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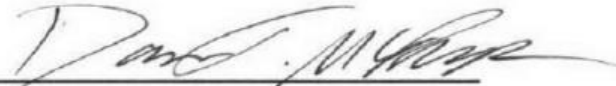
THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN STUDENT EMPLOYMENT IN THE COLLEGE UNION AND
STUDENT SUCCESS

BY

ASHLEY CASTEEL REED

THESIS APPROVED:


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STUDENT SUCCESS

BY

ASHLEY CASTEEL REED

Submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School of
Eastern Kentucky University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

2018

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DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate my work to my parents, Mike and Debbie Casteel, for their unwavering love and support. Thank you for pushing me to always be my best self. I love you.

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Today is the day I write the last page of my dissertation. Completing the Doctor of Education program at EKU has been an incredibly exhausting but rewarding experience, especially as a first generation student. I have learned a lot about myself during these last few years, both personally and professionally. Those of you who stood by me, thank you.

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this quantitative study was to investigate the relationship between student employment in the college union and student success at public universities in the Southeastern Conference (SEC). The study focused on the success of student employees as it relates to satisfaction, persistence, student learning and personal development. The study also focused on the relationship between college union working conditions and student satisfaction. The subjects in this study were 166 student employees who work in the college union at public SEC institutions during the 2016-2017 academic year. A survey was used to collect demographic information and information on how student employees within the college union describe their success and satisfaction. The results of this study generally confirm that student employment in the college union yields student success through satisfaction, persistence, student learning and personal development. The results also confirm that there is a positive correlation between working conditions and satisfaction with the college experience.

Keywords: student employment, college union, student success

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Introduction

Since the early 1900s, college unions have been identified as a facility that bonds the campus community. Influenced by universities in England, Harvard University became the first American university to establish a union for the purpose of promoting comradeship among the members of the university (Humphreys, 1951). The primary purpose of the union in the early 1900s was for debating societies and recreational activities; however, after the war in 1919, the union quickly became recognized as the space to build community between faculty, staff and students through social gathering and intellectual interests. After the war, colleges across the nation began constructing facilities of their own to promote campus unity and a “safe place for democracy” (Humphreys, 1951). According to Humphreys (1951) “this was an era of school spirit, of coeducation, of the biggest of the big dances, of bringing independent students up to a social par with fraternity students, of breaking down class barriers, and of co-operative student-faculty government”(p. 25). Prior to college unions, the typical “college life” emphasized conformity and discouraged imagination (Thelin, 2004).

In 1938, the college union became a contributing factor of educating students in self-realization, human relationships, economic efficiency and civic responsibility (Humphreys, 1951). During this time, the union was acknowledged as a fundamental part of the educational mission of the college. As students were finding their space on college campuses, the administration found a purpose for student affairs.

The development and success of students in college often relies on student-centered professionals in higher education; therefore, professionals in higher education

must be knowledgeable with practices linked to student success. According to Kuh et. al (2005), student success is “broadly defined to include satisfaction, persistence, and high levels of learning and personal development” (p. xiv) of the increasingly diverse student population.

The college union strives to provide programs and services that enhance the success of students. Previous research indicates that student involvement is a critical component to a student’s success, college experience and retention (Kindcaid, 1996). According to Astin (1999), “student involvement refers to the amount of physical and psychological energy that the student devotes to the academic experience” (p. 518). Astin (1999) explains that an involved student regularly devotes energy to studying, spending time on campus participating in student organizations and frequently interacting with members of the college community.

Student involvement and co-curricular activities contribute to student learning. Today, student learning can be assessed through in-class and out-of-class experiences. Learning outside the classroom has become such a spectacle in higher education that authors have developed a new definition for this *type* of learning:

“We no longer believe that learning is the passive corollary of teaching, or that students do, or should, simply absorb material presented in lectures and textbooks. The new concept of learning recognizes the essential integration of personal development with learning: it reflects the diverse ways through which students may engage, as a whole

people with multiple dimensions and unique personal histories, with the tasks and content of learning” (Keeling, 2004, p. 3)

An important element to student learning in college unions is the experiences gained outside the classroom. One of the co-curricular activities often discussed in higher education is student employment. Student employment in the student center (college union) can be a meaningful part of a student’s out-of-class learning experiences (Butts, 1971). Different from other on-campus student employment positions, students in college unions are often responsible for the day-to-day operations of the union, as well as graphic design, event services, programming, office support, game room management and customer service seven days a week. According to Astin (1999) students who work a part-time job on campus often acquire the same benefits of students who live on campus. Like residential students, students working a part-time job on campus will more likely develop a stronger identification and attachment to the college, increasingly the likelihood of interacting with faculty and other students.

College unions are student run facilities where students receive first-hand experience in leadership, social responsibility and engagement. Through the college union, a student-centered organization, students are encouraged to develop themselves through volunteerism, committees and student employment. Student employment is advantageous to the college union. In many cases, student employees represent the majority of employees in the union. This elevated level of responsibility, and minimal

supervision from full-time staff, contributes to a student's self-esteem and independence (Perozzi, 2009).

As on-campus student employment remains a crucial factor in the operation of higher education, not just college unions, it is important to recognize the needs of student employees. Student employment contributes to the success of our students; therefore, educators must structure on-campus student employment in ways that positively affect the learning and development of students.

Problem Statement

Student employment in the college union is relevant to the student experience; however, the prevailing problem is that universities rarely embrace employment as a means to education and student development (Perozzi, 2009). Instead, college unions are often viewed as a large facility built for socializing and food services. As budgets continue to diminish in higher education, it's more important than ever for college unions to demonstrate their impact and contributions to the mission of higher education.

Due to the rising cost of college tuition and tightened budgets, departments within colleges and universities are held more accountable for their outcomes related to student success, student learning and development. Departments responsible for assessing co-curricular activities and its impact on student development, such as student employment on-campus, must successfully measure outcomes that enhance student success during and after college. According to Collins and Roberts (2012), it is more

important than ever for student affairs to collaborate and share information because “the implications of reductions if not eliminations, at one college or university will not be limited to that institution. In these economically desperate times, reorganizations at one institution may become a template for the leaders of other institutions to follow” (p. 3).

Research suggests that student employment is the most common out-of-class experience among college students today with most students needing to work at least part-time (Pascarella & Terenzi, 2005). While there are mixed reviews regarding student employment as a benefit and a detriment to student success, recent research indicates that on-campus student employment yields bigger retention rates and is a means of ensuring student success and persistence on campus (Perozzi, 2009). Student employment has been explored as a positive out-of-classroom experience; however, little research exists surrounding specific student employment positions at colleges and universities. Previous studies suggest that future research should explore unique student employment positions because most likely they will have different measures across various student development outcomes (Perrozzi, 2009). Although research specifies the benefits of on-campus student employment, there is minimal research surrounding the impact student employment in the college union has on student success.

This study will investigate the relationship between student employment in the college union and student success as measured by student employees’ satisfaction,

persistence and levels of learning and development as they relate to their job in the college union. Hopefully, a better understanding will be uncovered between the link of student employment in the college union and student success. The potential for learning as a student employee on campus can provide students with invaluable opportunities for development and future success.

Purpose

The purpose of this quantitative study is to investigate the relationship between student employment in the college union with student success at public universities in the Southeastern Conference (SEC). Specifically, the study focused on the relationship between satisfaction, persistence, student learning and personal development concerning student employment within the college union. The results of this study will be used to expand the incomplete knowledge of the impact working in a college union has on student success. The study focused on the following research questions:

- How do student employees in the college union describe their success?
- What is the relationship between college union working conditions and student satisfaction?

Significance

In higher education, assessment has become a significant element of the accreditation process and distribution of campus resources (Rouzer, Sawal, Yakaboski, 2014). This quantitative study assessed the impact student employment in the college union has on student success. The findings of this study will better define the role of the

college union on a college campus, provide evidence on the significance of the student employment program in college unions, and provide college union director's and the Association of College Unions International (ACUI) with meaningful information on how the college union supports the mission of higher education. The findings of this study may provide guidance for professionals in the college union to incorporate these research findings to structure on-campus student employment opportunities in ways that positively affect a student's experience outside the classroom.

