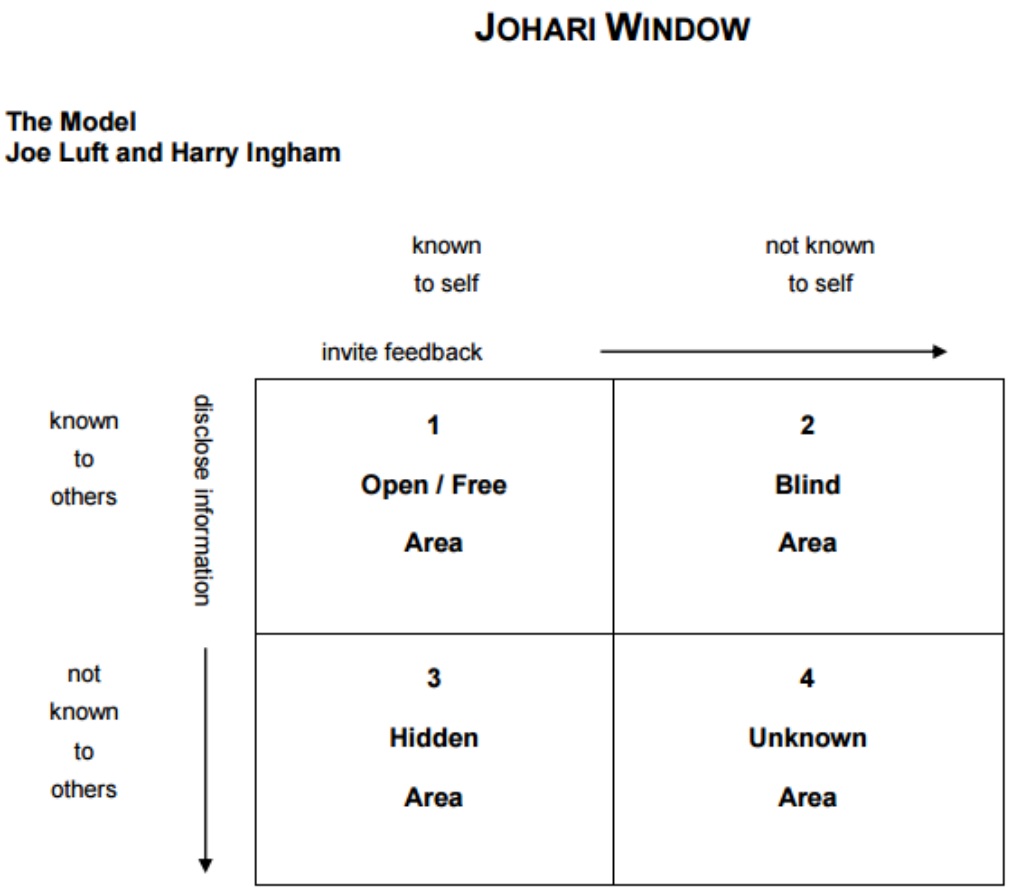

Figure 3. The Johari window developed by Luft and Ingham. Reprinted from "The Johari Window," by J. Luft and H. Ingram, 1961, *Human Relations Training New, 5(1),* pp. 6-7. Copyright 1961.

Each quadrant in the Johari window can change in size depending on where an individual is in his or her development of self-awareness, similar to Rochat's (2003) five levels of self-awareness. Further, like Rochat's research stating individuals should aim for level five, explicit self-awareness, Luft and Ingham (1961) state that Quadrant 1 should be aspirational because this is the quadrant where competencies, such as knowledge, skills, attitudes, and dispositions, are

known not only by the person but also by others, making the individual most successful and valuable. Individuals in Quadrant 1 are usually experienced in both the workforce and their personal development.

The other quadrants, on the other hand, have room for growth when it comes to self-awareness. According to Luft and Inghram (1961), Quadrant 2, referred to "as ignorance about oneself" (p. 2), usually takes place when an individual does not openly seek feedback from others concerning strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities for growth. Quadrant 3 is referred to as the hidden area because it is where individuals are scared to openly disclose information, whether about professional competencies, such as performance attainment and outcomes or manipulative intentions and hidden agendas, or whether it is about personal competencies, such as fears and sensitivities. Last, Quadrant 4 is the unknown area where competencies are unknown to both self and others. According to Luft and Inghram (1961), individuals who typically fall in this quadrant are younger in age and lack experience.

Johari's Window has proven to be an effective tool in the health care industry where the importance of practical reflective skills and personal learning are emphasized. Through reflection and feedback, practitioners have the opportunity to "get feedback about aspects of ourselves we were unaware of, and, every now and then, an aspect of ourselves that was completely hidden from our own and others' view emerges, often to our complete surprise" (Oelofsen, 2012, p. 295). Another healthcare researcher, Beach (1982), completed a study identifying the continuing education needs of nurses as perceived by the nurses themselves and their supervisors. The Johari window was used as the organizational framework for the data collection. Overall, Beach found the Johari window useful for self-awareness because it could be used as a teaching and supervisory tool when it came to blind needs versus hidden needs.

Oelsofsen (2012) summed up the Johari window by stating that "the aim of self-aware, reflective practitioners is to be able to include as many aspects of their personal learning into either their open or their hidden quadrants and to shrink their blind spots and the level to which their personality is unknown to self and others" (p. 297).

Regardless of how self-awareness is defined, the level of self-awareness attained, or the quadrant on the Johari window where an individual falls, it is important to be able to recognize self-awareness within oneself. In the following section, self-awareness will be discussed more thoroughly along with ways to recognize individuals with a heightened sense of self-awareness versus those who are lacking in development of self-awareness. Further, a few professional development opportunities that utilize specific tools such as the 360° evaluation will be reviewed.

Recognizing Self-Awareness

Self-awareness can be easily recognized in practitioners who are open and honest about their strengths and weaknesses. Individuals who are willing to discuss past failures and present limitations and who display a willingness to demonstrate their strengths are usually aware of their competencies. Self-aware individuals typically have a desire for constructive feedback as opposed to feeling threatened or targeted when another person responds to them candidly about their behavior or performance in the workplace. Overall, self-aware individuals truly understand the art of meaning-making and have become self-authored. Magolda and Baxter Magolda (2012) observe that with meaning-making, self-aware individuals are able to "make sense of knowledge (i.e., cognitive), our identities (i.e., intrapersonal), and our relationships (i.e., interpersonal)" which can, in turn, help with self-authorship where multiple perspectives are supported, careful

reflection takes place, and the fear of others' perceptions is diminished, if not completely exhausted (p. 10).

Professional development opportunities mentioned, such as the USG's Accelerated Leadership Academy and the Exectutive Leadership Institute, intentionally incorporate self-awareness into the curriculum to assist higher education participants in knowing and understanding their competencies in relation to their strengths and weaknesses. ALA states that they provide 360-degree, leadership potential, derailer inventories, and executieve coaching. ELI states that, "360° assessments will be administered at the beginning and end of the institute. Scholars receive feedback acquired from both in and outside of their workplace. Scholars also participate in a personality assessment to gain in-depth understanding of personality and its influence on leader effectiveness" (http://www.usg.edu/leadership_excellence/executive_leadership_institute).

Self-awareness assessments, such as the 360-degree assessment, provide thorough feedback when it comes to identifying self-awareness or the lack thereof because they are multi-source assessments; 360s are known for providing an evaluation of competencies from colleagues, supervisor(s), subordinates, and sometimes family or customers. These evaluations are measured against the individual's self-evaluation to determine if any discrepancies come to light. According to Bracken and Rose (2011), if given the right circumstances, 360 feedback can create behavior changes in professionals and organizations. Therefore, a 360 evaluation cannot be thrown together for employees nor can it be provided without follow-up once it is concluded. Bracken and Rose stated that in order to create professional and organizational change within a unit, the design features of the 360 evaluation must have "(a) relevant content, (b) credible data, (c) accountability, and (d) census participation" (p. 183), meaning that attention to detail is

needed in 360 evaluations. This type of evaluation must be intentional from start to finish and requires significant follow up. If done correctly, these assessments can be a tool for recognition of self-awareness.

Self-Awareness of Competencies

Higher education, like other professions, depends on competent individuals with the required tools and capabilities to do the job successfully. When professionals and their supervisors, other professionals, and/or their subordinates do not see eye-to-eye on the competencies possessed by the professional, a disconnect can occur. Research has identified several situations where self-awareness of competencies could be skewed. Entry-level professionals tended to view their understanding and mastery of most competencies differently than SSAOs and/or their direct supervisors viewed the entry-level professional's understanding of the competencies (Cuyjet et al., 2009; Dickerson et al., 2011). Mid-level managers in student affairs also tended to have skewed self-awareness and perceived their leadership skills to be significantly higher than their staff perceived their leadership on the job (Herbst & Conradie, 2011).

When conducting a meta-analysis on student affairs competencies, Herdlein et al. (2013) found that dispositions were typically overlooked in studies, indicating that these competencies may not be as valued as the competencies that fall within the categories of knowledge and skills. However, in studies that did include dispositions, the researchers found self-awareness to be the disposition mentioned most frequently as an important attribute for student affairs professionals. Furthermore, Dickerson et al. (2011) found that 93% of SSAOs and faculty in student affairs graduate preparation programs desired entry-level professionals to enter the field with self-awareness, contrasted with only 58.4% of SSAOs and faculty believing entry-level professionals

actually possessed self-awareness as a competency. Overall, the study showed that a gap in how a new professional's self-awareness was perceived by SSAOs versus how the faculty perceived a new professional's self-awareness. Similar to the findings of Dickerson et al. (2011) where only 58.4% of entry-level professionals actually possessed self-awareness, research conducted by Cuyjet et al. (2009) confirmed that entry-level professionals appeared to have a higher opinion of their competencies as opposed to the opinion of their supervisors.

While studies support discrepancies between self-awareness of entry-level professionals and the perceptions of their supervisors, evidence also definitively supports a divide between self-awareness of mid-managers and the perceptions of their supervisors, subordinates, and peers. Herbst and Conradie (2011) conducted a study of mid-managers in South Africa where they explored the mid-managers' self-perceptions versus the perceptions of their direct supervisor, subordinates, and peers. Herbst and Conradie's study used Kouzes and Posner's Leadership Practices Inventory to evaluate the mid-managers on the five leadership practices or competencies: challenging the process, inspiring a shared vision, enabling others to act, modeling the way, and encouraging the heart. The researchers found statistically significant inconsistencies between self and observer ratings in all five competencies, signifying that mid-managers over-estimated their leadership competencies.

Self-awareness of competencies is a highly desired disposition (Herdlein, 2013) but is not possessed by the majority of practitioners in student affairs (Dickerson et al., 2011; Herbst & Conradie, 2011). Research proves that the lack of this disposition affects more than just entry-level professionals. Regardless of who does or does not possess self-awareness, this disposition is critical to success in higher education. It is an essential component of student affairs

professionals' ability to lead and it is necessary for a professional to advance through the levels of competencies.

Chapter Summary

Competencies have been around for centuries (Mulder, 2009), being cited as in existence prior to medieval times and continuing to evolve into present day standards used in hiring practices and performance evaluations. As competencies continued to evolve around the globe, identification and development of specific competencies began to arise as a hot topic in higher education in the early 2000s with the first joint publication of competencies published by ACPA and NASPA, the two largest generalist professional organizations for student affairs practitioners. This document identified 10 specific competencies in which all student affairs practitioners should at least have a basic understanding. Since 2010, the publication has been revisited and revised. Although updated, the publication still consists of 10 specific competencies in which all student affairs practitioners should be foundationally knowledgeable.

Most researchers typically group competencies into the three different categories known as knowledge, skills, and dispositions (Dickerson et al., 2011; Estanek et al., 2011; Herdlein et al., 2013). However, ACPA/NASPA's joint publication included these three categories within each competency and also included levels of understanding, such as basic, intermediate, or advanced (or more recently, foundational, intermediate, or advanced), within each competency (ACPA/NASPA, 2010, 2015).

Although competencies have a lengthy history in higher education, research shows a disconnect between the competencies acquired in graduate preparation programs and the competencies needed in practice (Arellano & Martinez, 2009; Herdlein et al., 2013). A disconnect was also found between competencies and their relation to self-awareness (Cuyjet et

al., 2009; Dickerson et al., 2011; Herbst & Conradie, 2011) among student affairs professionals at all levels, suggesting a need for further research on how to bridge this gap and eliminate the disconnects.

Self-awareness, although highly subjective, is not stagnant (Luft & Ingram, 1961; Rochat, 2003). Rochat (2003) stated that, "As adults, we are constantly oscillating in our levels of awareness: from dreaming or losing awareness about ourselves during sleep, to being highly self-conscious in public circumstances or in a state of confusion and dissociation as we immerse ourselves in movies or novels" (p. 728). Further, Luft and Ingram (1961) devised the Johari window depicting how individuals can represent their competencies in different quadrants depending on where they are in life or in a particular situation. These four quadrants, known as the open/free area, the blind area, the hidden area, and the unknown area, can increase or decrease in size depending on an individual's current level of awareness. Therefore, perfecting our self-awareness is key. An individual can hone self-awareness by understanding the art of meaning-making and self-authorship. Magolda and Baxter Magolda (2011) believe that "intellectual curiosity about oneself is again an essential ingredient to the process" (p. 11). Therefore, it is essential that student affairs practitioners strive to make meaning out of their experiences so self-awareness is gained or perfected throughout their development as individuals and employees.

In conclusion, self-awareness is a competency in and of itself. It has been classified repeatedly as a highly sought-after disposition (Dickerson et al., 2011; Herdlein et al., 2013). Thus, it is important that, moving forward, student affairs practitioners understand the complex dichotomies that exist between their perceived competence and their perceived level of self-awareness.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

After participating in an executive leadership training program where 360º feedback evaluations were performed, the researcher, a student affairs practitioner, became interested in perceived competencies and self-awareness. Evaluations from the 360º feedback showed either an alignment or misalignment of competencies and self-awareness. This eye-opening experience proved pivotal in the participants' development as leaders and practitioners in higher education, and overall, it laid the foundation for this research. The intent of this quantitative study was to measure student affairs practitioners' self-reported data about perceived competence as it related to their ability to be self-aware.

This study examined data collected from practitioners in Georgia and states contiguous to Georgia. Information collected from this study provides knowledge needed for professional associations, graduate preparation programs, institutions of higher education, and individuals planning professional development opportunities to identify gaps between the competencies being taught and the ability to be self-aware. This chapter details the researcher's worldview, methodological design, population sampling, instrumentation, survey procedures, validity, ethical considerations, data collection, and data analysis.

Figure 4 demonstrates the steps of the research process using an illustration provided by Ary, Jacobs, Sorensen, and Walker (2013). According to Ary et al. (2013), researchers can move back and forth among research stages with stages even overlapping at times.

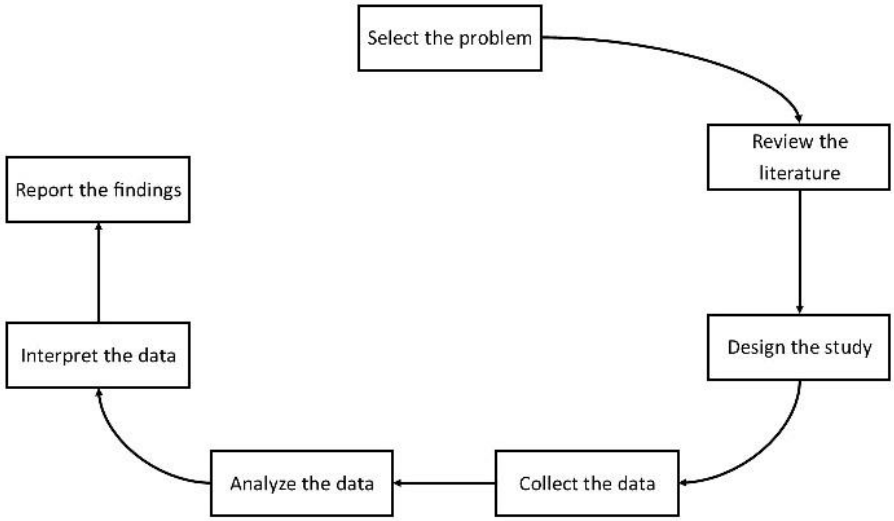

Figure 4. Stages in the research process developed. Reprinted from Cengage Learning (p. 35), by Ary, Jacobs, Sorensen and Walker, 2014. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, Cengage Learning. Copyright 2014.

Worldview

Worldviews are based on experience and present a philosophical understanding of the researcher's beliefs and opinions concerning why he or she chose to conduct a particular study, whether qualitative, quantitative, or mixed methods (Creswell, 2014). Most researchers begin their work with a knowledge claim. According to Creswell (2003), "Stating a *knowledge claim* means that the researchers start a project with certain assumptions about how they will learn and what they will learn during their inquiry" (p. 6). The researcher for this study began with a hypothesis, meaning the researcher described a relationship among the constructs or non-observables. The constructs in this study were perceived competence and perceived self-awareness.

Four commonly debated worldviews or paradigms associated with research designs are positivist/postpositivism, constructivism, transformation, and pragmatism. As a positivist/postpositivist researcher, the researcher believes that reality exists; however, the

researcher also understands that humans are fallible and, at times, reality can be only approximated. This study was guided by the researcher's philosophical assumptions that aligned with positivist/postpositivist knowledge claims. A survey was used to collect data for the study. The survey used primarily closed-ended questions. The researcher's survey instrument served as the sole mechanism for data collection and the data captured can be generalized to a larger population (Hatch, 2002). Furthermore, the researcher remained as objective as possible throughout the study.

Methodological Design and Questions

Numerous research studies on the topic of competencies exist including competency modeling (Marrelli, 1998; Shippman & Ash, 2000), competencies in the workforce (Hoge et al., 2005; McLagan, 1997), and competencies for higher education professionals (ACPA/NASPA, 2015; Dickerson et al., 2011; Lovell & Kosten, 2000). Furthermore, self-awareness, as it relates to both leadership and emotional intelligence (Goleman, 1998; Goleman, 2004, Goleman, Boyatzis, & McKee, 2002) is highly researched. However, at the time of this study, scant research existed on whether or not a relationship exists between perceived competence and perceived self-awareness. Therefore, in order to determine if a relationship exists between the two variables, the researcher employed a survey instrument to obtain the needed data.

The research design utilized in this study was survey research design, often referred to as descriptive research. In descriptive quantitative research studies, survey research designs are useful in providing an overview of existing situations through the collection and analysis of survey data (Creswell, 2014). Descriptive research variables are not manipulated as opposed to experimental design where manipulation of variables can occur. According to Plano Clark and Creswell (2010), "Survey research designs are procedures in quantitative research for

administering a survey or questionnaire to a small group of people (called the *sample*) in order to identify trends in attitudes, opinions, behaviors, or characteristics of a large group of people (called the *population*)" (p. 175). Overall, surveys allow for summarization of attitudes, beliefs, and opinions about a specific topic to be measured which is then generalized to a larger population.

Surveys are a common tool widely used in both social sciences and education (Ary et al., 2013). The survey developed for this study provided a set of pre-determined, instrument-based, closed-ended questions that, in return, produced numerical, unbiased, data for the researcher to analyze prior to making generalizations. This research was designed to answer the following primary research question: What is the relationship between self-awareness and perceived competencies for student affairs practitioners? The researcher attempted to answer the primary research question through an online survey that zeroed in on the primary question by examining the following sub questions:

1. To what degree, if any, does experience in the field as a student affairs practitioner predict one's self-awareness of professional competencies?
2. To what degree, if any, does job level/position as a student affairs practitioner predict one's self-awareness of professional competencies?

Population Sampling

Permission was requested from ACPA and NASPA, two generalist professional associations for student affairs practitioners, to survey their members in Georgia and states contiguous to Georgia. Some individuals may have had membership in both organizations. However, it is unlikely that individuals would attempt to take the survey more than once. To

safeguard against such an occurrence, Qualtrics, the electronic data collection system used, provided privacy settings that prohibit individuals from taking the survey more than once.

The survey instrument was created using Qualtrics, a web-based, data-collection tool utilized by "1,600 college and universities worldwide, including every major university in the U.S." (http://www.qualtrics.com/about/). Qualtrics has the ability to password protect a survey, open and close the survey based on preset parameters, and prohibit duplicate responses from individuals. Further, Qualtrics boasts of its ability to ease the cost of and time required for of academic research via its web-based survey tools. Qualtrics has the ability to generate real-time reports with cross-tabulations and extreme confidentiality.

Population

The U.S. census does not currently have a definition for the states that would be included in the southeast region. Furthermore, ACPA and NASPA categorize their membership in geographic regions, such as, individual state classification or the groupings of states. ACPA has state affiliations such as the Georgia College Personnel Association (GCPA) and the North Carolina College Personnel Association (NCCPA). NASPA, on the other hand, has broad regions that are categorized in groups from Region I to Region VI as well as areas that include countries outside the United States. Although NASPA does have specific regions, the organization does not have a region classified as the southeast. The closest region within NASPA would be Region III, which encompasses Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, Bulgaria, Japan, Kenya, Southern Africa, and Taiwan. Therefore, NASPA's Region III would be entirely too large to provide a manageable sample size. Consequently, individuals who are located in

Georgia and states contiguous to Georgia were selected, for the purpose of this study, to represent the southeast region of the United States.

In January 2016, membership numbers for both ACPA and NASPA were acquired via personal communication with their research designees. Table 1 details a breakdown of the number of members in each organization by state in which the survey instrument was distributed.

Table 1.

Breakdown of Membership in ACPA and NASPA Among States

STATES	ACPA Membership	NASPA Membership
Alabama	29	132
Florida	259	547
Georgia	182	273
North Carolina	229	329
South Carolina	164	154
Tennessee	68	126
TOTAL (2,492):	931	1,561

Note. Membership may overlap between the two organizations, possibly giving a population sample size smaller than actual membership.

The membership within the two organizations was sufficient for the required sample size and is discussed in more detail in the following paragraphs.

An a priori power analysis was conducted using G.Power 3.2 (Faul et al., 2009) to determine the minimum sample size required to detect statistically significant observed effects in the data. Given an expected effect of $f^2 = .15$ (medium/moderate), an alpha value of .05, and 2 expected predictors based on the research questions, the minimal sample size for this study was

68. Thus, the target sample size was 200. A larger target sample size would ensure that the statistical analyses had adequate power.

Sample

Survey research design is utilized in quantitative research and entails administering a survey to a sample population to identify a particular trend, such as behaviors, opinions, attitudes, or characteristics, which can then be generalized to a larger population (Plano Clark & Creswell, 2010). Plano Clark and Creswell (2010) stated, "A hallmark of this design is that the researcher carefully selects a group of people to study to ensure that they are representative of a larger population about which they want to make conclusions" (p. 175). The group of people selected for this study were student affairs practitioners who belonged to ACPA or NASPA and who also lived in Georgia or one of the states contiguous to Georgia. This group of people were representative of a larger population about which the researcher would make conclusions (presented in Chapter 5). Further, because the researcher was a member of both ACPA and NASPA, access to the membership databases was easily obtainable. Therefore, the sample was chosen through a single-stage sampling procedure where the researcher already had access to the names and contact information of the population, making it easier for the researcher to proceed with surveying the clustered population (Creswell, 2014).

Finally, probability sampling was not feasible for this study, so nonprobability sampling was used. In nonprobability sampling, the sample is selected out of availability, convenience, and the fact that the population represents an attribute which the researcher is seeking to study (Plano Clark & Creswell, 2010). In this case, the sample population was working student affairs practitioners. While nonprobability sampling was the strategy used, it does limit generalization,

meaning the conclusions of this study may not be applicable to all student affairs professionals across the United States since the study focused on the southeast.

The sample was comprised of 248 student affairs practitioners from Georgia and states contiguous to Georgia. However, only 174 practitioners completed the survey in its entirety, giving an overall response rate of 70%. While the target sample size was 200, 174 responses was well over the minimum sample size of 68, which was required to detect statistically significant observed effects in the data.

Table 2 presents personal demographic characteristics of the sample population. As shown in Table 2, the majority of the respondents held a master's degree, with those having an earned doctorate following closely behind. Further, females were the primary respondants, with males coming in a close second. In reviewing age, those in their 30s had the highest response rate, with the age groups of 18-29, 40-49, and 50-50 all being relively close in responding as compared to those in their 30s. Last, the personal characteristics of the samples showed that the sample largely identified racially as White (135 out of 174). This table can be reviewed more closely below.

Table 2.

Descriptive Statistics of Personal Characteristics of the Sample

Characteristics	Raw Frequencies
Highest-Degree Earned	
Bachelors	12
Masters	99
Doctorate	64
Other	4
Gender	
Male	67
Female	111
Transgender	2
Prefer not to respond	2
Age	
18-29	42
30-39	65
40-49	39
50-59	25
60 or older	10
Racial Identity	
American Indian or Alaska Native	1
Black or African American	29
Latino or Hispanic	7
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	3
White	135
Multiracial	2
Other	6
Prefer not to respond	2

N = 174

Table 3 provides a summary of professional characteristics of the sample and delineates membership in professional associations along with preferences for professional development and years of experience in student affairs.

Table 3.

Descriptive Statistics of Professional Characteristics

Characteristics	Raw Frequencies
Membership in Professional Associations	
ACPA	105
GCPA	25
NASPA	142
NCCPA	15
SCCPA	17
SACSA	41
None	3
Other	79
Currency in Professional Practice	
Attend state and/or national conferences	166
Campus trainings	119
Discuss with other professionals	154
Read current periodicals	159
Webinars	118
Other	15
Likelihood of Attending Professional Development Event	
Webinar	118
Campus workshop	120
Drive-in workshop	78
State conference	103
Regional conference	116
National conference	131
Other	4
Frequency of Participation in Professional Development Event	
Monthly	77
Quarterly	76
Annually	35
Never	1

Table 3.

Descriptive Statistics of Professional Characteristics (continued)

Characteristics	Raw Frequencies
Perceptions of Preparation of Graduate Programs on Professional Competencies	
Not at all	13
Somewhat	68
Adequate	64
Superior	43
Support from Home Campus on Competencies	
Not supported at all	13
Somewhat supported	50
Supported	59
Extremely supported	67
Number of Direct Supervisees	
None	64
1-5	66
6-10	28
10 or more	24
Identity as Student Affairs Professional	
Yes	172
No	9
Current Level Position	
Entry-level	46
Mid-level	81
Senior-level	53
Level of Next Anticipated Position	
Mid-level	65
Senior-level	83
I do not anticipate having a next position	22
Other	12
Years of Experience	
0-3 years	44
4-10 years	53
11-15 years	29
≥ 16 years	54

N = 174

Table 4 presents the institutional characteristics of the sample. This table shows that the majority of the participants worked at public, 4-year colleges or universities with graduate programs. Further, the highest number of student affairs practitioners participating in the survey were employed in Georgia.

Table 4.

Descriptive Statistics of Institutional Characteristics

Characteristic	Raw Frequencies
Type of Institution	
Public	139
Private	35
For-Profit	2
Further Classification of Institution	
Technical college	3
Community college	6
4-year college or university without graduate programs	18
4-year college or university with graduate programs	151
Institutional Enrollment	
999 or fewer	6
1,000 to 4,999	25
5,000 to 9,999	37
10,000 to 19,999	38
20,000 or more	74
State of Institutional Location	
Alabama	14
Florida	15
Georgia	75
North Carolina	36
South Carolina	24
Tennessee	16
Other	2

N = 174

Instrumentation

The survey instrument used by the researcher (Appendix B) was replicated and modified from two different survey instruments (Appendices C and D). Since the researcher was examining the relationship between competencies and self-awareness, she obtained permission to adapt one survey that focused exclusively on competencies and another survey that focused exclusively on self-awareness. Dr. Antony Gutierrez's (2012) Community College Student Government Advisor Survey was adapted by the researcher along with Dr. Carver and Dr. Scheier's (1985) Self-Consciousness Scale Revised (SCSR). Permission from all three researchers can be found in Appendices E, F, and G.

Measurement of Competencies

Dr. Antony Gutierrez's dissertation, entitled *Student Affairs Standards and Competencies: Examining the Professional Standards and Competencies of California Community College Student Government Advisors* (2012), was designed to examine competencies of student government advisors working in the California community college system. Gutierrez surveyed his population using professional standards and competencies from the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC), the American College Personnel Association (ACPA), the Association of College Unions International (ACUI), the California Community College Student Affairs Association (CCCSAA), the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA), and student affairs literature. However, this researcher's study on the complex dichotomies of student affairs practitioners' perceived competence was not examining a specific functional area, such as student government advisors, nor was it examining only one specific state. Further, this researcher's study was specifically exploring the competencies adopted by the governing boards of ACPA and NASPA in July 2015

as published in the *Professional Competency Areas for Student Affairs Educators* (2015). Therefore, Dr. Gutierrez's instrument was adapted to reflect the characteristics of this study.