Operational Definitions

1. College union: an organization offering a variety of programs, activities, services, and facilities that enhance the life of the campus community. Can also be referred to as a 'Student Union' or 'Student Center'.
2. Student employment: a position that allows students who are enrolled in college to work on-campus and receive real-world experience.
3. Student Learning: Cognitive complexity and forms of civic engagement.
4. Personal Development: knowledge acquisition, intrapersonal development, interpersonal competence, intrapersonal development, humanitarianism and civic engagement, and practical competence.
5. Student Involvement: student regularly devotes energy to studying, spending time on campus participating in student organizations and frequently interacting with members of the campus community.

6. Student Success: Measured by satisfaction, persistence and levels of learning and development.

II. Literature Review

The History of the College Union

Chapter II presents a review of literature that provides an overview of the history of the college union, student employment in the college union and the factors that promote student success in the college union. The conceptual framework that was used to guide this study also is presented.

Birth of the College Union

College Unions originated at Oxford and Cambridge during the early 19th century (Jordan & Vakillian, 2013). This era (1815-1894) also was known as the debate stage in higher education (Humphreys, 1951). The primary purpose of the unions in Europe during this period was to provide a safe space for debates among young college men (Humphreys, 1951). The Union debates were considered to be indirect education that taught men how to be witty, social and spirited (Butts, 1971). Crosby and Aydelotte (1923) declared in Oxford “many men who lead the political and diplomatic destinies of the Empire received a first lesson of confidence and debating skill in the Union” (Butts, 1971, p. 4). Oxford Union was so inspiring that the Chancellor of Oxford in 1873 considered the Union Society as the most valuable instrument in education, but the association lacked the recognition of the University (Butts, 1971).

At the turn of the century, American colleges became interested in the union concept established by British unions (Butts, 1971). Shortly thereafter, Harvard University and other prestigious universities were inspired by the European unions and

became the first college union in America (Humphrey, 1951). Once college unions were introduced in America, the purpose of the college union was to promote social gathering rather than debates. Facilities such as Houston Hall at the University of Pennsylvania redefined campus facilities by including swimming pools, game rooms and meeting spaces to bring students together for recreation and scholarly debates (Jordan & Vakillian, 2013). The college union facilities were strategically planned to provide students the opportunity to organize themselves organically into discussion groups. 1898, the Constitution of the Houston Club read:

“The object of this club shall be to draw together students, officers and alumni of all Departments at the University in a wholesome social life, and to provide for them suitable amusements and recreations” (Butts, 1971, pg. 10).

Social Gatherings in the College Union

According to Thelin (2004), college unions were the first attempt by the university administration to promote inclusion among the wealthy, commuter students and other outsiders; however, a central space for meetings, dining, and social functions did not exist. A central space for social connection became crucial to campus life. This period of college unions became known as the club stage (1895-1918). It became evident during the “club stage” that college unions were an important part of college life. During the club stage, college unions provided students with a physical space to gather outside the classroom and residential living. During an inaugural address in 1904, President Charles Van Hise of Wisconsin recognized the union at Wisconsin by

stating "...For when a student goes out into the world, no other part of his education is of such fundamental importance as capacity to deal with men. Nothing that the professor or laboratory can do for the student can take the place of daily close companionship with hundreds of his fellows." (Butts, 1971, p. 11).

In the beginning stages of the union members of the university administration rarely recognized the significance of the union. It was the announcement by Lealock that caught the attention of other university administrators. In the early 1900s, Lealock, an educator at McGill University, proclaimed:

"As a college teacher, I have long since realized that the most that the teacher, as such, can do for the student is a very limited matter. The real thing for the students is the life and environment that surround him. All that he really learns, in a sense, he learned by the active operation of his own intellect and not as the passive recipient of lectures. And for this active operation what he needs most is the continued and intimate contact with his fellows. Students must live together and eat together, talk and smoke together. Experience shows that this is how their minds really grow...If a student is to get from his college what it should give him, a life in common with other students is his absolute right...A college that fails to give it to him is cheating him" (Butts, 1971, p. 12-13).

In 1914, student representatives from nine institutions in Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Wisconsin, West Virginia, and Michigan came together to construct the National Association of Student Unions (NASU) (Jordan & Vakillian, 2013)- known today as Association of College Unions International. During the NASU conference, the student

representatives exchanged ideas on how to “unify the student body, increase college spirit, and promote democracy” (Jordan & Vakillian, 2013, p. 4). After the First World War, following the years after 1919, a space on campus for socializing and democratizing became an important role for the union. As American unions emphasized the social life of college, unions also became known as the social- cultural center that embraced the interests of all members of the university (Butts, 1971).

Progression of the College Union

The period of 1919-1929 was known as The Campus Democracy Stage. During the democracy stage, the college union became the architectural legacy of the growing student body (Thelin, 2004). During this period, the college union provided a cohesive learning space for developing a diverse student population and provided an alternative to eating clubs and secret societies. On some campuses, the college union was the first physical structure for students to gather outside of the classrooms. As a result, college unions became known as the “living room” on college campuses (Rouzer, De Sawal, Yakaboski, 2014). According to Butts (1971), colleges looked at the Union “as one of the valuable educational workshops of the University- a laboratory for the close study of all our complex social relationships- the equipment for experimentation in the very slightly cultivated field of the student’s leisure hours” (p. 22).

After World War I, the American public became interested in higher education, especially in extracurricular activities (Thelin, 2004). Following the years after the war and women’s suffrage, universities started constructing union buildings to

commemorate those who served in the war. This was the beginning of the union movement. According to Humphreys (1951) many of the unions erected during this period were war memorials dedicated to better the democratic life of all students, no matter the gender or social status. The Michigan Union, in 1920, was the ideal union for college campuses. Humphreys (1951) states that the Michigan Union was “the most impressive club type of building to date, complete with hotel rooms, swimming pool, billiard room, and tap room” (p. 25). According to Humphrey’s research, the Michigan Union created the momentum of the union movement.

Shortly after World War 1 came The Great Depression. According to various literature, the great depression shifted campus life. Due to financial burdens, students could no longer afford expensive hobbies and dances; instead their hobbies focuses on discussions and games (Jordan & Vakillian, 2013). (Butts (1971) explained that there was a “shifting of energies away from the unions social and educational functions to economic functions and problems” (p. 22). In 1929, Porter Butts, Director of the Wisconsin Union, developed four objectives of the college union. According to Butts (1971), college unions exist to “1) Make the large university a more human place; 2) Provide a common space where students and teachers can find expression, a comprehensive and well-considered program for the social life of the University; 3) To promote and recognize the importance of leisure hours; and 4) To give the students an opportunity to manage their own affairs and an opportunity to reduce the cost of living” (p. 23-24). Butts (1971) states that a “student should find in the Union...in its concerts,

art exhibitions, library, and discussion groups...the opportunities to manifest, take pleasure in, and make a matter of habit the cultural interests which the University painstakingly sets out to develop in the classroom” (p. 24).

Shift in the College Union

According to Humphreys (1951), the community recreation stage began in 1930. During this time, college unions went from being a social gathering space to a common leisure time for the university community. During this period, Humphrey’s (1951) defined the college union as “An organization, ordinarily composed of students, faculty and alumni, is an informal educational medium for individual and group self-discovery and expression through a broad program of social and cultural recreation adapted to the leisure-time interests and needs of the college community. The union building is the community center, --the physical instrument for implementing the objectives of the organization and for facilitating a community life” (p. 11).

World War II had a tremendous effect on college campuses and college union operations. Prior to this time, women were not leaders on college campuses; however, as students and staff were enlisted in the draft women began stepping into director roles (McMillan & Davis, 1989). Although a change in leadership, college unions continued to operate as normal and continued hosting recreational activities and dances. According to McMillian & Davis (1989), women union directors played an integral role in creating coed unions and developing programs and recreational activities that were geared toward female students.

In 1956, the role of the college union was adopted. According to the Association of College Unions International (ACUI), “the union is the community center of the college, serving students, faculty, staff, alumni, and guests. By whatever form or name, a college union is an organization offering a variety of programs, activities, services, and facilities that, when taken together represent a well-considered plan for the community life of the college” (ACUI).