Measurement of Self-Awareness

The original Self-Consciousness Scale (Fenigstein et al., 1975) consists of 23 items intended to measure three different elements of self-consciousness. Public self-consciousness, private self-consciousness, and social anxiety are all aspects of self; therefore, they relate to one's self-awareness. Dr. Carver and Dr. Scheier (1985) revised the original Self-Consciousness Scale by Fenigstein et al. (1975) so that the revised scale could be used whenever data concerning self-consciousness needed to be collected from populations other than undergraduate college students. Additionally, on the original scale some verbiage needed to be simplified for better comprehension and the response arrangement needed to be simplified for better participant comprehension. The revised scale by Carver and Scheier (1985) was clearer and easier for participants to follow. The revised scale consisted of 22 items rather than the 23 items included in the original scale. In the new scale, respondents are asked to select the extent to which the 22 statements reflect their behavior. Participants use the following response arrangement: 3 = a lot like me, 2 = somewhat like me, 1 = a little like me, and 0 = not at all like me.

Measurement of Perceived Competencies and Self-Awareness

The survey constructed by the researcher for the current study was divided into three sections. The first section focused on the 10 competencies identified by ACPA and NASPA as essential to the work performed by student affairs practitioners:

- Personal and ethical foundations (PPF)
- Values, philosophy, history (VPH)
- Assessment, evaluation, and research (AER)

- Law, policy, and history (VPH)
- Organizational and human resource (OHR)
- Leadership (LEAD)
- Social justice and inclusion (SJI)
- Student learning and development (SLD)
- Technology (TECH)
- Advising and supporting (A/S)

Participants were asked to rank these competencies according to the importance of each as it pertains to their work. A Likert scale was used with 0 = least important, 1 = somewhat important, 2 = important, and 3 = extremely important. Next, participants were asked to identify the level at which they would rate themselves in terms of how confident they feel about practicing each competency. The levels were ranked using a Likert scale and, with the exception of 0 which equaled not competent, were identified by ACPA and NASPA as: 1 = foundational, 2 = intermediate, and 3 = advanced. Following these initial two questions, additional questions asked about professional organization membership, professional development opportunities involving acquiring and perfecting competencies, and graduate preparation related to competencies. Some questions on Dr. Gutierrez's instrument were either omitted or adapted to meet the requirements of this study. Further, additional questions were added as needed (Appendix B).

The second section of the survey used for this study focused on self-consciousness or awareness of self. The researcher compiled the three categories of the Self-Consciousness Scale Revised (SCSR) so that the questions were no longer categorized as private self-consciousness, public self-consciousness, and social anxiety. Further, questions that seemed redundant or not

applicable to student affairs practitioners were eliminated. Last, considering Goleman's (1998) research linking self-awareness to the understanding of strengths, weaknesses, and the ability to be receptive to feedback from others, the following three questions were added to this section of the survey; they were not included in the Self-Consciousness Scale Revised (questions 29, 30, & 31—Appendix B). Overall, this section asked questions about participants' own self-consciousness and they responded using a Likert scale.

Finally, the last set of questions gathered demographics for the survey. While many of these questions asked for personal demographics, several questions pertained to professional demographics as well as institutional demographics. It was not only important to know who participated in this survey, but it was also important to understand the type of institution where the participants worked and the functional area of their work. This section gathered basic facts about the characteristics of the participants that helped the researcher generalize the data to smaller population pockets.

Validity and Reliability

Validity refers to whether or not the researcher can gain meaningful information and useful inferences from the data collected and the scores provided by the particular instruments utilized (Creswell, 2014). The level of validity aids the researcher in convincing others of the value of his or her research. Reliability, on the other hand, refers to whether or not scores for items on a survey instrument are consistent and stable over time. The first part of the researcher's survey was an adaptation of Dr. Antony Gutierrez's (2012) Community College Student Government Advisor Survey. His survey was self-constructed and he ensured validity via a convenience pilot test where five student affairs practitioners were asked to evaluate the

assessment tool and provide feedback. Following the feedback received, minor edits were made to the survey.

The second survey tool adapted the Self-Consciousness Scale Revised, which has proven validity through factor analyses and interscale correlations. In the factor loading data, the Self-Consciousness Scale Revised compared the variance to the original scale to ensure consistency (Fenigstein et al., 1975). Furthermore, the original scale had proven test-retest reliability. The reliabilities were .84 for public self-consciousness, .79 for private self-consciousness, .73 for social anxiety, and .80 for the total reliability score (Fenigstein et al., 1975). The Self-Consciousness Scale Revised used Cronbach alphas to determine internal consistency. Private self-consciousness revealed a score of .75, public self-consciousness revealed a score of .84, and social anxiety revealed a score of .79, all of which compared favorably to the original scale (Fenigstein & Scheier, 1985). Finally, a test-retest correction was provided by Fenigstein and Scheier (1985) for their revised scale in order to tackle the last remaining issue surrounding reliability. After a 4-week interval, the test was administered again. Private self-consciousness had a subscale of .76, public self-consciousness had a subscale of .74, and social anxiety maintained a subscale of .77 (Fenigstein & Scheier, 1985). This ultimately proved that the scale is stable across time and, overall, has both proven validity and reliability.

Data Collection

Prior to the start of data collection, Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval was sought from Georgia Southern University's Office of Research Integrity. A copy of the IRB approval letter is included (Appendix H). After IRB approval, the researcher sent an email to the ACPA membership via an e-card and to the NASPA membership via an email. The e-card/email explained to recipients why they were targeted for the survey. Additionally, the e-card/email

explained the timeframe for completing the survey, which was for a 3-week period in January. The e-card/email also explained the benefits for completing the survey. As required by the IRB, both the contact information for the researcher and the researcher's dissertation chair were included should questions arise. In addition to this information, a link to the Qualtrics survey was embedded in the e-card/email. The link led to a brief cover letter in Qualtrics where the participant had to indicate his or her consent prior to proceeding to the research questions. The participant's consent acknowledged that he or she understood the purpose of the study and the survey procedures. If the participants were interested in proceeding, acceptance of the informed consent document was required before the respondent could access the questions (Appendix I). Participants were given 3 weeks in January 2016 to complete the survey. The researcher sent a follow-up e-card/email to members of the sample one week prior to closing the survey encouraging them to participate.

Throughout the data collection process, all participants were presented the same exact questions in the same order. Overall, the questions pertained to perceived competencies, perceived self-awareness, and demographics as they related to the participants personally, professionally, and institutionally. Participants had the ability to skip questions that they had no desire to answer, and some questions allowed participants to explain their responses. At the close of the survey, participants were thanked for their participation, and, once again, they were informed about the survey's anonymity and confidentiality. Once the site was exited, Qualtrics did not allow participants to re-enter.

Ethical Considerations

Student affairs practitioners who belong to ACPA, NASPA, or CAS espouse to adhere to a set of ethical principles (Appendices J and K) as all three organizations have their own code of

ethics or something similar. A code of ethics helps govern both scholarly research and everyday practice for members of an organization. NASPA is explicit in their Standards of Professional Practice and identifies 18 standards for members. Of the 18, one is research involving human subjects which states, "Members are aware of and take responsibility for all pertinent ethical principles and institutional requirements when planning any research activity dealing with human subjects" (https://www.naspa.org/about/student-affairs). Further, the American Educational Research Association (AERA) also has a code of ethics that involves human research protection. Therefore, as an educational researcher and a member of ACPA, NASPA, and CAS, every effort was made to ensure ethical behavior before, during, and after the research process. An example of the researcher's ethical behavior was ensuring that IRB status, which provides protections against human rights violations, was granted prior to beginning the data collection process.

The researcher identified three possible ethical considerations that participants might question: breach of anonymity or confidentiality, uncomfortableness with participation, and/or accuracy of information reported. From the beginning of the survey, the importance of ensuring anonymity and confidentiality was communicated to all participants. Qualtrics provides the option to anonymize responses. Plus, the survey did not request specific names or names of the institutions of individuals who chose to participate. Further, IP addresses of participants were not tracked and no data was shared that could be linked to any subject.

Another ethical consideration, potential uncomfortableness, was fully addressed in the informed consent document that explained the provisions of the study, including a "standard set of elements that acknowledges protection of human rights" prior to participation (Creswell, 2014, p. 96). Finally, in response to potential question about accuracy, the use of Qualtrics

ensured accuracy of responses, and the researcher did her best to analyze and report the data through an unbiased lens.

Finally, all information pertaining to this research study will be kept secure. Paper files are locked in the researcher's office. Electronic files are password protected on the researcher's computer and further protected in the researcher's online DropBox account. Only the researcher has direct access to retained files. Use of the research data over the next several years will be strictly for publication or a follow-up study. The research data will not be kept for more than 5 years.

Data Analysis

Each participant provided data about his or her perceived competence, perceived self-awareness, and demographic information such as gender, level of education, functional area, years of experience, institution size and type, and state. Descriptive statistics (e.g. frequencies, means, and standard deviations) and bivariate, zero-order correlations were calculated using the survey data. To examine RQ1 – To what degree, if any, does experience in the field as a student affairs practitioner predict one's self-awareness of professional competencies? – an ordinary least squares regression was utilized. An ordinary least squares regression technique, stepwise regression allows for examination of the predictive effect of one or more predictors on a criterion or outcome variable, in this case self-awareness of professional competencies.

For RQ2 – To what degree, if any, does job level/position in the field as a student affairs practitioner predict one's self-awareness of professional competencies? – the researcher initially intended to use a one-way analysis of covariance (ANCOVA). In this analysis, job level/position serves as the independent variable and self-awareness of professional competencies serves as the dependent variable. Pertinent demographic characteristics serve as covariates in the model.

ANCOVA permits researchers to ascertain the effect of one or more independent variables on a dependent variable while controlling for the effect (i.e., variance) of one or more covariates. Thus, ANCOVA allows for a better understanding of the true observed effects of the independent variables of interest.

However, the use of an ANCOVA was not feasible either because of a violation to the homogeneity of regression coefficients assumption or because the covariate in question had no effect on the outcomes. Therefore, this research question was answered using a series of one-way ANOVAs with job level serving as the independent variable and self-awareness and perceived competence serving as the outcome respectively.

Together, these analyses answered the research questions and will help scholars and practitioners understand more clearly how these phenomena operate together. With respect to effect sizes, Cohen (1988) provided the following interpretive guidelines for interpreting effect sizes: R^2: .01-.24 is small; .25-.49 is moderate; ≥ .50 is large; η^2: .01-.05 is small; .06-.13 is moderate; ≥ .14 is large.

Chapter Summary

This study was constructed to assess student affairs practitioners' perceived competence in comparison to their perceived self-awareness. By surveying practitioners in the southeast U.S. via their membership in ACPA and NASPA, the researcher achieved a rate of return that enables generalization of the findings to a larger population. The worldview of this study is positivism/postpositivism, where the researcher collected quantitative descriptive research data through an online survey tool known as Qualtrics. The researcher used nonprobability sampling and already had access to members of both professional organizations who lived in either

Georgia or a state contiguous to Georgia. Because no uniform definition of the southeastern U.S. existed, the researcher defined the southeast as Georgia and contiguous states.

The survey tool utilized was an adaptation of both Dr. Gutierrez's (2012) survey tool for his dissertation and Drs. Carver and Scheier's Self-Consciousness Scale Revised (1985). Both tools had proven validity and the Self-Consciousness Scale Revised had strong proven reliability. Once the survey tool for this study was constructed, IRB status was obtained and the survey was distributed. Informed consent of participants was essential and confidentiality was maintained to the highest standards. Throughout the research process, the researcher adhered to the ethical standards of ACPA, NASPA, and CAS.

Chapters 4 and Chapter 5 conclude this study. In Chapter 4, the researcher presents the data analysis using several tables to give a visual perspective. In Chapter 4, the researcher also presents a report of the findings. Chapter 5 provides an interpretation of the findings along with a discussion of the implications and recommendations for further research.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

This quantitative study set out to measure the relationship between student affairs practitioners' perceived competencies and their perceived self-awareness. The study looked at personal, professional, and institutional demographics deemed essential. Survey respondents were practitioners who were members of ACPA and/or NASPA and who lived in Georgia or a state contiguous to Georgia. The survey instrument was distributed to 2,492 student affairs practitioners. ACPA administered the survey to its members, and the researcher admistered the survey to NASPA's members; therefore, out of the 2,492 emails sent, some of the practitioners could have overlapped between the two affiliations. Overall, 174 completed responses were received.

The following primary research question guided this study: What is the relationship between self-awareness and perceived competencies for student affairs practitioners?
The two sub questions asked:

1. To what degree, if any, does experience in the field as a student affairs practitioner predict one's self-awareness of professional competencies?
2. To what degree, if any, does job level/position as a student affairs practitioner predict one's self-awareness of professional competencies?

This chapter begins with descriptive statistics and zero-order correlations followed by answers to the research questions and then a chapter summary.

Descriptive Statistics and Zero-Order Correlations

Both descriptive statistics, known for summarizing and describing data, and internal consistency reliability coefficients, known for determining how well items on a survey measure

the same construct (Creswell, 2014; Newton & Rudestam, 2012), are presented in Table 5. The table uses student affairs practitioners' years of experience. Entry-level professionals, practitioners with 0 to 3 years of experience, have a higher self-reported rate of perceived self-awareness as compared with practitioners with 16 or more years of student affairs experience. However, when looking at the descriptive statistics and internal consistency reliability coefficients for self-reported perceived competence, the numbers are opposite in comparison to the self-reported rate of perceived self-awareness. Practitioners having 0 to 3 years of experience reported having lower perceived competencies as compared to practitioners with 16 or more years of experience.

Table 5

Descriptive Statistics and Internal Consistency Reliability Coefficients for Self-Awareness and Perceived Competence by Years of Experience

Outcome	0-3 Years		4-10 Years		11-15 Years		≥ 16 Years		α
	M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	
Self-Awareness	2.85	0.29	2.72	0.42	2.66	0.33	2.59	0.40	0.76
Perceived Competence	3.01	0.27	3.11	0.34	3.13	0.34	3.42	0.25	0.83

N = 174

Descriptive statistics for perceived self-awareness and perceived competence by job level were also calculated. Job level is organized into three categories: entry-level, mid-level, and senior-level; however, these categories were not defined in the survey, leaving each participant the discretion to self-identify in one of the categories. Table 6 displays the descriptive statistics for each scale by job level.

Table 6

Descriptive Statistics for Self-Awareness and Perceived Competence by Job Level

Outcome	Entry-Level		Mid-Level		Senior-Level	
	M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*
Self-Awareness	2.82	0.30	2.72	0.39	2.57	0.39
Perceived Competence	3.00	0.27	3.15	0.36	3.38	0.26

N = 174

Consistent with years of experience in Table 5, Table 6 indicates that perceived self-awareness is higher in entry-level professionals compared to senior-level professionals. Yet, once again, perceived competence is higher in senior-level professionals as compared to entry-level professionals. In both tables, mid-level professionals remained directly in the middle of entry-level professionals and senior-level professionals when mean and standard deviations were examined.

Finally, zero-order correlations among years of experience, job level, self-awareness, and perceived competence are depicted in Table 7. As shown, all variables, with the exception of self-awareness, are statistically significant.

Table 7

Zero-Order Correlations Among Years of Experience, Job Level, Self-Awareness, and Perceived Competence

Variable	1	2	3	4
1. Job Level	-	.80*	-.24*	.44*
2. Years of Experience		-	-.26*	.46*
3. Self-Awareness			-	$-.04^{ns}$
4. Perceived Competence				-

N = 174 * $p < .01$ ^{ns} statistically non-significant

The reliability coefficient, Cronbach's α, for the Self-Consciousness Scale Revised is at par or better than previous research, including the initial validation study completed by Carver and Scheier (1985). Cronbach's α for the perceived competencies scale is similar to that published in the original dissertation validation study. Thus, the internal consistency reliability coefficients for the present sample match those reported in previous research. Zero-order correlation coefficients revealed that as job level and years of experience increased, student affairs practitioners' perceived self-awareness decreased. Conversely, as job level and years of experience increased, practitioners' perceived competence increased as well. Interestingly, there was no correlation between perceived self-awareness and perceived competence albeit the correlation trended in the inverse direction.

Answering the Research Questions

The following primary research question guided this study: What is the relationship between self-awareness and perceived competencies for student affairs practitioners? As previously noted, no correlation exists between perceived self-awareness and perceived competencies. As competence increased, self-awareness decreased, leaving an inverse correlation between the two variables.

The first sub question asked: To what degree, if any, does experience in the field as a student affairs practitioner predict one's self-awareness of professional competencies? This sub question was answered through a series of ordinary least squares regressions with years of experience as a student affairs practitioner serving as the predictor and self-awareness and perceived competence serving as the criterion, respectively. With respect to awareness, years of experience was a negative predictor of self-awareness, $F_{(1,168)} = 10.59$, $p = .01$, $R^2 = .06$. For every one unit increase in years of experience as a student affairs practitioner, self-awareness

decreased by -.24 of one standard deviation (b = -.08 [$CI_{95\%}$ = -.13, -.03]). Inversely, years of experience was a significant positive predictor of perceived competence, $F_{(1,170)} = 43.53$, $p < .001$, $R^2 = .20$. For every unit increase in years of experience, there was a concomitant .45 standard deviation increase in perceived competence (b = .13 [$CI_{95\%}$ = .09, .17]). Refer to Table 5 for the means and standard deviations for each outcome by years of experience.

The second sub question asked: To what degree, if any, does job level/position as a student affairs practitioner predict one's self-awareness of professional competencies? This sub question was answered using a series of one-way ANOVAs with job level serving as the independent variable and self-awareness and perceived competence serving as the outcome respectively. The results from analysis of self-awareness indicated that job level had a significant effect on the self-awareness of student affairs practitioners, $F_{(2,167)} = 5.13$, $p = .01$, $\eta^2 = .06$.

Post-hoc tests with Tukey's Honestly Significant Difference (HSD) adjustment to the p-value showed that the only statistically significant difference in self-awareness occurred between entry-level and senior-level practitioners, with entry-level practitioners reporting greater self-awareness than senior-level practitioners. The differences between entry-level and mid-level and mid-level to senior-level practitioners were not statistically significant. Findings of perceived competence demonstrated that job level had a statistically significant influence on the perceived competence of student affairs practitioners, $F_{(2,169)} = 18.15$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .18$. Post-hoc tests with Tukey's HSD adjustment suggested that statistically significant differences existed between entry-level and mid-level, entry-level and senior-level, and between mid-level and senior-level, with senior-level practitioners reporting the highest perceived competence and entry-level

practitioners reporting the lowest. See Table 6 for descriptive statistics by job level for each outcome.

Chapter Summary

Of the 2,492 student affairs practitioners who received the survey instrument via e-card/email, 174 respondents completed the survey in its entirety. This sample population provided an adequate number of participants for the research questions under investigation. Therefore, the data collected and the results analyzed are considered statistically significant.

Findings from the primary research question indicated that as student affairs practitioner's perceived competence increased, perceived self-awareness decreased, showing a clear inverse relationship between the two. Sub questions one and two produced similar results in that as both experience and job level/position increased, so did perceived competence. And, as both experience and job level/position decreased, as did perceived competence. In contrast, as experience and job level/position increased, perceived self-awareness decreased, and as experience and job level/positon decreased, perceived self-awareness increased.

Possible explanations of why the two variables proved to be inversely correlated are explored in Chapter 5. Chapter 5 also provides a detailed interpretation of the results presented in this chapter as well as a detailed interpretation of how the demographics presented in Chapter 3 play into the needs of students affairs practitioners. Further, the findings are discussed along with recommendations for further study.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this study was to determine if a relationship existed between the perceived self-awareness of student affairs practitioners and their perceived competencies. Furthermore, the intent was to look closely at demographics that could potentially help or hinder the relationship between the two variables. Demographics that were examined included the respondents' years of experience in the field as a student affairs practitioner and their current job level/position.

Kegan's self-evolution theory was utilized as the guiding framework for this study. In his book, *The Evolving Self* (1982), Kegan introduced the self-evolution theory, and the research behind the theory remains the same after 34 years (Patton et al., 2016). However, over time Kegan has slighty changed his terminology of the five stages or orders of development. Just like the knowledge and understanding of competencies and self-awaress can both evolve and regress, so can an individuals development of consciousness, as they may shift back and forth between Kegan' five stages. In 1982, Kegan referred to these levels of consciousness as stages of development, then in 1994 he referred to them as orders of consciousness, and in 2000, he references them as forms of mind (Patton et al., 2016). Similar to Rochat (2003) stating that one never arrives at being self-aware, one does not necessarily arrive at Kegan's Order 5: Self-Transforming Mind. This stage is infrequently reached, and if so, it is shaped by one's experiences and encounters throughout life; therefore, one typically, if at all, reaches it much later in life.

A non-directional hypothesis guided this study in that the researcher believed some type of a relationship existed between competencies and self-awareness because, in the researcher's

mind, these two variables seem to go hand-in-hand. However, the literature did not indicate whether the relationship would be positive or negative. Therefore, the researcher set out to discover the influence, if any, the two variables had on one another and how the respondents' demographics might affect the relationship between the two variables.

A descriptive quantitative study was employed to answer the overarching research question that directed this study: What is the relationship between perceived self-awareness and perceived competencies for student affairs practitioners? For the study, the researcher utilized competencies identified as essential for individuals working in the field of student affairs. These competencies were published in the most recent guide (2015) produced jointly by ACPA and NASPA. The competencies identified in the publication are specific to individuals who work in student affairs regardless of their education or experience. Throughout this study, the researcher sought to answer the following sub questions:

1. To what degree, if any, does experience in the field as a student affairs practitioner predict one's self-awareness of professional competencies?

2. To what degree, if any, does job level/positon in the field as a student affairs practitioner predict one's self-awareness of professional competencies?

The researcher surveyed student affairs practitioners who worked in Georgia or states contiguous to Georgia. This smaller subset of student affairs practitioners provided the researcher with a manageable sample size. Although not all student affairs professionals in the United States were surveyed, the results were still significant enough to enable the researcher to answer the primary research question and the two sub questions.

Discussion of Research Questions

The discussion that ensues focuses on the overarching research question and the two sub questions that guided this study. These questions were created by the researcher after conducting a significant amount of research for the literature review. Through the exploration of past and current literature, the researcher found a need to further examine the two variables, competencies and self-awareness, and the possible relationship that might exist between the variables as they relate to practitioners in the field of student affairs. After the research was conducted, a survey was distributed to a specific group of practitioners currently employed in the field. The following discussion is based on the results of the survey completed by student affairs practitioners. Participants indicated their responses to survey questions using a Likert scale and the researcher compiled and analyzed the results using statistical meathods.

Primary Research Question

The primary research question guided the two sub questions which are discussed in the following paragraphs. The primary research question assisted in exploring all aspects of the conceptual framework presented in Figure 1 on page 10. As shown in Figure 1, a researcher must understand student affairs, competencies, and self-awareness prior to exploring whether or not a relationship exists among the variables. Therefore, a thorough examination of the conceptual framework was presented in Chapter 2 for the reader to study prior to moving forward with the methods section.

In response to the primary research question, the researcher found that a negative relationship exists between perceived competencies and perceived self-awareness. As student affairs practitioners' perceived competencies increase, their reported perceived self-awareness decreased. This, in turn, shows a visible relationship between the two variables. Yet, it is an

inverted relationship and not necessarily one that is favorable to student affairs practitioners. There is a strong need for practitioners to perceive their competencies and self-awareness accurately in terms of job understanding and overall professionalization of the field (Herbst & Conradie, 2011; Herdlein et al., 2013; Lovell & Kosten, 2000).

Sub Questions

The two sub questions focused on years of experience in the field and current job level/positon. The researcher wanted to know if either of these two variables affected the data in terms of the relationship between perceived competencies and perceived self-awareness. If so, the researcher presumed this information would be helpful to individuals acquiring or perfecting competencies needed to successfully perform their jobs as student affairs practitioners, especially the competency of self-awareness. As discussed in both Chapter 1 and Chapter 2, the sub questions could directly impact individuals entering the field of student affairs, practitioners currently working in the field, and professionals designing, implementing, and teaching graduate preparation programs as well as professional development opportunities. Overall, the implications are endless for practitioners as a whole.

When examining the first sub question, the researcher found that both years of experience in the field and job level/position predict an individual's self-awareness of professional competencies. Practitioners with less experience and those in entry-level positions showed lower perceived competence and greater perceived self-awareness, indicating that entry-level professionals are aware that there is much work to be done when it comes to attaining competency as a student affairs professional, which happens as a result of time and experience. A wide array of competencies are taught in graduate preparation programs, yet, the intense

hands-on experience of utilizing these competencies occurs during a practitioner's first job (Cuyjet et al., 2009).

The second sub question revealed that the practitioners with more experience and practitioners in senior-level positions tended to have greater perceived competence yet lower perceived self-awareness. This could indicate that while practitioners in senior-level positons fully know, understand, and possess the competencies needed to perform their jobs, they lack the time needed for reflection, leaving their perceived self-awareness lacking. The results could also indicate that practitioners with more experience and practitioners in senior-level positions have advanced so far in their careers that they are no longer willing to accept or discuss their limitations or failures thinking that if they do so, others may no longer view them as potential leaders (Golman, 1998).

The results from the sub questions indicate a greater need for the competencies identified by ACPA and NASPA to be researched, studied, and better understood by students in graduate preparation programs prior to taking entry-level positons. According to the survey administered in this study, the majority of participants (30.85%) indicated that they have not reviewed ACPA and NASPA's publication, *Professional Competency Areas for Student Affairs Educators*. Without having a thorough understanding of this publication, entry-level practitioners may find it difficult to feel competent in many of the competencies required by their positions.

Additionally, the responses to the sub questions indicated a greater need for opportunities focused on self-awareness to take place for practitioners with the most job experience in the field or those in senior level positions. As shown in the literature review, professional development opportunities and training focusing on leadership development, critical thinking, emotional intelligence, and overall personal reflection can benefit practitioners who have been in the field

the longest and those in senior level positions (Goleman, 1998; Herbst & Conradie, 2011). When attempting to assist practitioners reporting lower levels of perceived self-awareness, understanding both Kegan's self-evaluation theory and the Johari window would be an excellent place to begin exploring how self-awareness fluctuates among individuals (Rochat, 2003; Oelofsen, 2012).

Implications

As previously noted, perceived competencies and perceived self-awareness among student affairs practitioners were negatively correlated, indicating that as one variable increases the other variable decreases. This study further supports and illustrates the disconnect found in previous research between competencies and self-awareness among student affairs professionals at all levels (Cuyjet et al., 2009; Dickerson et al., 2011; Herbst & Conradie, 2011). Yet, the conclusions from this study have a notable significance that can impact practitioners working in student affairs. While this study does not pinpoint specific ways to assist student affairs practitioners in developing self-awareness of their competencies, it does provide suggestions for graduate preparation programs, professional development opportunities/associations, and human resources managers and supervisors to aid in narrowing the disparity between the two variables.

Student affairs practitioners recognize the need to have competent individuals in the field who are also aware of both their strengths and weaknesses. Self-awareness has been described many times as a highly sought disposition (Dickerson et al., 2011; Herdlein et al., 2013). However, it is difficult to address this need when the two variables fail to relate. Certain demographics may assist in further understanding the outcomes, implications, and recommendations for further research, particularly the personal characteristics of the sample

found in Table 2 on page 77 and the professionals characteristics of the sample displayed in Table 3 on page 78.

Two of the primary methods for acquiring competencies were discussed in greated detail in the literature review. These two meathods are graduate preparation programs and professional development opportunities. In addition to the professional benefits that student affairs practitioners will gain from reflecting on and evaluating the findings in this study, the researcher also showed meaningful implications for implementing recommendations from the study in graduate preparation programs, professional development opportunities, and for individuals supervising or evaluating student affairs practitioners. These implications are discussed further in the next section.

Implications for Graduate Preparation Programs

Research on graduate preparation programs found that whether needed competencies were actually learned through these programs was debatable. The majority of respondents (36.17%) indicated they only felt somewhat that their graduate preparation program provided adequate training on professional competencies. This could explain why one of the sub questions showed that respondents with one to three years of experience in the field and those in entry-level positons reported having lower levels of perceived competence than individuals with more years of experience in the field or individuals in senior-level positions. Furthermore, the majority of participants (30.58%) had not reviewed ACPA and NASPA's publication on competencies, indicating a need for graduate preparation programs to be more proactive in teaching the competency areas to students prior to their entry into the field. Similar to how some graduate courses display the Council for the Advancement of Standards (CAS) learning outcomes on the syllabus used in the course, professional competences could be added as well to the content areas

being taught. Therefore, students would know which professional competencies were focused on throughout the course.

According to Pittman and Foubert (2016), "Graduate students' primary goal is completing their education in order to learn the profession's values and what it means to be a professional. Supervisors should allow for ways in which graduate students can develop as professionals and integrate their course teachings into their positions" (p. 24). By integrating the two, graduate programs and supervisors of graduate students are indirectly, yet intentionally, teaching their students the needed competencies. Furthermore, Pittman and Foubert go on to state that graduate students should join at least one generalish student affiars professional association or a student affairs professional association that is directly linked to their functional area.