The student population drastically changed during the 50’s and 60’s. College campuses were becoming more diverse; therefore, issues related to social justice were being discussed and debated on college campuses. Protests were discovered on college campuses during the 1950’s; however, it wasn’t until the 1960’s that protests became dangerous to the campus community (Jordan & Vakillian, 2013). ACUI found protests and controversial discussions to be an important part to a student’s education. Butts (1966) exclaimed that college union professionals needed “to give students themselves the opportunities to shape the conditions of their life together and thus learn the ways of leadership” (p. 7). With the shift of demographics on campus it was more important than ever to provide educational programs and activities to the campus community. In fact, campus leaders found that student life outside of the classroom was so important that departments started receiving more money from the University to increase programming and activities on campus (Jordan & Vakillian, 2013).

College unions are committed to be a welcoming space for all students; however, during the 1990’s college unions were encouraged to promote inclusion for an

ever-growing diverse student population. According to Banks, Hammond, and Hernandez “college unions have been and will continue to be challenged to create environment that are inclusive, encompassing, and representative of the cultures and communities within higher education institutions” (Banks, Hammond & Hernandez, 2014, p. 16). During the 90’s and 2000’s the diversity of student populations increased on college campuses. To promote inclusion, college unions developed intentional programming to support the diverse student population.

Student Development and the College Union

By the late 1970’s protests on college campuses were diminishing. College union leaders took this as an opportunity to start focusing on their role in student development. By the 1980’s proving student development in the college union became even more important when funds for student life started shifting to academic affairs (Jordan & Vakillian, 2013). In order for college unions to keep funding, college union leaders were challenged to start assessing their profession and begin collecting evidence that proves the effectiveness of their programs as it relates to student development (Jordan & Vakillian, 2013).

The 1990’s and 2000’s brought new challenges and responsibilities to the student affairs profession. Literature, such as *Greater Expectations*, challenged higher education to change the quality of student learning and provide liberal education that would prepare students for life beyond college (Keeling, R., 2006). It was *Learning Reconsidered* that provided guidance and explanations of how student affairs educators

could enhance the quality of student learning and out-of-classroom experience.

According to Keeling (2006), “event program should have clear and specific learning outcomes and a clear link to the mission of the campus (or its institutional learning outcomes)” (p. 13). Eventually, university leaders found that student employees provided an abundance of learning opportunities in campus services (Keeling, R., 2006).

New Generation in the College Union

Over the years college unions have expanded to provide campus services, establish new sources of revenue and dedicate space for informal and formal learning (Rouzer, De Sawal & Yakaboski, 2014). Today, the college union is no longer the only structure available for student services and engagement on a college campus; however, college unions are created to provide and encourage comfortable environments for the growing diverse student population. According to Banks, Hammond & Hernandez (2014), “college unions are in a position to be a central point where institutions can promote inclusion and be a welcoming place for numerous student populations” (p.13).

According to Gallagher & Zamecnik (2013), “the unique nature of the college union organization requires a staff that is inclusive of a variety of different skills, focus, and educational preparation” (p. 26). Today, the functions of a college union include administration and finance, facility maintenance and operations, program and activities, marketing, event services, and retail opportunities such as a bookstore and dining services. The physical spaces within the college union form gathering spaces that

creates opportunities for student learning and engagement (Gallagher & Zamecnik, 2013).

CAS Standards and Guidelines

The need for college unions to assess their profession became more vital when the Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (CAS) provided specific standards for universities to aspire towards to achieve excellence (Jordan & Vakillian, 2013). Gallagher & Zamecnik (2013) declared that “union professionals should use the CAS standards to regularly assess the mission of the union, programs and services, financial resources, facilities and technology, legal responsibilities, issues of equity and access, campus and external relationships, diversity, ethics, and evaluation procedures. In addition, they should also use the standards to evaluate themselves and their work as professionals” (p. 34).

Established in 1979, CAS developed professional standards and guidelines to enhance student learning and development opportunities through programs and services in higher education. The CAS identified six broad categories (called domains) that illustrate student learning and development: knowledge acquisition, construction, integration and application; cognitive complexity; intrapersonal development; interpersonal competence; humanitarianism and civic engagement; and practical competence. The CAS Standard for College Unions (2012c) claims that professional’s are responsible for constructing the student employment experience in the college union and making it relevant to desirable student learning and development outcomes.

According to CAS (2012), college unions serve as an effective bridge for connecting out-of-class experiences or co-curricular learning with classroom learning. Based on a NASPA-led survey in 2010, students who participated in college union programs were taught how to balance their social activities with academics, improve appreciation for the fine and performing arts, and improve their communication skills (NASPA, 2010). The CAS (2012) Standards and Guidelines identify the following as desirable student learning and development outcomes for the college unions: intellectual growth, effective communication, realistic self-appraisal, enhanced self-esteem, clarified values, career choices, leadership development, healthy behaviors, meaningful interpersonal relationships, independence, collaboration, social responsibility, satisfying and productive lifestyles, appreciation of diversity, spiritual awareness, and achievement of personal and educational goals. For the purpose of this study, I will use the learning outcomes (domains) outlined in Table 2.1 below. Table 2.1 was established by CAS (2012) and recognized by several other resources focused on student learning and development outcomes in higher education.

Table 2.1 Student Learning Outcomes

Student Outcome Domain ²	Dimensions of Outcome Domain	Examples of Learning and Development Outcomes
Knowledge, acquisition, construction, integration, and application	Understanding knowledge from a range of disciplines	Possesses knowledge of human cultures and the physical world; possesses knowledge of [a specific] one or more subjects
	Connecting knowledge to other knowledge, ideas and experiences	Uses multiple sources of information and their synthesis to solve problems; knows how to access diverse sources of information such as the internet, text observations, and data bases
	Constructing knowledge	Personalizes learning; makes meaning from text, instruction and experience; uses experience and other sources of information to create new insights; generates new problem-solving approaches based on new insights; recognizes one's own capacity to create new understandings from learning activities and dialogue with others
	Relating knowledge to daily life	Seeks new information to solve problems; relates knowledge to major and career decisions; makes connections between classroom and out-of-classroom learning; articulates career choices based on assessment of interests, values, skills, and abilities; provides evidence of knowledge, skills, and accomplishments resulting from formal education, work experience, community service, and volunteer experiences, for example in resumes and portfolios

Table 2.1 (Continued)

Student Outcome Domain ²	Dimensions of Outcome Domain	Examples of Learning and Development Outcomes
Cognitive complexity	Critical thinking	Identifies important problems, questions, and issues; analyzes, interprets, and makes judgments of the relevance and quality of information; assesses assumptions and considers alternative perspectives and solutions ³
	Reflective thinking	Applies previously understood information, concepts, and experiences to a new situation or setting; rethinks previous assumptions
	Effective reasoning	Uses complex information from a variety of sources including personal experience and observation to form a decision or opinion; is open to new ideas and perspectives
	Creativity	Integrates mental, emotional, and creative processes for increased insight; formulates a new approach to a particular problem
Interpersonal development	Realistic self-appraisal, self-understanding, and self-respect	Assesses, articulates, and acknowledges personal skills, abilities, and growth areas; uses self-knowledge to make decisions such as those related to career choices; articulates rationale for personal behavior; seeks and considers feedback from others; critiques and subsequently learns from past experiences; employs self-reflection to gain insight; functions without need for constant reassurance from others; balances needs of self with needs of others
	Identity development	Integrates multiple aspects of identity into a coherent whole; recognizes and exhibits interdependence in accordance with environmental, cultural, and personal values; identifies and commits to important aspects of self

Table 2.1 (Continued)

Student Outcome Domain ²	Dimensions of Outcome Domain	Examples of Learning and Development Outcomes
	Commitment to ethics and integrity	Incorporates ethical reasoning into action; explores and articulates the values and principles involved in personal decision-making; acts in congruence with personal values and beliefs; exemplifies dependability, honesty, and trustworthiness; accepts personal accountability
	Spiritual awareness	Develops and articulates personal belief system; understands roles of spirituality in personal and group values and behaviors; critiques, compares, and contrasts various belief systems; explores issues of purpose, meaning, and faith
Interpersonal competence		Establishes healthy, mutually beneficial relationships with others; treats others with respect; manages interpersonal conflicts effectively; demonstrates appropriately assertive behavior
	Interdependence	Seeks help from others when needed and offers assistance to others; shares a group or organizational goal and works with others to achieve it; learns from the contributions and involvement of others; accepts supervision and direction as needed
	Collaboration	Works cooperatively with others, including people different from self and/or with different points of view; seeks and values the involvement of others; listens to and considers others' points of view

Table 2.1 (Continued)

Student Outcome Domain ²	Dimensions of Outcome Domain	Examples of Learning and Development Outcomes
	Effective leadership	Demonstrates skill in guiding and assisting a group, organization, or community in meeting its goals; identifies and understands the dynamics of a group; exhibits democratic principles as a leader or group member; communicates a vision, mission, or purpose that encourages commitment and action in others
Humanitarianism and civic engagement	Understanding and appreciation of cultural and human differences	Understands one's own identity and culture; seeks involvement with people different from oneself; articulates the advantages and impact of a diverse society; identifies systematic barriers to equality and inclusiveness, then advocates and justifies means for dismantling them; in interactions with others, exhibits respect and preserves the dignity of others
	Global perspective	Understands and analyzes the interconnectedness of societies worldwide; demonstrates effective stewardship of human, economic, and environmental resources
	Social responsibility	Recognizes social systems and their influence on people; appropriately challenges the unfair, unjust, or uncivil behavior of other individuals or groups; participates in service/volunteer activities that are characterized by reciprocity; articulates the values and principles involved in personal decision-making; affirms and values the worth of individuals and communities

Table 2.1 (Continued)

Student Outcome Domain ²	Dimensions of Outcome Domain	Examples of Learning and Development Outcomes
	Sense of civic responsibility	Demonstrates consideration of the welfare of others in decision-making; engages in critical reflection and principled dissent; understands and participates in relevant governance systems; educates and facilitates the civic engagement of others
Practical competence	Pursuing goals	Sets and pursues individual goals; articulates rationale for personal and educational goals and objectives; articulates and makes plans to achieve long-term goals and objectives; identifies and works to overcome obstacles that hamper goal achievement
	Communicating effectively	Conveys meaning in a way that others understand by writing and speaking coherently and effectively; writes and speaks after reflection; influences others through writing, speaking or artistic expression; effectively articulates abstract ideas; uses appropriate syntax and grammar; makes and evaluates presentations or performances; listens attentively to others and responds appropriately
	Technological competence	Demonstrates technological literacy and skills; demonstrates the ethical application of intellectual property and privacy; uses technology ethically and effectively to communicate, solve problems, and complete tasks; stays current with technological innovations
	Managing personal affairs	Exhibits self-reliant behaviors; manages time effectively; develops strategies for managing finances

Table 2.1 (Continued)

Student Outcome Domain ²	Dimensions of Outcome Domain	Examples of Learning and Development Outcomes
	Managing career development	Takes steps to initiate a job search or seek advanced education; constructs a resume based on clear job objectives and with evidence of knowledge, skills, and abilities; recognizes the importance of transferrable skills
	Demonstrating professionalism	Accepts supervision and direction as needed; values the contributions of others; holds self accountable for obligations; shows initiative; assesses, critiques, and then improves the quality of one's work and one's work environment
	Maintaining health and wellness	Engages in behaviors and contributes to environments that promote health and reduce risk; articulates the relationship between health and wellness in accomplishing goals; exhibits behaviors that advance the health of communities
	Living a purposeful and satisfying life	Makes purposeful decisions regarding balance among education, work, and leisure time; acts in congruence with personal identity, ethical, spiritual, and moral values

¹ This document is an adaptation of *Learning Reconsidered* and the CAS Learning Outcomes

² Categories adapted from *Learning Reconsidered (2004)* and Kuh, Douglas, Lund, & Ramin Gyurmek (1994)

³ These examples are adopted from the George Mason University *Critical Thinking Assessment Report (2006)*

Student Employment in College

The U.S. federal government recognized the need for college employment in the early 1960's (Perozzi, 2009). During the 1990's student employment rates increased due to enlarged cost of college tuition (Lang, 2012). The most recent data available from the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES, 2017) show that 78 percent part-time and 43 percent full-time students are employed during college. According to Watson (2012), student employment is an important area to study since working during college is a common thread among college students. As students spend time on campus working for specific units and/or departments, universities are obligated to provide a meaningful learning experience as part of this work.

Researchers have studied the relationship between student employment and student success. While off-campus student employment may negatively affect students' attachment to college, many studies report that part-time student employment on campus creates a connection to the college and positively impacts a students' social and academic outcomes (Brint & Cantwell, 2010; Cheng & Alcantara, 2007; Dundes & Marx, 2006; Fjortoft, 1995; Kulm & Cramer, 2006; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). According to previous research, students who work between 10-20 hours a week on campus typically show higher rates of persistence relative to students who do not work on campus (Kuh, 1995). These studies suggest that there is a positive correlation between on-campus student employment and student success.

Student employment in college contributes to a sense of responsibility, as well as career and personal development. According to Kincaid (1996), students encounter

two important transitions while they are in college. Kincaid (1996) states, “The first crucial transition for a college student is during their freshman year, which may be facilitated by student employment. The second, the senior year transition from college to a career, is also facilitated by undergraduate employment” (Kincaid, 1996, p. viii). On-campus student employment contributes to a student’s sense of belonging and becoming involved at the university; student involvement has been linked to academic success and retention.

According to Perozzi (2009), on-campus student employment is important because universities rarely embrace the connection between student employment and student development. If students must work during college, it is the university’s responsibility to make the student employment experience meaningful. Done correctly, student employment should provide students with the tools to communicate effectively, evaluate new ideas and techniques, and perfect decision-making. Perozzi (2009) suggests that student employment provides developmental outcomes such as moral development, psychosocial change, and attitudes and values.

According to Perozzi (2009), to learn meaningfully student employees must be challenged by activities, tasks, and projects that are authentic to their position and involve a certain amount of reflection. Another important factor to create a meaningful workplace is establishing specific workplace experiences that produce increased levels of learning and integrating the qualities in every aspect of the student employee’s experience from application to graduation. Perozzi (2009) discovered that administrators who work with student employees could make a positive change and

enhance student learning, mainly by having clear learning outcomes from the beginning. Supervisors also can assist with student learning by providing feedback, recognition and evaluations.

Supervisors of student employees have a tremendous role to provide a meaningful and positive student employment-learning experience. According to Perozzi (2009), “work habits that students develop during college employment do affect career attitude” (p. 40-41). Therefore, it is important to provide students with a meaningful experience that includes responsibility, feedback on job performance, and the opportunity for rewards when feasible.

Student Employment in the College Union

According to Butts (1971), “one important practical consideration often overlooked by college administrators staffing a union is that union buildings normally operate seven days a week, including holidays, from early morning to late evening- in other words, two eight-hour works days each day of the week” (p. 61). The increase of responsibilities and expectations of the union led to increased staff and supervisory positions. In 1936, the average number of student employees in the unions across the nation was fifty-one (Humphrey, 1951). Today, many college unions host the largest number of student employees (Lane & Perozzi, 2014). Some of the college union positions include being a building manager, information desk worker, programming coordinator, graphic designer and event coordinator. According to Lane & Perozzi (2014), “these structured roles can be transformational experiences for students, especially when designed intentionally with students’ learning in mind” (p. 31).

According to Atha, Oaks, and Kennedy-Phillips (2013) employment within students affairs, such as student employment in the college union, offers an environment where students can acquire new skills and competencies that support them during and after college. For example, student employee building managers are responsible for managing the safety and services during evening, weekends, and holidays seven days a week. With this large responsibility, building managers often practice problem solving and leadership skills during their on-campus employment at the college union (NASPA, 2010).

The Association of College Unions International (ACUI) has identified 11 core competencies for college union and student activities profession. The 11 core competencies include communication, facilities management, fiscal management, human resource development, intercultural proficiency, leadership, management, marketing, planning, student learning and technology. Student employment in the college union focuses on student learning. According to ACUI, student learning is the “ability to create educational environments and experiences that intentionally provide students with opportunities for acquiring intellectual and interpersonal skills, beyond the traditional place and time boundaries” (www.acui.org).