Implications for Professional Associations/Development Opportunities

In addition to graduate preparation programs, this study has clear implications for professional associations and professional development opportunities provided by these associations. The descriptive statistics for professional characteristics in Table 3 (page 78) showed that, of the 174 survey participants, participation in professional associations and professional development events was high overall. All but three of the 174 respondents reported involvement in professional associations, and all but one of the respondents reported participating in professional development opportunities at least annually (18.52%) if not quarterly (40.21%) or monthly (40.74%). These high numbers for participation show that professional development is valued among student affairs practitioners. Therefore, professional associations and the professional development opportunities they provide to student affairs practitioners can be a primary resource for practitioners working in the field. Providing

opportunities for development that focuses on these two variables could assist student affairs practitioners in becoming more cognizant of their capabilities. Workshops and training that focus solely on student affairs competencies, as opposed to the competencies paired with another topic and/or the competencies being presented as an afterthought, would assist student affairs practitioners with understanding the importance of competencies. Futhermore, activities centered on self-awarenss, and the need to understand the importance of being self-aware should also be a major focus. Similar to the workshops and trainings on competencies, actitivies that emphasis self-reflection of strengths and weakness should be incorporated into the program in order to get practitioners to take an in-deepth look at themselves professionally.

Of the respondents, 79.78% believed that professional associations, either somewhat or adequately, provided sufficient training on professional competencies, and the majority of the participants (22.7%) stated that attending conferences was their preferred method of staying current with professional competencies followed by reading periodicals (21.75%). When asked about their preferred professional development opportunities, national conferences were the preferred method (69.68%) followed by campus workshops/training (63.83%).

Overall, these numbers indicate that professional associations and professional development opportunities can be a primary means to bridge the gap between perceived competence and perceived self-awareness since the majority of student affairs practitioners surveyed held a membership in at least one professional association if not more than one. Additionally, the majority of student affairs practitioners who were surveyed were involved in professional development opportunities provided by these associations. Therefore, professional associations have been and continue to be major contributors to the development of student affairs practitioners.

Implications for Supervisors and Human Resources Directors

Similar to both graduate preparation programs and professional development associations and opportunities, supervisors and human resource directors can also benefit by utilizing this study. Supervisors and human resource directors are most likely to benefit from this information when it comes to conducting performance evaluations and performance enhancement plans for their student affairs staff. If competencies and self-awareness do not align, internal developmental conversations and training need to take place to assist staff members with their perceptions of their capabilities.

When ranking the importance of the 10 competencies identified by ACPA and NASPA, 133 respondents ranked personal and ethical foundations (PPF) as the most extremely important competency, followed by student learning and development (SLD) ranked by 125 respondents as extremely important. In contrast, only 39 respondents viewed technology (TECH) as an extremely important competency. Since ACPA and NASPA's (2015) competencies are newly grouped, it is difficult to state whether or not the findings in this study call for new research or if it refutes previous research and calls for further examination. Previous studies in the literature review showed that some of the top desired characteristics of student affairs professionals were research/assessment/evaluation, communication, and administration and management. However, according to the research conducted by Herdlein et al. (2013), technology ranked as number seven out of the 17 characteristics evaluated. Finally, just like the participants in this study ranked personal and ethical foundations as the most extremely important competency, Estanek et al. (2011) found ethics to be number four when ranking five items most critical to hiring new professionals.

When participants were asked at what level they would rank themselves on their confidence about their practice of each competency, the majority of respondents (45.24%) ranked themselves as intermediate, meaning they perceived themselves to be able to demonstrate the knowledge, skills, and attitudes associated with the outcomes not only under the intermediate category of each competency but also the knowledge, skills, and attitudes associated with the outcomes listed under the foundational category. The intermediate level is nestled between the foundational level and the advanced level, implying that the majority of student affairs practitioners have more than the minimum required knowledge, skills, and attitudes for their roles but they do not yet have advanced knowledge, skills, and attitudes for their roles. Considering the majority of respondants (46.5%) self-identified as mid-level practitioners, the above statistic is not overwhelmingly surprising, as most mid-level practitioners should have at least an intermediate understanding of student affairs competencies. Only 1.38% of the student affairs practitioners surveyed ranked themselves as not competent in at least one of the 10 competencies identified by ACPA and NASPA.

Last, supervisors and human resource managers may find the questions about perceived self-awareness beneficial as they conduct performance evaluations or performance enhancement plans. When participants selected how each statement in the category of self-awareness related to them, only eight indicated that they do not do well with constructive criticism. Therefore, a likely interpretation would be that feedback is valued among the overarching majority of student affair practitioners. Yet, only 89 of the participants found the statement “It is easy for me to discuss my weaknesses” somewhat like them, which could be counterintuitive to responses to the question about their ability to handle constructive criticism.

As discussed by Goleman (1998), Luft (1982), Oelofsen (2012), and Rochat (2003), for true self-awareness to take place, successful professionals need to be able to recognize and discuss both their strengths and weaknesses. Researchers have determined that there is a greater need for both supervisors and human resource managers to be able to conduct transparent and candid conversations concerning competencies with their staff. By functioning in a leadership role, supervisors and human resource managers can assist employees in creating developmental plans that include further training related to deficient competencies by encouraging participation in workshops or training put on by professional associations or by suggesting enrolling in a graduate preparation program.

As both a research and a current student affairs practitioners, this researcher believes all the implications from this study are vital to practitioners in the field. Graduate preparation programs, professional development opportunities provided through professional associations, and leadership of supervisors all play an instrumental role in the holistic growth and development of student affairs practitioners. The growth and development process of student affairs practitioners could be viewed as linear, when in fact, it is not. It is the role of professional associations to enhance the work in which graduate preparation programs teach these professionals prior to entering the field in entry-level positions. Supervisors must take on responsibility for developing self-awareness in their staff when professional associations have exhausted all they can do. Overall, self-awareness of competencies is a process, a process that cannot be taken lightly and a process that should be continually on-going.

Recommendations for Further Research

After completion of this study, a need exists for further research on competencies and self-awareness as these variables relate to student affairs practitioners. Further research should

include: (a) a different research method, specifically qualitative research; (b) a sample with different demographics (e.g. sample size larger than the identified southeast and/or student affairs practitioners who do not necessarily have membership in either ACPA or NASPA); (c) expanded competencies as opposed to only the competencies identified in the ACPA and NASPA 2015 joint publication; (d) a more thorough exploration into the topic of self-awareness versus emotional intelligence and how the two intersect with competencies.

The research for this study was quantitative. The researcher sought to obtain numerical data that would answer the research questions that guided the overall study. However, as future studies seek additional information, a different research method is recommended. Qualitative research is exploratory in that it uses methods such as interviews and observations as a means of data collection (Bryant, 2004; Roberts, 2010; Savin-Baden & Major, 2013). Qualitative researchers "tend to believe that when studying individuals, the best that researchers can do is learn about, describe and explain them from the perceptions of those involved" (Savin-Baden & Major, 2013). Therefore, rich, thick, descriptive information from individuals would provide a narrative to accompany the statistics gathered in this study. This narrative would assist in explaining questions the researcher or reader might have when reviewing the results.

Expanding the demographic population surveyed is also recommended for further research. Due to the time constraints placed on this study, the sample size had to be bounded. Additionally, two restrictions were placed on the individuals surveyed: respondents had to be student affairs practitioners who held membership in ACPA and/or NASPA and who lived in Georgia or one of the five states contiguous to Georgia. It is recommended that future research use a sample encompassing an area larger than the southeast region of the U.S. In addition, the population should include all student affairs practitioners rather than limiting the study to

practitioners holding membership in one or both of the two largest professional organizations. This expansion, in turn, would provide more generalizable data.

Competencies have been around for centuries (Mulder et al., 2009), and many student affairs professional development organizations, in addition to ACPA and NASPA, have established competencies for the functional areas they represent. Additionally, several researchers, such as Herdlein et al. (2013) and Lovell and Kosten (2000), have completed in-depth studies pertaining to competencies in student affairs. Therefore, expanding future studies to encompass more competencies than the ones identified in ACPA and NASPA's most recent joint publication could be beneficial when determining the relationship between student affairs practitioners' perceived competencies and perceived self-awareness.

Last, it is recommended that a more thorough exploration of emotional intelligence and its relationship to self-awareness be investigated to expand upon this study. The additional variable of emotional intelligence could change the dynamics of this inquiry and add a unique dimension. According to Goleman (1995, 1998), emotional intelligence consists of both personal and social competencies. Self-awareness is just one of the personal competencies identified by Goleman. Therefore, adding other personal competencies that define emotional intelligence along with social competencies is recommended for further exploration. The additional perspective could provide additional insight into previous works related to this topic.

Chapter Summary

The need for competent employees in the field of student affairs is important for the professionalization of the field as reflected in the amount of research that has been published about the perceptions of upper-level administrators on the preparation of entry-level employees (Burkard, Cole, Ott, & Stoflet, 2005; Cuyjet et al., 2009; Dickerson et al, 2011; Estanek et al.,

2011). In this study, the researcher looked at more than just the competencies for entry-level practitioners. The researcher sought to discover if a relationship existed between perceived competencies of student affairs practitioners, at any level, and their perceived self-awareness.

The study found that practitioners who had been in the field longer and who were in senior level positons had greater perceived competence and lower self-awareness, whereas, practitioners in the field only one to 3 years and who were classified as entry-level, had less perceived competence and greater perceived self-awareness. These findings have implications for graduate preparation programs, professional development opportunities and professional development associations, and both supervisors and human resource directors. Stanley O. Ikenberry states in the forward of *Academic Leadership and Governance of Higher Education* that "colleges and universities touch more lives profoundly than any social institution in society" (Hendrickson et al., 2013). If his statement is true, then the results and implications of this study are essential for all parties involved.

While further research is needed to expand the findings of this study, the foundation has been laid. Clearly, although inverse, a relationship exists between both perceived competence and perceived self-awareness. Moving forward, the researcher recommends that future studies provide personal narratives from respondents. Other recommendations were made, such as expanding the sample size and target population in order to produce more generalizable data.

Conclusion

As discussed in Chapter 1, it is essential for both competencies and self-awareness to function in tandem (Carry & Keppler, 2014) in order for an individual to be successful. Yet, attainment of competencies and self-awareness is not an easy task because, according to Rochat (2003), as individuals, we are constantly "oscillating in our levels of awareness" (p. 728).

Understanding that individuals constantly oscillate in their level of self-awareness was essential to determining how student affairs practitioners can improve their understanding of their strengths, weaknesses, and levels of competence in the field.

By understanding how student affairs practitioners perceive themselves in terms of competency and self-awareness, adaptations can be made to graduate preparation programs, on-campus development via supervisors or human resources, and through professional development associations to improve opportunities for development of student affairs practitioners regardless of their demographics. Furthermore, further research can be conducted in order to carry this research to the next level for researchers who want to continue exploring the topic of competencies and self-awareness.

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APPENDIX A

The 44 Functional Areas Identified by The Council for the Advancement of Standards (CAS):

Academic Advising Programs

- Adult Learner Programs and Services
- Alcohol and Other Drug Programs
- Assessment Services
- Auxiliary Services Functional Areas
- Campus Activities Programs
- Campus Information and Visitor Services
- Campus Police and Security Programs
- Campus Religious and Spiritual Programs
- Career Services
- Civic Engagement and Service-Learning Programs
- Clinical Health Services
- College Honor Society Programs
- College Unions
- Commuter and Off-Campus Living Programs
- Conference and Event Programs
- Counseling Services
- Dining Service Programs
- Disability Resources and Services
- Education Abroad Programs and Services
- Financial Aid Programs

The 44 Functional Areas Identified by The Council for the Advancement of Standards (CAS):

- Fraternity and Sorority Advising Programs
- Graduate and Professional Student Programs and Services
- Health Promotion Services
- Housing and Residential Life Programs
- International Student Programs and Services
- Internship Programs
- Learning Assistance Programs
- Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Programs and Services
- Master's Level Student Affairs Professional Preparation Programs
- Multicultural Student Programs and Services
- Orientation Programs
- Parent and Family Programs
- Recreational Sports Programs
- Registrar Programs and Services
- Sexual Violence-Related Programs and Services
- Student Conduct Programs
- Student Leadership Programs
- Transfer Student Programs and Services
- TRIO and Other Educational Opportunity Programs
- Undergraduate Admissions Programs and Services
- Undergraduate Research Programs

The 44 Functional Areas Identified by The Council for the Advancement of Standards (CAS):

- Veterans and Military Programs and Services
- Women's and Gender Programs and Services

APPENDIX B

Survey Instrument

Survey of Student Affairs Practitioners'

Perceived Competence and Self-Awareness

Perceived Competencies Questions

1) Listed below are newly revised competency areas that have been identified by both the American College Personnel Association (ACPA) and the National Association of Personnel Administrators (NASPA). Please rank the importance of each as they pertain to your work.

   (The following competencies will be scored: 0=Least Important, 1=Somewhat Important, 2=Important, 3=Extremely Important)

   Personal and Ethical Foundations (PPF)
   Values, Philosophy, History (VPH)
   Assessment, Evaluation, and Research (AER)
   Law, Policy, and History (LPH)
   Organizational and Human Resource (OHR)
   Leadership (LEAD)
   Social Justice and Inclusion (SJI)
   Student Learning and Development (SLD)
   Technology (TECH)
   Advising and Supporting (A/S)

2) Now that you have identified the importance of each competency, what "level" would you rate yourself when it comes to how confident you feel about your practice in each of them?