Professionals who work in college unions may contribute to student success through student employment opportunities. Student employment within the college union is a co-curricular experience that “directly complements the academic curriculum by providing degree-appropriate and career related experiences for student and learning opportunities that are intentionally focused on outcomes

mirroring those promoted for general education, for example interpersonal communication and intercultural understanding (Association of American Colleges and Universities, 2013)” (Lane & Perozzi, 2014, p. 27).

Rodgers (1990b) defined student development as “the ways that a student grows, progresses, or increases his or her development capabilities as a result of enrollment in an institution of higher education” (p. 27). Miller and Prince (1976) suggested that student development is the “application of human development concepts in postsecondary settings so that everyone involved can master increasingly complex developmental tasks, achieve self-direction, and become interdependent” (p. 3). Astin (1993) summarized that a “student’s academic and personal development can be enhanced by heavy involvement” (p. 382). According to Collins and Roberts (2012), “Research demonstrates that students who have involvement experience can improve skills such as interpersonal communication, leadership abilities, oral communication, teamwork, data analysis, problem solving and cognitive development” (p.56).

For the purpose of this study I have provided job descriptions for the standard student employment positions in college unions provided by the Association of College Unions International (2014):

Building Manager Responsibilities: Regulate and monitor service, safety, and security of the student union by walking rounds, responding to issues, and completing reports. Exists to facilitate the co-curricular and administrative programs of the student center and to assist the programs of non-university

organizations that have contracted use of student center facilities. Monitor events, including event set-ups. Identify and resolve immediate operations issues in the building. Open and close the student center. Model appropriate behavior and provide leadership for other student center student staff. Create a friendly atmosphere in the student center for students, staff and visitors, by building positive working relationships with public safety, and other campus entities. Work with student workers to achieve a high level of customer service. Manage onsite facility and customer problems, conflicts, and issues.

Information Desk Responsibilities: Responsible for the daily operation of the information desk including cash-handling responsibilities, ticket sales transactions, and a good working knowledge of current and upcoming events. Issue keys, give out campus directions, and welcome guests to the union. Uphold strong customer service standards for dress, greetings, phone calls, and expedient customer response. Support emergency response processes as needed by the building manager.

Technical Service Responsibilities: Act as a greeter for individuals in the campus center; provide prompt and courteous customer service to guests and clients; enforce campus center policies; responsible for safety and security of facility, furnishings, equipment, guests, and employees; relay all pertinent information/issues to staff members as appropriate. Complete all daily equipment set-ups, technical requirements; assist with daily event management, to include checking out equipment; maintains awareness of daily

event schedule and all related information. Inspect all equipment for proper functioning before setting up in a meeting room; maintain orderly appearance in all storage areas. Put into operation various pieces of audio-visual equipment (PA systems, slide/overhead projectors, LCD projectors, computers, TV/VCR/DVD players, sound boards, speakers, dry erase board/marker/eraser sets). Check-in with clients prior to event/meeting to ensure equipment is functioning properly. Serve as audio-visual technician for large events or where technical expertise is desired. Assists with documenting technical equipment inventory. For centers with a stage management crew: Scheduling technical crew for performances. Ensure readiness of backstage facility and house. Call cues/give direction during shows. Operate light/sound board, follow-spot, fly rail as appropriate.

Set-up Responsibilities: Act as a greeter for individuals in the campus center; Provide prompt and courteous customer service to guests and clients; Enforce campus center policies. Responsible for safety and security of facility, furnishings, equipment, guests, and employees. Relay all pertinent information/issues to staff members as appropriate. Complete all daily event setups, technical requirements, furniture, equipment, etc.; Assist with daily event management to include unlocking meeting rooms, checking out equipment, and maintaining awareness of daily event schedules; Inspect all equipment for proper functioning before setting up in a meeting room; Maintain orderly appearance in all storage areas; Conduct regular inventory of

setup equipment; Responsible for appearance/cleanliness of public spaces and meeting rooms; Assist with resetting spaces after events/meetings; Maintain neat and clean appearance of information center, lounges, meeting rooms, hallways (in coordination with housekeeping staff).

Program Coordinator Responsibilities: Assists student activities professionals in researching, developing, and implementing a varied program calendar of events for the union's program offerings. Initiates program ideas and themes. Coordinates necessary contract requirements for performances. Assists with marketing and promotions for all events in the college union.

Student employment in the union is a positive way to connect students to campus resources, peers, and events that promote personal growth and development. According to Lane and Perozzi (2014), students who are engaged on campus through employment opportunities are more likely to engage with their faculty, staff and peers. Lane and Perozzi (2014) explain how "framing these interactions and relationships with intentional outcomes can assist students with the development of key skills and abilities that can ultimately make them more marketable in the work force" (p. 31).

The college union provides a community that welcomes students, faculty and staff to develop relationships outside the classroom. With that said, students who work in the college union are more likely to engage with their faculty, staff and other peers. According to Astin (1999) "frequent interaction with faculty is strongly related

to satisfaction with college than any other type of involvement or, indeed, any other student or institutional characteristic” (p. 525).

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for understanding the literature and research related to this study is based on the assumption that student development and learning can be recognized through student employment in the college union. The six domains of the Council for the Advancement of Standards (CAS) in Higher Education illustrate levels of student learning and development. The six domains (knowledge acquisition, cognitive complexity, intrapersonal development, interpersonal development, civic engagement, and personal competence) can be identified throughout the components necessary for student success. This study was designed to evaluate student success across dimensions of student learning, personal development, satisfaction and persistence. I have illustrated the components necessary for student success in Figure 2.1 (see below).

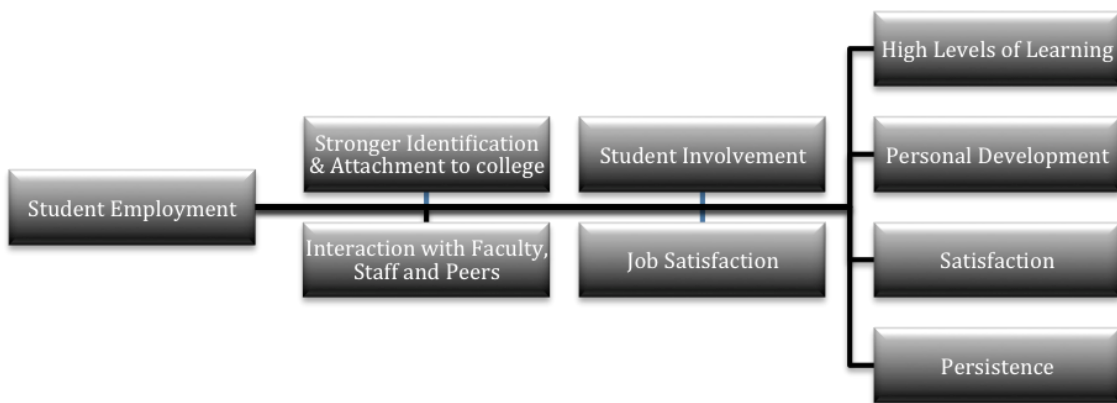


Figure 2.1 Conceptual Framework

Stronger Identification and Attachment to College

Retention has been, and will continue to be, an ongoing challenge for higher education. Tinto’s Internationalist Theory views student departure as a “process that occurs because of the meanings the individual student ascribes to his or her interactions with the formal and informal dimensions of a given college or university (Braxton, Suliivan, and Johnson, 1997; Tinto, 1986, 1993)” (Braxton, Hirschy & McClendon, 2004, p. 7). Tinto argued that students depart higher education without earning a degree because of the nature and quality of the interactions with the college or university (Braxton, Hirschy & McClendon, 2004). According to the Tinto Internationalist Theory (1975), these interactions are measured by a student’s academic and social integration. Tinto’s (1975) findings indicate that a greater degree of academic integration creates a greater commitment to the goal of graduation, and the greater the degree of social integration creates a greater commitment to the

institution; therefore, the greater levels of both institution commitment and the commitment to the goal of college graduation increases the probability that the student will persist in college.

Student employment provides students with an opportunity to integrate with the institution, academically and socially. Most importantly, working on-campus can give students a sense of belonging to their campus community. According to Kuh, Kinzie, Schuh, and Whit (2005), “feelings of belonging help students connect with their peers and the institution, relationships that, in turn, are associated with persistence and satisfaction” (p. 119). Based on previous research, on-campus student employment has “positive effects on year-to-year persistence, timely graduation, bachelor’s degree completion, and the probability of enrollment in professional or graduate school” (Parcarella & Terenzini, 2005). In addition, Astin (1984) indicates that student employment allows the student to rely on the college as a source of income, which in return, results in a greater attachment to the college.

Student employment in the college union promotes persistence in college by specifying expectations and providing advice, support, involvement, and learning. Tinto (2002) explains that students are more likely to persist in college and graduate when they are put in environments that expect them to succeed. According to Tinto (2002), “high expectations are a condition for student success, or as is sometimes noted, “no one rises to low expectations” “(p. 4). The college union staff views their student employees as an essential piece to the success of the college union. According

to Astin (1993), students are more likely to persist and graduate in college if they are viewed as valued members of the institution.

Tinto (2002) claims that one of the most important factors to student persistence and graduating in college is creating environments that foster learning. Tinto (2002) explains that “students who are actively involved in learning, that is who spend more time on task, especially with others, are more likely to learn and, in turn, more likely to stay and graduate” (p.5). The mission of the college union is to be a laboratory where students can learn and practice leadership, programming, management, social responsibility and interpersonal skills.

Interactions with Faculty, Staff & Peers

Pascarella and Terenzini (2005) claim that positive interactions between a student and faculty members, as well as student and peers, aid in creating a bond between the student and institution. Astin’s (1993) findings indicate that students who work on-campus are more likely to have informal interactions with faculty and their peers (Perozzi, 2009). In the college union, the facility is an inclusive space that creates programming and services for informal interactions between students, faculty, staff, and peers.

Student employment allows students the opportunity to interact with faculty and staff outside the classroom. Based on the evidence of previous research, “student contact with faculty members outside the classroom appears to consistently promote student persistence, educational aspirations, and degree completion, even when other factors are taken into account” (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005, p. 417). Lane and

Perozzi (2014) claim that the faculty, staff and peer interactions supported by student employment can assist students with developing key skills and abilities that make them more marketable in the work force.

Previous research indicates that meaningful interactions between faculty and students are fundamental to a students learning experiences in college (Kuh et. al, 2005). According to Kuh et. al (2005), the following interactions are important to a student's collegiate experiences: "(1) talking about career plans with a faculty member or advisor, 2) Discussing ideas from readings or classes with faculty members outside of class, (3) receiving prompt feedback from faculty on academic performance, (4) working with a faculty member on a research project, (5) working with faculty members on activities other than coursework, (6) discussing grades or assignments with an instructor" (p. 207). Students' involvement with faculty outside of the classroom is well known to be beneficial for students (Kuh, 2003; Kuh et al., 2005). According to Tinto (1993), the frequency and quality of contact between students and other members of the university (faculty, staff, other peers) is an important predictor of student persistence and graduation.

Student Involvement

Previous research has found that student involvement during college contributes to student learning, personal development, satisfaction and persistence (Astin 1984). According to Astin (1984), part-time on-campus student employment during college is one of the most noteworthy factors that facilitate student retention. On-campus student employment increases the likelihood that students will come in

contact and socialize with faculty, staff and other students (Astin, 1984). In addition to on-campus student employment increasing involvement between the student and campus community, Astin (1993) also found that “part-time, on-campus employment has positive effects on student development: higher GPA, faster degree completion, and more frequent self-reported cognitive and affective growth” (Perozzi, 2009, p. viii).

Astin (1984) indicates, “the amount of student learning and personal development associated with any educational program is directly proportional to the quality and quantity of student involvement” (Astin, 1984, p. 519). The college union is a learning-centered department that focuses on the student employment experience and learning outcomes. Job descriptions for student employees in the college union are written to summarize the essential job functions that identify with the college unions identified learning outcomes (Perozzi, 2009). According to the Association of Colleges and Universities (2013), “the co-curriculum directly complements the academic curriculum by providing degree-appropriate and career-related experiences for students and learning opportunities that are intentionally focused on outcomes mirroring those promoted for general education, for example interpersonal communication and intercultural understanding” (Lane & Perozzi, 2014, p. 27).

Previous research on college student development indicates that “the time and energy students devote to educationally purposeful activities is the single best predictor of their learning and personal development” (Astin, 1991; Chickering & Reisser, 1993; Kuh, Schuh, Whitt, & Associates, 1991; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991, 2005). Casella and Brougham (1995) found that college graduates who work in college

“produced higher-quality work, accepted supervision and direction more willingly, demonstrated better time management skills, and were better able to interact with coworkers on team projects” (Pascarella & Terezini, 2005). In addition to student employment improving higher quality work and better time management skills, Collins and Roberts (2012), found research that provides evidence of involvement improving skills such as interpersonal communication, problem solving skills, communication and leadership abilities.

Job Satisfaction

Previous research indicates that those who persist in college are usually satisfied with their college experience. According to Astin (1993b), satisfaction is a key indicator and direct measure of success in college. In general, it is important to measure student satisfaction because it is related to retention and persistence. With that said, it is equally important for student employees to have a positive experience because there may be a positive correlation between the satisfactions with their job compared to their institution.

According to Kincaid (1996), many employees, students and regular employees, receive a significant degree of personal satisfaction from their work. Kincaid (1996) indicates that student employees receive this satisfaction when they are motivated by their supervisor and challenged in their job functions. Areas such as planning, marketing, public relations and security allow for intellectual curiosity and personal achievement, which in return, is measured as personnel satisfaction (Kincaid, 1996).

Satisfaction in the workplace can also be achieved by encouraging input from staff during the decision-process as it allows staff to feel more involved in the organizational goals (Perozzi, 2009). The same can be said for student employees. According to *Administrative Aspects of Student Employment*, professionals should encourage input from student employees because it supports a positive work environment and relationship for both professional and student staff (Perozzi, 2009).

III. Methodology

Context of the study was disseminated to public universities with a college union in the Southeastern Conference (SEC). The SEC consists of the following public institutions:

University of Alabama- University of Alabama is located in Tuscaloosa, Alabama and is home to over 35,000 students. The Ferguson Student Center, housed in the Division of Student Life, is located in the heart of University of Alabama's campus. The Ferguson Student Center is known for hosting different events and programs for the campus community, as well as offering a wide variety of high-quality services, collaborative programming, and leisure activities. The student center utilizes approximately 54 student employees. Student employment opportunities include Building Manager, Conference Coordinator, Office Assistant, Technical Service Assistant, and Facilities/Maintenance Assistant.

University of Arkansas- University of Arkansas is a land-grant, space-grant research university that is located in Fayetteville, Arkansas and is home to over 27,000 students. The Arkansas Union, housed in the Division of Student Affairs, is committed to providing a community for students and others to connect to convenient services such as dining, entertainment, meeting/event spaces and student involvement. The union utilizes approximately 15 student employees to manage building operations.

Auburn University- Auburn University is located in Auburn, AL and is a land grant institution that is home to over 28,000 students and more than 300 clubs and student organizations. The Auburn Student Center is an 184,000 square foot facility that is the family room of campus. Some of the services offered in the Student Center include full service postal kiosks, ATMS, dining, game lounge, and a variety of meeting and event space that services students, departments and the campus community. The student employment program at the Auburn Student Center consists of 80 student employees. Student employees at the Auburn Student Center are responsible for managing the information desk, AV Tech and meeting room set-up, game room, and office support.

University of Florida- University of Florida is located in Gainesville, Florida and is a land-grant, sea-grant and space-grant institution for more than 50,000 students. The Reitz Union, housed within Student Affairs, supports many services and programs that benefit the campus and Gainesville community. The 350,000+ gross square foot facility includes ballroom and meeting space, food court, game room, hotel, arts & crafts center, art gallery, computer lab and event services. The union employs approximately 150 student employees. Student employment opportunities include AV Services, Information Desk, IT Services, Operations, Set-Up Crew, Event Services, Programming, and Marketing.