   (The following competencies levels will be scored: 0=Not Competent, 1=Foundational, 2=Intermediate, 3=Advanced)

   Personal and Ethical Foundations (PPF)
   Values, Philosophy, History (VPH)
   Assessment, Evaluation, and Research (AER)
   Law, Policy, and History (VPH)
   Organizational and Human Resource (OHR)
   Leadership (LEAD)
   Social Justice and Inclusion (SJI)
   Student Learning and Development (SLD)
   Technology (TECH)
   Advising and Supporting (A/S)

Survey Instrument

3) What professional association(s) do you belong to (if any)?
   American College Personnel Association (ACPA)
   Georgia College Personnel Association (GCPA)
   National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA)
   North Carolina College Personnel Association (NCCPA)
   South Carolina College Personnel Association (SCCPA)
   Southern Association for College Student Affairs (SACSA)
   None
   Other, please specify

4) To what extent do you feel that the professional association(s) you belong to have provided adequate training on professional competencies?
   Not at all
   Somewhat
   Adequate
   Superior
   Do not belong to any professional association(s)

5) To what degree do you find ACPA and NASPA's professional development opportunities valuable to your competency acquisition or development? Please use the following ranking:

   (The following professional development opportunities will be scored: 0=Not Important, 1=Somewhat Important, 2=Important, 3=Extremely Important)

   Workshops and/or conferences
   Job Placement/Search
   Publications
   Regional/State Associations
   Scholarship Opportunities
   Volunteer Opportunities

6) Have you reviewed ACPA and NAPSA's publication, *Professional Competency Areas for Student Affairs Educators*? If yes, how helpful was this publication?
   Not helpful
   Somewhat helpful
   Helpful
   Very helpful
   Have not reviewed
   Do not belong to these professional associations

Survey Instrument

7) How do you stay current in professional competencies?
   Attend conferences
   Campus workshops/trainings
   Discuss with other professionals
   Read current periodicals
   Webinars
   Other, please specify

8) What types of professional development opportunities would you most likely attend?
   Webinar
   Campus workshop/trainings
   Drive-in workshop
   State conference
   Regional conference
   National conference
   Other, please specify

9) How often do you take advantage of professional development opportunities?
   Monthly
   Quarterly
   Annually
   Never

10) To what extent do you feel that your graduate preparation program provided adequate training on professional competencies?
   Not at all
   Somewhat
   Adequate
   Superior
   Do not belong to any professional association(s)

11) To what degree do you feel supported at your home campus to remain current in your knowledge and practice of competencies, standards, skills, and knowledge bases?
   Not supported at all
   Somewhat supported
   Supported
   Extremely supported

Survey Instrument

Self-Awareness Questions

(The following questions will be scored: 0=Not like me at all, 1=A little like me, 2=Somewhat like me, 3=A lot like me)

12) I am always trying to figure myself out.
13) I think about myself a lot.
14) I never take a hard look at myself.
15) I constantly think about my reasons for doing things.
16) I sometimes step back (in my mind) in order to examine myself from a distance.
17) I am quick to notice changes in my mood.
18) I know the way my mind works when I work through a problem.
19) I am concerned about my style of doing things.
20) I care a lot about how I present myself to others.
21) I am self-conscious about the way I look.
22) I usually worry about making a good impression.
23) I am concerned about what other people think of me.
24) It takes time for me to get over my shyness in new situations.
25) It is hard for me to work when someone is watching me.
26) I get embarrassed very easily.
27) It is easy for me to talk to strangers.
28) I feel nervous when I speak in front of a group.
29) It is easy for me to discuss my strengths.
30) It is easy for me to discuss my weaknesses.
31) I do not do well with constructive criticism.

Demographics

32) What functional area do you identify with most?
(drop-down list from CAS)*

33) How many full-time professional staff do you directly supervise?
None
1 – 5
6 – 10
11+

34) What is your formal job title?

35) What is the formal job title of your direct supervisor?

Survey Instrument

36) Do you consider yourself a student affairs professional?
Yes
No
What would you identify your profession to be (i.e. faculty member, researcher, administrator, etc.)

37) At what level do you categorize your current position?
Entry-level
Mid-level
Senior-level

38) At what level do you anticipate your next position?
Mid-level manager
Senior-level
I do not anticipate having a next position
Other, please specify

39) What is the highest degree you have received?
Associates
Bachelors
Masters
Doctorate
Other

40) How many years of professional Student Affairs experience do you have?
0-3
4-10
11-15
16+

41) At what type of institution do you work?
Public
Private
For-Profit

42) How would you further classify your institution?
Technical College
Community College
4-year College
4-year University, offering graduate degrees

Survey Instrument

43) What is your institution's enrollment?
- 999 or fewer
- 1,000-4,999
- 5,000-9,999
- 10,000-19,999
- 20,000+

44) In what state are you employed?
- Alabama
- Florida
- Georgia
- North Carolina
- South Carolina
- Tennessee
- Other, please specify

45) What is your gender?
- Male
- Female
- Transgender
- Do not Identify
- Prefer Not to Respond

46) Which category below includes your age?
- 29 or younger
- 30-39
- 40-49
- 50-59
- 60+

47) How do you racially identify?
- American Indian or Alaskan Native
- Asian
- Black or African-American
- Latino or Hispanic
- Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander
- White
- Multiracial
- Prefer Not to Respond
- Other, please specify

APPENDIX C

Dr. Anthony Gutierrez's Community College Student Government Survey

Dear Community College Student Government Advisor
You are being asked to participate in a research study. I am a doctoral student at UC, Santa Barbara. To conduct research for my dissertation, I am conducting a survey. The purpose of the study is to research the level of understanding of professional standards and competencies of California Community College student government advisors.

I am asking you to participate in this survey because you have been identified as a California Community College student government advisor. If you decide to participate, you will be directed to a survey that will take approximately 20 minutes to complete. I do not anticipate any risk to you that would be greater than everyday life. There is no direct benefit to you anticipated from your participation in this study.

The data I collect will not be linked to your identity in any way. You may change your mind about being in the study and quit after the survey has started.

If you have any questions about this research project or would like to view results, please contact Anthony Gutierrez at anthonycgutierrez@umail.ucsb.edu. The information you provide will be a valuable contribution, and your participation is appreciated.

If you have any questions regarding your rights and participation as a research subject, please contact the Human Subjects Committee at (805) 893-3807 or hsc@research.ucsb.edu. Or write to the University of California, Human Subjects Committee, Office of Research, Santa Barbara, CA 93106-2050.

1. Please indicate all degrees earned (include discipline)

Bachelors

Masters

Doctorate

2. Gender

- ◯ Female
- ◯ Male

3. Age

- ◯ 26-30
- ◯ 31-40
- ◯ 41-54
- ◯ 55+

Dr. Anthony Gutierrez's Community College Student Government Survey

4. Race/Ethnicity (choose as many as appropriate)

- [ ] American Indian or Alaska Native
- [ ] Asian
- [ ] Black or African American
- [ ] Latino
- [ ] Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
- [ ] White
- [ ] Other, please specify

5. Length of time advising student government

- ◯ Up to 5 years
- ◯ 6-10 years
- ◯ 10-15 years
- ◯ 15+ years

6. What is the current headcount at your community college campus?

- ◯ Up to 10,000
- ◯ 10,001 – 20,000
- ◯ More than 20,001

7. Is your community college campus:

- ◯ Rural
- ◯ Suburban
- ◯ Urban

8. What do you believe is the primary reason students attend your institution? You can select up to 2 responses.

- [ ] Transfer to a 4-year institution
- [ ] Obtain AA/AS degree(s)
- [ ] Earn certificate(s)
- [ ] Other, please specify

Dr. Anthony Gutierrez's Community College Student Government Survey

9. At your community college campus how is your position described:

- ◯ Classified
- ◯ Faculty
- ◯ Management
- ◯ Other, please specify

10. What other primary responsibilities do you have (other than advising student government)?

- ☐ Counseling
- ☐ Student Discipline
- ☐ Student Health Center
- ☐ Student Photo ID
- ☐ Other, please specify

11. Do you consider yourself a student affairs professional?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ What would you identify your profession to be (i.e. faculty member, researcher, administrator, etc.)

12. Have you reviewed the Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (CAS) standards on the Role of Campus Activities Programs and Student Leadership Programs? If yes, what is your assessment of how helpful the standards are in your role as a student government advisor?

- ◯ Not helpful at all
- ◯ Somewhat helpful
- ◯ Helpful
- ◯ Very helpful
- ◯ I haven't reviewed them

Dr. Anthony Gutierrez's Community College Student Government Survey

13. Listed below are standards and competency areas that have been identified by professional state and national associations, and research literature. Please rank the importance of each one from 1-4.

	Least Important	Somewhat Important	Important	Extremely Important
Advising	○	○	○	○
Advocacy	○	○	○	○
Assessment, Evaluation and Research	○	○	○	○
Collaboration	○	○	○	○
Communication	○	○	○	○
Community Building and Programming	○	○	○	○
Conflict Resolution	○	○	○	○
Counseling and Helping Skills	○	○	○	○
Diversity, Inclusion, and Equity	○	○	○	○
Ethical Professional Practice/Professionalism	○	○	○	○
History, Philosophy, and Values	○	○	○	○
Human and Organizational Resources	○	○	○	○
Law, Policy, and Governance	○	○	○	○
Leadership	○	○	○	○
Personal Foundations	○	○	○	○
Resource Management	○	○	○	○
Student Learning and Development	○	○	○	○
Teaching	○	○	○	○
Technology	○	○	○	○

Dr. Anthony Gutierrez's Community College Student Government Survey

14. Now that you have identified the importance of each standard and competency, how confident do you feel about your practice in each of them?

	Not Confident	Confident	Somewhat Confident	Extremely Confident
Advising	○	○	○	○
Advocacy	○	○	○	○
Assessment, Evaluation and Research	○	○	○	○
Collaboration	○	○	○	○
Communication	○	○	○	○
Community Building and Programming	○	○	○	○
Conflict Resolution	○	○	○	○
Counseling and Helping Skills	○	○	○	○
Diversity, Inclusion, and Equity	○	○	○	○
Ethical Professional Practice/Professionalism	○	○	○	○
History, Philosophy, and Values	○	○	○	○
Human and Organizational Resources	○	○	○	○
Law, Policy, and Governance	○	○	○	○
Leadership	○	○	○	○
Personal Foundations	○	○	○	○
Resource Management	○	○	○	○
Student Learning and Development	○	○	○	○
Teaching	○	○	○	○
Technology	○	○	○	○

15. What professional association(s) do you belong to (if any)?

- ☐ American Association of Community Colleges (AACC)
- ☐ American College Personnel Association (ACPA)
- ☐ Association of California Community College Administrators (ACCCA)
- ☐ Association of College Unions International (ACUI)
- ☐ California Community College Student Affairs Association (CCCSAA)
- ☐ National Association Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA)
- ☐ None
- ☐ Other, please specify

Dr. Anthony Gutierrez's Community College Student Government Survey

16. To what extent do you feel that the professional association(s) you belong to have provided adequate training on professional standards and competencies?

- ◯ Not at all
- ◯ Somewhat
- ◯ Adequate
- ◯ Superior
- ◯ Do not belong to any professional association(s)

17. To what degree do you find the following professional association(s) opportunities valuable? Please use the following ranking:

	Not Important	Somewhat important	Important	Extremely Important
Access to member only information on website(s)	◯	◯	◯	◯
Access to workshops and/or conferences	◯	◯	◯	◯
Job Placement	◯	◯	◯	◯
Learning Communities (related to a specific topic/issue)	◯	◯	◯	◯
Publications	◯	◯	◯	◯
Regional Groups	◯	◯	◯	◯
Scholarship Opportunities	◯	◯	◯	◯
Volunteer Opportunities	◯	◯	◯	◯

18. Have you reviewed your professional association(s) statement on professional standards and competencies? If yes, what is your assessment of the degree it is helpful?

- ◯ Not Helpful
- ◯ Somewhat helpful
- ◯ Helpful
- ◯ Very Helpful
- ◯ Have not reviewed
- ◯ Do not belong to any professional association(s)

19. How important do you believe it is that a California Community College student government advisor has a student development background in order to be an advisor?

- ◯ Extremely Unimportant
- ◯ Somewhat Important
- ◯ Important
- ◯ Extremely Important

Dr. Anthony Gutierrez's Community College Student Government Survey

20. How much do you agree with the following statement? I believe that professional development as a student government advisor increases my ability to develop leadership behavior in student government leaders?

- ◯ Not Agree
- ◯ Somewhat Agree
- ◯ Agree
- ◯ Completely Agree

21. To what degree do you feel supported at your campus to remain current in your knowledge and practice of competencies, standards, skills, and knowledge bases?

- ◯ Not supported at all
- ◯ Somewhat supported
- ◯ Supported
- ◯ Extremely supported

22. What kind of support would you like from your campus to remain current in your knowledge and practice of competencies, standards, skills, and/or knowledge bases?

- ☐ Time to participate in local or statewide workshops
- ☐ Funding to attend state or national conferences
- ☐ Campus Training
- ☐ Other, please specify

23. How do you stay current in professional standards and/or competencies?

- ☐ Attend state and or national conferences/workshops
- ☐ Campus Training(s)
- ☐ Discuss with other professionals
- ☐ Read current periodicals
- ☐ Webinars
- ☐ Other, please specify

Dr. Anthony Gutierrez's Community College Student Government Survey

24. What types of professional development opportunities would you most likely attend?

- [ ] Webinar
- [ ] Campus Workshop
- [ ] Drive-in Workshop
- [ ] Regional Conference
- [ ] Other, please specify

25. How often do you take advantage of professional development opportunities?

- ◯ Monthly
- ◯ Quarterly
- ◯ Annually
- ◯ Every 2 years
- ◯ Never

26. Would you be willing to be contacted for a brief follow-up interview?

- [ ] Yes
- [ ] No
- [ ] If yes, please include name and email address below.

27. If you have any additional comments or questions, please feel free to write them here.

APPENDIX D

Dr. Carver's and Dr. Scheier's Self-Consciousness Scale Revised

SCSR

Please answer the following questions about yourself by darkening in an appropriate circle on your IBM answer sheet. For each of the statements, indicate how much each statement is like you by using the following scale:

3 = a lot like me
2 = somewhat like me
1 = a little like me
0 = not like me at all

Please be as honest as you can throughout, and try not to let your responses to one question influence your response to other questions. There are no right or wrong answers.

1. I'm always trying to figure myself out.
2. I'm concerned about my style of doing things.
3. It takes me time to get over my shyness in new situations.
4. I think about myself a lot.
5. I care a lot about how I present myself to others.
6. I often daydream about myself.
7. It's hard for me to work when someone is watching me.
8. I never take a hard look at myself.
9. I get embarrassed very easily.
10. I'm self-conscious about the way I look.
11. It's easy for me to talk to strangers.
12. I generally pay attention to my inner feelings.
13. I usually worry about making a good impression.
14. I'm constantly thinking about my reasons for doing things.
15. I feel nervous when I speak in front of a group.