University of Georgia- Located in Athens, GA, the University of Georgia is a land and sea grant institution that is home to over 36,000 students and more than 600 registered student and service organizations. The Tate Student Center, housed within Student Affairs, is a facility that creates welcoming and inclusive spaces for students through programs, development opportunities and services. Services within the Tate Student Center include dining options, Student Veterans Resource Center, radio station, print and copy services, and several event and lounge spaces for the campus community to enjoy. The Tate Student Center utilizes approximately 121 student employees to manage specific operations in the student center. Student employment opportunities include information desk, event services, and student programming.

University of Kentucky- University of Kentucky is located in Lexington, KY and is home to over 30,000 students. The UK Student Center, housed in Student and Academic Life, is currently under a renovation and expansion and is expected to reopen in Spring 2018. Since May 2015, the Student Center staff, tenants and services have been in temporary facilities. During the renovation, The Student Center has been utilizing approximately 70 student employees to manage information desks, programming, marketing, tech services, and temporary facilities.

Louisiana State University- Louisiana State University is located in Baton Rouge, LA and is home to over 30,000 students and offers 71 undergraduate degree programs, 71 master's degree programs, 47 doctoral programs and 4

professional/post professional programs. The LSU Student Center, housed in Auxiliary Services, encompasses a wide variety of services and programs that are available to the LSU community. The LSU Student Center provides the campus community with arts and entertainment, meeting and conference space, box office, theatre, dining, testing center, passport photo services and mailing services. LSU Student Center utilizes approximately 40 students employees to manage the student center. Student employment opportunities include administration, art gallery, box office, event management, information center, arts studio, marketing, technical services, and Tiger Card Office.

Mississippi State University- Mississippi State University is located in Starkville, Mississippi and is home to over 21,000 students. The Colvard Student Union is home to the Center for Student Activities, Cultural Diversity Center, Fraternity and Sorority Life, and the Lyceum Series. The Colvard Student Union offers a wide variety of services that include dining options, hair salon, ATM's, event and meeting spaces. The Colvard Student Union employs approximately 20 students. Student employment opportunities include Reservation and Information Desk Assistants, General Office Assistants, Budget Office Assistants, AV Crew, Maintenance and Set-up Assistants, and Auditorium Ushers.

University of Mississippi- Ole Miss is located in Oxford, Mississippi and is home to over 24,000 students with 60 percent of the student body being from Mississippi. The Ole Miss Student Union, housed in Division of Student Affairs,

serves as the center of student life on campus by providing quality programs, facilities and services. In December 2016, the Ole Miss Student Union began major renovations to meet the demands of the growing student body. During the renovation, Ole Miss Student Union has utilized 6 student employees to take on the task of set-up, A/V, and reservation requests.

University of Missouri- University of Missouri is a public land-grant research university located in Columbia, Missouri and home to more than 30,000 students. The Missouri Student Unions, housed in Student and Auxiliary Services, is comprised of two facilities, the Memorial Student Union and the MU Student Center. The Missouri Student Unions house a number of student services, such as Asian Affairs Center, International Center, Disability Center, Veterans Center, Information Center, Unions Events Management Office, Unions Programs Officer, Student Life Offices, Campus Dining, New Student Programs, Multicultural Center, Credit Union, Mizzou Store (bookstore), Banks, and multiple places to host events and lounge. The Missouri Unions utilizes approximately 60 student employees to manage the two unions.

University of South Carolina- University of South Carolina is located in Columbia, South Carolina and is home to over 30,000 students. The Russell House University Union, housed in Student Life, provides administrative office space for student life departments, leadership and service center, campus dining, bookstore, retail, event space and lounges. The Russell House utilizes approximately 100 student employees to manage the union. Student

employment opportunities include Building Attendant, Information Center Attendant, Gameroom Attendant, Event Services Assistant, Leadership and Service Center employee and graphic designer.

University of Tennessee- University of Tennessee is located in Knoxville, Tennessee and is home to more than 28,000 students. The Student Union serves as the community center of campus and is committed to student development and learning, civic engagement, multiculturalism, healthy living and sustainability. The Student Union has been under a major renovation and expansion project, but was able to open phase 1 in 2016. The student union is currently utilizing 17 student employees to manage the facility.

University of Texas A&M- Texas A&M is located in College Station, TX and is home to over 64,000 students. The Memorial Student Center, housed within the Division of Student Affairs, is the “living room” of campus that provides students with multiple lounge areas, galleries, TV and Gaming Area, Computer and Printing Services, dining, and multiple meeting and conference spaces for student organization and department activities. The Memorial Student Center utilizes approximately 175 student employees for services such as event services.

Population and Sample Selection

The target population for this study was full-time students who were student employees in the college union during the 2016-2017 academic year. For the purpose of this study, all college union student employee graduate assistants and

undergraduates from the SEC public institutions were included in the study. The final size of the sample was N= 157 student employees.

Instrumentation and Measures

It was determined that a survey would be the most effective way to evaluate how and why students learn, as well as to measure student employee satisfaction (Beam, 2005). According to Collins and Roberts (2012), surveys are a useful tool that encourages students to reflect on their experiences. The self-assessment questionnaire gathered subjective and quantitative information by measuring student's identification and attachment to college, interactions with faculty/staff and peers, student involvement, and job satisfaction. The six domains of the Council for the Advancement of Standards (CAS) in Higher Education illustrate levels of student learning and development. The six domains (knowledge acquisition, cognitive complexity, intrapersonal development, interpersonal development, civic engagement, and personal competence) can be identified throughout the components necessary for student success. The self-assessment questionnaire also collected information on student satisfaction and how their satisfaction correlates with their experience and working conditions in the college union.

The web-based survey, developed and managed through Qualtrics, included explicit instructions for student employees taking the survey. Student employees were asked, "As a result of working in the college union, I have: " and the students rated their agreement with the following statements using a five-point Likert scale (5= strongly agree, 4= agree, 3= neutral, 2= disagree, 1= strongly disagree). The five-point

Likert scale allowed students to assess their level of learning, development and satisfaction. In addition, students were given an opportunity to provide qualitative comments (related to their overall experience) that can add quality to the student's unique job experience.

The survey (Appendix A) consists of three sections and took approximately ten minutes to complete. The first section of the survey gathered demographic information related to gender, age, university affiliation, year in school, enrollment status and cumulative grade point average (GPA). The second section of the survey is related to student learning and personal development through identification and attachment to college, student involvement, and interactions with faculty, staff and peers. The last section of the survey focused on the student's satisfaction levels as it relates to their job in the college union and overall collegiate experience.

Variables

The independent variables on the survey include the following background and demographic information: student employment position (standard college union student employment positions) and demographic information relating to gender, current year in school, student enrollment status, and years employed in the college union. The dependent variables consist of four areas (identification and attachment to college; interactions with peers and professional staff; student involvement; and job satisfaction) that signify student success through high levels of learning, personal development, satisfaction and persistence.

The six domains of the CAS standards and guidelines illustrate levels of student learning and development. The six domains (knowledge acquisition, cognitive complexity, intrapersonal development, interpersonal development, civic engagement, and personal competence) can be identified throughout components necessary for student success, such as high levels of learning and personal development.

Data Collection

All full-time undergraduate and graduate students who were employed within the college union at a SEC public institution were invited to participate in the student employment in the college union survey. The survey was administered through a secure, web-based server. The principal investigator sent a participation email to the Director of the College Union at SEC universities, who then emailed the survey to their student employees within the college union. In the participation email, students were informed of the purpose of the project, that their participation was voluntary, and that their participation was important to the success of the project.

Data was collected over a six-week period toward the end of the spring 2017 semester. Information collected throughout the study was recorded in such a manner that human subjects could not be identified directly through identifiers. The administration of the survey took approximately ten minutes to complete. Data was analyzed using Qualtrics and Statistical Software for the Social Sciences (SPSS) 21.0.

Data Analysis

The purpose of this study was to understand the relationship between student employment in the college union and student success. The study was designed to

examine how student employees defined their success, as well as understand how their working environment contributed to their satisfaction. Descriptive statistics formed the basis of data analysis. Correlations were also calculated. Group scores were analyzed by reporting response categories of strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, strongly disagree.

Limitations of the Study

Quantitative research involves using a structured questionnaire with closed ended questions; therefore, the results and information received from the participants were limited to responses selected for the survey (strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, strongly disagree). As with all surveys, respondent's answers may not reflect their true beliefs.