Dr. Carver's and Dr. Scheier's Self-Consciousness Scale Revised

2

16. Before I leave my house, I check how I look.

17. I sometimes step back (in my mind) in order to examine myself from a distance.

18. I'm concerned about what other people think of me.

19. I'm quick to notice changes in my mood.

20. I'm usually aware of my appearance.

21. I know the way my mind works when I work through a problem.

22. Large groups make me nervous.

Scoring Procedures:

1. Reverse code items 8 and 11.

2. Computing subscales:

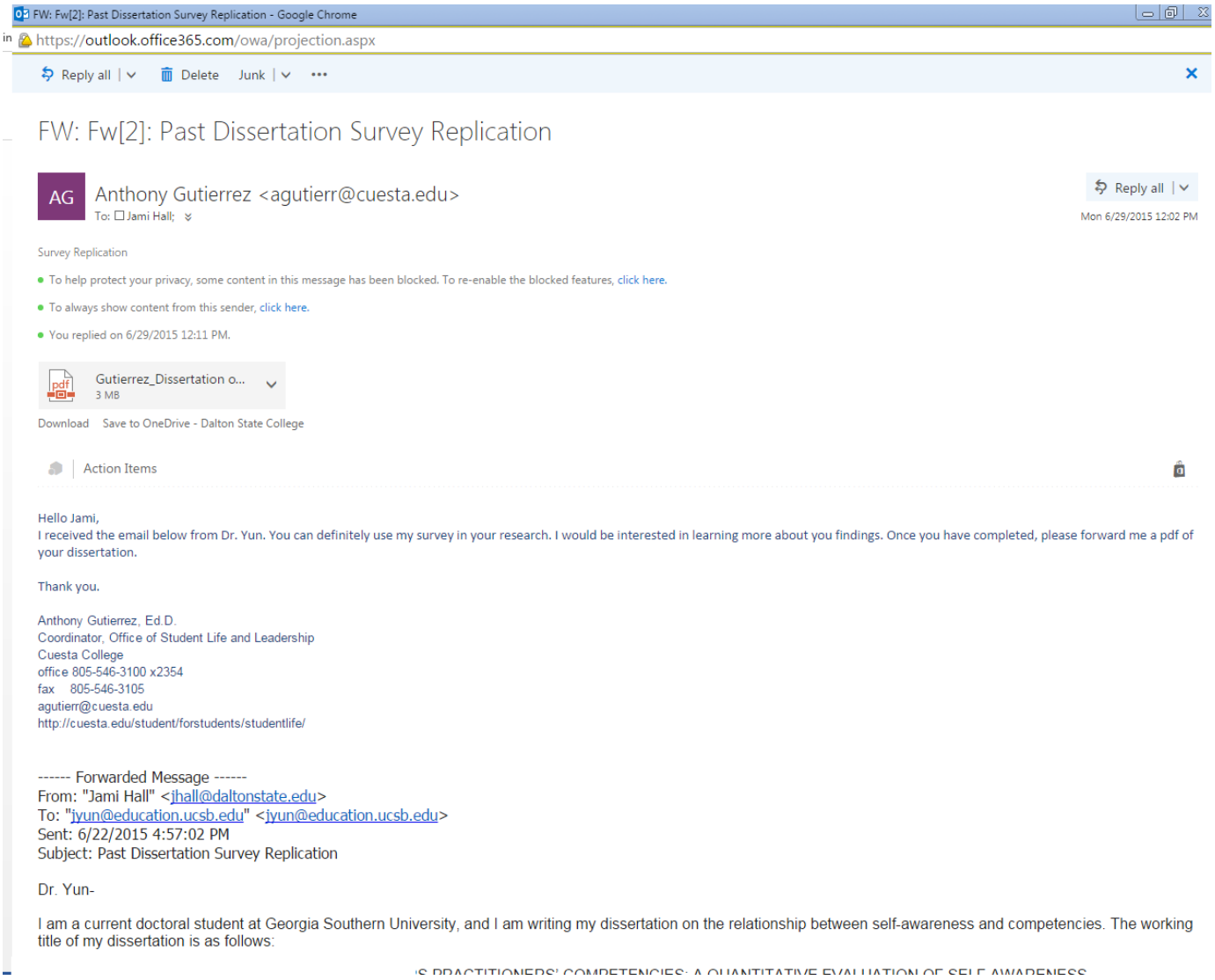
   a. For Private Self-consciousness subscale:
   Sum items 1, 4, 6, 8, 12, 14, 17, 19, and 21.

   b. For Public Self-Consciousness subscale:
   Sum items 2, 5, 10, 13, 16, 18, and 20.

   c. For Social Anxiety subscale:
   Sum items 3, 7, 9, 11, 15, and 22.

APPENDIX E

Permission from Dr. Gutierrez to Replicate his Instrument



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AG Anthony Gutierrez <agutierr@cuesta.edu>
To: Jami Hall;

Reply all | Mon 6/29/2015 12:02 PM

Survey Replication

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Action Items

Hello Jami,
I received the email below from Dr. Yun. You can definitely use my survey in your research. I would be interested in learning more about you findings. Once you have completed, please forward me a pdf of your dissertation.

Thank you.

Anthony Gutierrez, Ed.D.
Coordinator, Office of Student Life and Leadership
Cuesta College
office 805-546-3100 x2354
fax 805-546-3105
agutierr@cuesta.edu
http://cuesta.edu/student/forstudents/studentlife/

------ Forwarded Message ------
From: "Jami Hall" <jhall@daltonstate.edu>
To: "jyun@education.ucsb.edu" <jyun@education.ucsb.edu>
Sent: 6/22/2015 4:57:02 PM
Subject: Past Dissertation Survey Replication

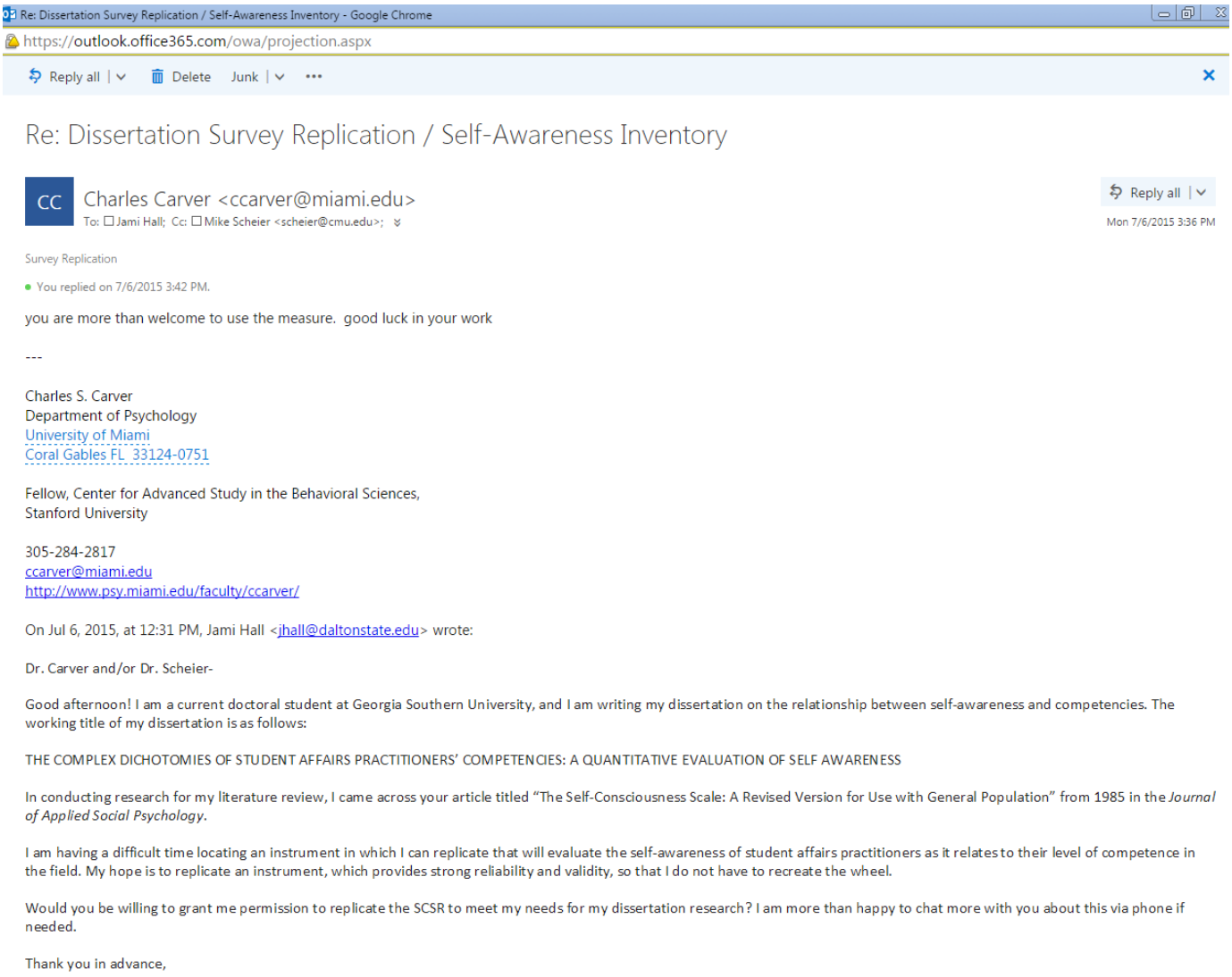
Dr. Yun-

I am a current doctoral student at Georgia Southern University, and I am writing my dissertation on the relationship between self-awareness and competencies. The working title of my dissertation is as follows:

'S PRACTITIONERS' COMPETENCIES: A QUANTITATIVE EVALUATION OF SELF-AWARENESS

APPENDIX F

Permission from Dr. Carver to Replicate the Self-Consciousness Scale Revised (SCSR)



Re: Dissertation Survey Replication / Self-Awareness Inventory - Google Chrome

https://outlook.office365.com/owa/projection.aspx

Reply all | Delete Junk | ...

Re: Dissertation Survey Replication / Self-Awareness Inventory

CC Charles Carver <ccarver@miami.edu>
To: Jami Hall; Cc: Mike Scheier <scheier@cmu.edu>;

Reply all | Mon 7/6/2015 3:36 PM

Survey Replication

You replied on 7/6/2015 3:42 PM.

you are more than welcome to use the measure. good luck in your work

---

Charles S. Carver
Department of Psychology
University of Miami
Coral Gables FL 33124-0751

Fellow, Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences,
Stanford University

305-284-2817
ccarver@miami.edu
http://www.psy.miami.edu/faculty/ccarver/

On Jul 6, 2015, at 12:31 PM, Jami Hall <jhall@daltonstate.edu> wrote:

Dr. Carver and/or Dr. Scheier-

Good afternoon! I am a current doctoral student at Georgia Southern University, and I am writing my dissertation on the relationship between self-awareness and competencies. The working title of my dissertation is as follows:

THE COMPLEX DICHOTOMIES OF STUDENT AFFAIRS PRACTITIONERS' COMPETENCIES: A QUANTITATIVE EVALUATION OF SELF AWARENESS

In conducting research for my literature review, I came across your article titled "The Self-Consciousness Scale: A Revised Version for Use with General Population" from 1985 in the *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*.

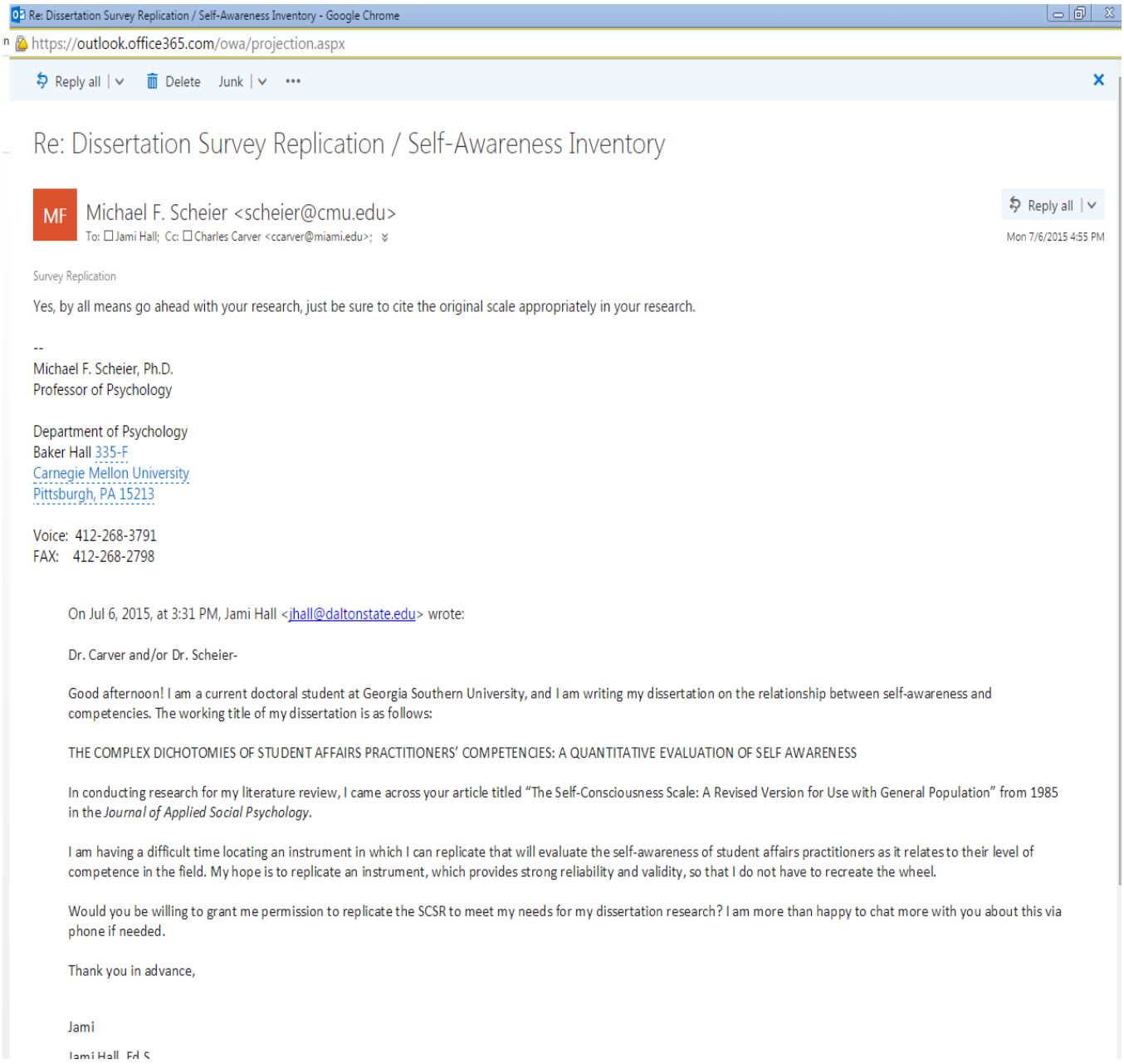
I am having a difficult time locating an instrument in which I can replicate that will evaluate the self-awareness of student affairs practitioners as it relates to their level of competence in the field. My hope is to replicate an instrument, which provides strong reliability and validity, so that I do not have to recreate the wheel.

Would you be willing to grant me permission to replicate the SCSR to meet my needs for my dissertation research? I am more than happy to chat more with you about this via phone if needed.

Thank you in advance,

APPENDIX G

Permission from Dr. Scheier to Replicate the Self-Consciousness Scale Revised (SCSR)



Re: Dissertation Survey Replication / Self-Awareness Inventory - Google Chrome

https://outlook.office365.com/owa/projection.aspx

Reply all | Delete Junk | ...

Re: Dissertation Survey Replication / Self-Awareness Inventory

MF Michael F. Scheier <scheier@cmu.edu>

To: Jami Hall; Cc: Charles Carver <ccarver@miami.edu>;

Reply all | Mon 7/6/2015 4:55 PM

Survey Replication

Yes, by all means go ahead with your research, just be sure to cite the original scale appropriately in your research.

--
Michael F. Scheier, Ph.D.
Professor of Psychology

Department of Psychology
Baker Hall 335-F
Carnegie Mellon University
Pittsburgh, PA 15213

Voice: 412-268-3791
FAX: 412-268-2798

On Jul 6, 2015, at 3:31 PM, Jami Hall <jhall@daltonstate.edu> wrote:

Dr. Carver and/or Dr. Scheier-

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I am having a difficult time locating an instrument in which I can replicate that will evaluate the self-awareness of student affairs practitioners as it relates to their level of competence in the field. My hope is to replicate an instrument, which provides strong reliability and validity, so that I do not have to recreate the wheel.

Would you be willing to grant me permission to replicate the SCSR to meet my needs for my dissertation research? I am more than happy to chat more with you about this via phone if needed.

Thank you in advance,

Jami

Jami Hall, Ed.S.

APPENDIX H

Institutional Review Board Approval

Georgia Southern University
Office of Research Services & Sponsored Programs

Institutional Review Board (IRB)

Phone: 912-478-0843
Fax: 912-478-0719
IRB@GeorgiaSouthern.edu
Veazey Hall 2021
P.O. Box 8005
Statesboro, GA 30460

To: Jami Hall

From: Office of Research Services and Sponsored Programs
Administrative Support Office for Research Oversight Committees
(IACUC/IBC/IRB)

Approval Date: 01/07/2016

Subject: Status of Application for Approval to Utilize Human Subjects in Research

---

After a review of your proposed research project numbered **H16172** and titled **"The Complex Dichotomy of Student Affairs Practitioners' Perceived Competencies: A Quantitative Evaluation of Self Awareness"** it appears that your research involves activities that do not require full approval by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) according to federal guidelines.

According to the Code of Federal Regulations Title 45 Part 46, your research protocol is determined to be exempt from full review under the following exemption category(s):

B2 Research involving the use of educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures or observation of public behavior, unless: (I) information obtained is recorded in such a manner that human subjects can be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects; and (II) any disclosure of the human subjects' responses outside the research could reasonably place the subjects at risk of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to the subjects' financial standing, employability, or reputation.

Any alteration in the terms or conditions of your involvement may alter this approval. *Therefore, as authorized in the Federal Policy for the Protection of Human Subjects, I am pleased to notify you that your research, as submitted, is exempt from IRB approval. No further action or IRB oversight is required, as long as the project remains the same. If you alter the project, it is your responsibility to notify the IRB and acquire a new determination of exemption. Because this project was determined to be exempt from further IRB oversight, this project does not require an expiration date.*

Sincerely,

Eleanor Haynes

Eleanor Haynes
Compliance Officer

good luck!

APPENDIX I

Invitation to Participate and Informed Consent

COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

DEPARTMENT OF LEADERSHIP, TECHNOLOGY, AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

Dear Student Affairs Practitioner:

Hello! You are invited to participate in a research study that focuses on the complex dichotomies of student affairs practitioners' perceived competencies. This study will be a quantitative evaluation of self-awareness. You are being asked to participate in this particular study because you meet the following criteria: a current member of the American College Personnel Association (ACPA) or the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA), currently work in the field of student affairs, and live in either the state of Georgia or a state that is contiguous to Georgia.

The purpose of this study is to determine if there is a relationship between self-awareness of student affairs practitioners and their perceived professional competencies, and if so, what variables assist in the formation of the relationship. If you volunteer to participate, data from this study may be included in future presentations and future publications. De-identified or coded data from this study may be placed in a publically available repository for study validation and further research. You will not be identified by name in the data set or any reports using information obtained from this study, and your confidentiality as a participant in this study will remain secure. Subsequent uses of records and data will be subject to standard data use policies which protect the anonymity of individuals and institutions. All information in this study will be kept completely confidential and kept in a secure location. No reference will be made in written or oral materials that could link you to this study. The research data will not be kept for a period longer than five years.

As a participant in this study, there may be no direct benefits. Yet, this study is significant in that it will fill a void in the literature by exploring paths to competency acquisition and development through generally researching both graduate preparation programs and professional development opportunities, along with providing suggestions on how to enhance self-awareness for the betterment of both personal and professional development. This study seeks to understand if student affairs professionals are self-aware of their competencies, and if not, what can be done, specifically regarding one's education and experiences, to initiate congruence of the two. Therefore, as a student affairs practitioner, you may see indirect benefits. Furthermore, as a participant, there will be no foreseeable risks involved to you, nor will there be any financial costs to participate.

As a participant, you have the right to ask questions and have those questions answered. If you have questions about this study, please contact the researcher or the researcher's faculty advisor, whose contact information is located at the end of the survey. For questions concerning your rights as a research

participant, contact Georgia Southern University Office of Research Services and Sponsored Programs at 912-478-0843.

In the end, participation is strictly voluntary. There is no penalty for deciding not to participate in the study; likewise, you may decide at any time they don't want to participate further and may withdraw without penalty or retribution.

Please understand that continuing, completing, and submitting the survey indicates that you are giving your consent to participate in the study. You agree that you understand the nature of the study, the possible risks to you as a participant, and how your identity will be kept confidential. When you consent to take this survey, this means that you are 18 years old or older, and that you give your permission to volunteer as a participant in the study that is described here.

If you consent to participate in this research study, then select "next." When you are finished, press "submit" at the conclusion of your participation. Please note that you can save your responses at any time during the survey and then resume completion later if needed.

You can print a copy of this consent form to keep for your records. This project has been reviewed and approved by the Georgia Southern University (GSU) Institutional Review Board under tracking number H16172.

Thank you!

Jami Hall

Title of Project:
The Complex Dichotomies of Student Affairs Practitioners' Perceived Competencies:
A Quantitative Evaluation of Self-awareness

Principal Investigator:
Jami Hall
Georgia Southern University, Doctoral Candidate
650 College Drive, Dalton, GA 30720
706.272.2505
jh04912@georgiasouthern.edu

Faculty Advisor:
Brenda L. H. Marina, Ph.D.
Department of Leadership, Technology & Human Development
Associate Professor, Educational Leadership/Higher Education Administration
P.O. Box 8131
Georgia Southern University
Statesboro, GA 30460-8131
bmarina@georgiasouthern.edu

APPENDIX J

The American College Personnel Association's (ACPA) Statement of Ethical Principles and Standards, page 1

ACPA College Student Educators International

Statement of
Ethical Principles
& Standards

Preamble

ACPA – College Student Educators International is an association whose members are dedicated to enhancing the worth, dignity, potential, and uniqueness of each individual within post-secondary educational institutions and, thus, to the service of society. ACPA members are committed to contributing to the comprehensive education of students, protecting human rights, advancing knowledge of student growth and development, and promoting the effectiveness of institutional programs, services, and organizational units. As a means of supporting these commitments, members of ACPA subscribe to the following principles and standards of ethical conduct. Acceptance of membership in ACPA signifies that the member understands the provisions of this statement.

This statement is designed to address issues particularly relevant to college student affairs practice. Persons charged with duties in various functional areas of higher education are also encouraged to consult ethical standards specific to their professional responsibilities.

Use of this Statement

The principal purpose of this statement is to assist student affairs professionals (individuals who are administrators, staff, faculty, and adjunct faculty in the field of student affairs) in regulating their own behavior by sensitizing them to potential ethical problems and by providing standards useful in daily practice. Observance of ethical behavior also benefits fellow professionals and students due to the effect of modeling. Self-regulation is the most effective and preferred means of assuring ethical behavior. If, however, a professional observes conduct by a fellow professional that seems contrary to the provisions of this document, several courses of action are available. Suggestions to assist with addressing ethical concerns are included in the Appendix at the end of this document.

Ethical Foundations

No statement of ethical standards can anticipate all situations that have ethical implications. When student affairs professionals are presented with dilemmas that are not explicitly addressed herein, a number of perspectives may be used in conjunction with the four standards identified in this document to assist in making decisions and determining appropriate courses of action. These standards are: 1) Professional Responsibility and Competence; 2) Student Learning and Development; 3) Responsibility to the Institution; and 4) Responsibility to Society.

Ethical principles should guide the behaviors of professionals in everyday practice. Principles are assumed to be constant and, therefore, provide consistent guidelines for decision-making. In addition, student affairs professionals should strive to develop the virtues, or habits of behavior, that are characteristic of people in helping professions. Contextual issues must also be taken into account. Such issues include, but are not limited to, culture, temporality (issues bound by time), and phenomenology (individual perspective) and community norms. Because of the complexity of ethical conversation and dialogue, the skill of simultaneously confronting differences in perspective and respecting the rights of persons to hold different perspectives becomes essential. For an extended discussion of these aspects of ethical thinking, see Appendix B.

These standards are: 1) Professional Responsibility and Competence; 2) Student Learning and Development; 3) Responsibility to the Institution; and 4) Responsibility to Society

APPENDIX K

The Council for the Advancement of Standards (CAS) in Higher Education Shared Ethical Standards (these standards are also linked to NASPA's website)

CAS Statement of Shared Ethical Principles

The Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (CAS) has served as a voice for quality assurance and promulgation of standards in higher education for over twenty five years. CAS was established to promote inter-association efforts to address quality assurance, student learning, and professional integrity. It was believed that a single voice would have greater impact on the evaluation and improvement of services and programs than would many voices speaking for special interests by individual practitioners or by single-interest organizations.

CAS includes membership of over 35 active professional associations and has established standards in over 30 functional areas. It has succeeded in providing a platform through which representatives from across higher education can jointly develop and promulgate standards of good practice that are endorsed not just by those working in a particular area, but by representatives of higher education association.

CAS often cites George Washington, who said, "Let us raise a standard to which the wise and honest can repair." CAS has raised standards; it is now time to focus on the attributes, such as wisdom and honesty, of those professionals who would use the standards. Professionals working to provide services in higher education share more than a commitment to quality assurance and standards of practice. A review of the ethical statements of member associations demonstrates clearly that there are elements of ethical principles and values that are shared across the professions in higher education.

Most of the member associations represented in CAS are guided by ethical codes of professional practice enforced through the prescribed channels of its association. CAS acknowledges and respects the individual codes and standards of ethical conduct of their organizations. From these codes, CAS has created a statement of shared ethical principles that focuses on seven basic principles that form the foundation for CAS member association codes: autonomy, non-malfeasance, beneficence, justice, fidelity, veracity, and affiliation. This statement is not intended to replace or supplant the code of ethics of any professional association; rather, it is intended to articulate those shared ethical principles. It is our hope that by articulating those shared beliefs, CAS can promulgate a better understanding of the professions of those in service to students and higher education.

Principle I - Autonomy
We take responsibility for our actions and both support and empower an individual's and group's freedom of choice.

- We strive for quality and excellence in the work that we do
- We respect one's freedom of choice
- We believe that individuals, ourselves and others, are responsible for their own behavior and learning
- We promote positive change in individuals and in society through education
- We foster an environment where people feel empowered to make decisions
- We hold ourselves and others accountable
- We study, discuss, investigate, teach, conduct research, and publish freely within the academic community
- We engage in continuing education and professional development

Principle II – Non-Malfeasance
We pledge to do no harm.

- We collaborate with others for the good of those whom we serve
- We interact in ways that promote positive outcomes
- We create environments that are educational and supportive of the growth and development of the whole person
- We exercise role responsibilities in a manner that respects the rights and property of others without exploiting or abusing power

The Council for the Advancement of Standards (CAS) in Higher Education Shared Ethical Standards (these standards are also linked to NASPA's website)

Principle III - Beneficence
We engage in altruistic attitudes and actions that promote goodness and contribute to the health and welfare of others.

- We treat others courteously
- We consider the thoughts and feelings of others
- We work toward positive and beneficial outcomes

Principle IV - Justice
We actively promote human dignity and endorse equality and fairness for everyone.

- We treat others with respect and fairness, preserving their dignity, honoring their differences, promoting their welfare
- We recognize diversity and embrace a cross-cultural approach in support of the worth, dignity, potential, and uniqueness of people within their social and cultural contexts
- We eliminate barriers that impede student learning and development or discriminate against full participation by all students
- We extend fundamental fairness to all persons
- We operate within the framework of laws and policies
- We respect the rights of individuals and groups to express their opinions
- We assess students in a valid, open, and fair manner and one consistent with learning objectives
- We examine the influence of power on the experience of diversity to reduce marginalization and foster community

Principle V - Fidelity
We are faithful to an obligation, trust, or duty.

- We maintain confidentiality of interactions, student records, and information related to legal and private matters
- We avoid conflicts of interest or the appearance thereof
- We honor commitments made within the guidelines of established policies and procedures
- We demonstrate loyalty and commitment to institutions that employ us
- We exercise good stewardship of resources

Principle VI - Veracity
We seek and convey the truth in our words and actions.

- We act with integrity and honesty in all endeavors and interactions
- We relay information accurately
- We communicate all relevant facts and information while respecting privacy and confidentiality

Principle VII – Affiliation
We actively promote connected relationships among all people and foster community.

- We create environments that promote connectivity
- We promote authenticity, mutual empathy, and engagement within human interactions

When professionals act in accordance with ethical principles, program quality and excellence are enhanced and ultimately students are better served. As professionals providing services in higher education, we are committed to upholding these shared ethical principles, for the benefit of our students, our professions, and higher education.

Some concepts for this code were taken from:
Kitchner, K. 1985). Ethical principles and ethical decisions in student affairs. In H. Canon & R. Brown (Eds.), *Applied ethics in student services* (New Directions in Student Services, No. 30, pp. 17-30). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Council for the Advancement of Standards. (2006). *CAS professional standards for higher education* (6th Ed.). Washington, DC: Author.