IV. FINDINGS

Profile of the Sample

The subjects in this study consisted of 166 full and part-time students who were college union student employees enrolled in a public SEC institution during the 2016-2017 academic year. There were 102 females (61.4%), 62 males (37.3%) and two non-binary/third gender (1.2%) subjects. Twelve subjects (7.2%) reported a part-time enrollment status. Of the 166 surveyed subjects, 13 (7.8%) were freshman, 43 (25.9%) were sophomores, 43 (25.9%) were juniors, 56 (33.7%) were seniors, and 11 (6.6%) were graduate students. The majority of the subjects (86.1%) had a cumulative GPA of 3.0 or greater.

The majority of the subjects came from University of Alabama (11.4%), University of Georgia (10.2%), University of Kentucky (32.5%), and University of Missouri (18.1%). Twelve of the thirteen public SEC institutions participated in the survey. University of Florida did not distribute the survey to their student employees.

Table 4.1 presents the student employment position students reported having in the college union. Of the 166 surveyed student employees, 27 (16.3%) were building managers, 51 (30.7%) worked at the information desk, 16 (9.6%) were technical service representatives, 9 (5.4%) were program coordinators, 21 (12.7%) were set-up crew, 9 (5.4%) were event services workers, 4 (2.4%) were graduate students, and 29 (17.5%) reported their job function as 'other'. Table 4.2 identifies what 'other' student job functions were reported in the college union. Forty of the subjects (24.1%) indicated that they were a supervisor to other students.

Table 4.1 Current Job

What job do you currently have in the college union? - Selected Choice

		Frequency	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Building Manager	27	16.3	16.3
	Information Desk	51	30.7	47.0
	Technical Service Representative	16	9.6	56.6
	Program Coordinator	9	5.4	62.0
	Set-Up Crew	21	12.7	74.7
	Graduate Assistant	4	2.4	77.1
	Other	29	17.5	94.6
	Event Services	9	5.4	100.0
	Total	166	100.0	

Table 4.2 displays several other recognized student employment positions in the college union. The most common student employment positions shown in the table below include office assistants, housekeepers, graphic designers and art collectors.

Table 4.2 Other College Union Jobs*What job do you currently have in the college union? - Other – Text*

	Frequency	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	139	83.7	83.7
Arts Collection	1	.6	84.3
Cashier at Print Shop	1	.6	84.9
Facilities and Maintenance	1	.6	85.5
Graphic design coordinator	1	.6	86.1
Graphic Designer	2	1.2	87.3
Housekeeping	2	1.2	88.6
ID Technician	1	.6	89.2
Intercultural Diversity Center Student Assistant	1	.6	89.8
Interior Design	1	.6	90.4
None	1	.6	91.0
Office Assistant	4	2.4	93.4
Post office employee	1	.6	94.0
Print and Copy	1	.6	94.6
Professional Development Intern and Student Unions Programming Board Office Assistant	1	.6	95.2
Public Arts Intern	1	.6	95.8
Student Assistant	2	1.2	97.0
Student Office Assistant	1	.6	97.6
student worker	2	1.2	98.8
Ticket Sales Representative	1	.6	99.4
Ucopy Student Worker	1	.6	100.0
Total	166	100.0	

Results

Research Question 1: How do student employees in the college union describe their success?

High Levels of Learning

Table 4.3 provides data on how student employees within the college union describe their success as it relates to high levels of learning. According to the information presented in the table below, student employees agree that working in the college union allows them to use critical thinking and problem solving skills (m= 4.20). As a result of working in the college union, student employees somewhat feel that working in the college union has increased their awareness of other cultures (m= 3.96).

Table 4.3 High Levels of Learning

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Increased my awareness of other cultures.	157	3.96	.953
Used critical thinking skills to form opinions and solve problems.	157	4.20	.774

Personal Development

Table 4.4 presents findings of elevated levels of personal development. Student employees agreed that as a result of working in the college union they expanded their interactions with people of diverse backgrounds (m= 4.31). Student employees also agreed that as a result of working in the college union they were able to identify their

personal skills, abilities and areas of growth (m=4.24), make connections between their job and life as a student (m= 4.22), experience personal growth through self-esteem, leadership abilities, and/or independence (m=4.20), be more self-sufficient (m= 4.18), be prepared for a world of full-time employment (m=4.16), and have effective time management skills (m=4.12). Student employees reported a relatively neutral rating when making connections between their job in the college union and academics (m= 3.90).

Table 4.4 Personal Development

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Made connections between my job and life as a student.	157	4.22	.685
Made connections between my job and academics.	157	3.90	.962
Expanded my interactions with people of diverse backgrounds.	157	4.31	.782
Identified my personal skills, abilities, and areas of growth.	157	4.24	.761
Grown personally through self-esteem, leadership abilities, and/or independence.	157	4.20	.835
Developed effective time management skills.	157	4.12	.887
Become more self-sufficient.	157	4.18	.741
Prepared myself for a world of full-time employment.	157	4.16	.797

Satisfaction

Table 4.5 reveals that student employees reported high levels of satisfaction because working in the college union created a positive college experience for them as students (m= 4.44).

Table 4.5 Satisfaction*Descriptive Statistics*

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Had a positive college experience.	147	4.44	.652

Persistence

Table 4.6 summarizes whether student employees have thought about graduate school as a result of working in the college union. Graduate School was a lower reported average among student employees (m= 3.64).

Table 4.6 Persistence*Descriptive Statistics*

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Thought about graduate school.	157	3.64	1.149

Student Involvement

Table 4.7 shows that student employees reported lower levels of agreement when asked if working in the college union made them more involved in campus activities (m= 3.69).

Table 4.7 Student Involvement*Descriptive Statistics*

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Been more involved in campus activities.	157	3.69	1.067

Job Satisfaction

Table 4.8 presents information on how student employees rate their satisfaction with working in the college union. The table indicates that student employees agreed to having positive interactions with their supervisor while working in the college union (m=4.63). The second highest indicated that student employees within the college union had positive interactions with their peer student employees (m= 4.59). Student employees also agreed that while working in the college union they experienced personal satisfaction in their work (m=4.34), contributed to the success of the union (m=4.32), and had been motivated by their supervisor (m=4.24). Student employees were relatively neutral when asked if they were involved in making decisions about day-to-day operations in the college union (m= 3.65).

Table 4.8 Job Satisfaction*Descriptive Statistics*

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Had positive interactions with my supervisor.	147	4.63	.524
Been motivated by my supervisor.	147	4.24	.782
Had positive interactions with peer student employees.	147	4.59	.547
Experienced personal satisfaction in my work.	147	4.34	.726
Contributed to the success of the college union.	147	4.32	.662
Been involved in making decisions about day-to-day operations in the college union.	147	3.65	1.157
Had a positive student employment experience.	147	4.54	.644

Attachment to College

Table 4.9 demonstrates how student employees within the college union define their identification and attachment to college. According to the table below, students who are student employees in the college union felt a sense of belonging to their campus community.

Table 4.9 Identification and Attachment to College

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Felt a sense of belonging to my campus community.	157	4.04	.842

Interactions

Table 4.10 presents information on how student employees within the college union describe their interactions with faculty, staff and peers as a result of working in the union. According to the table below, student employees agree that due to their student employment experience in the college union they have established more meaningful relationships with peers, staff and faculty (m= 4.34). In addition, the table shows that student employees communicate with faculty and/or staff about their future career plans (m=4.08).

Table 4.10 Interactions

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Established more meaningful relationships with peers, faculty and/or staff.	157	4.34	.695
Communicated with faculty and/or staff member about my future career plans.	157	4.08	.862

Conceptual Framework

Table 4.11 presents information on how student employees within the college union responded to the conceptual framework. As a result of working in the college union, student employees agreed that they had a positive overall college experience (m= 4.43). Additionally, the table reports that students' agreed to being satisfied with their job in the college union (m= 4.33). From the survey, student employees agreed that as a result of working in the college union they experienced interactions with faculty, staff and peers (m= 4.21), personal development (m=4.16), high levels of learning (m=4.08), stronger identification and attachment to college (m=4.04; and described a somewhat neutral reaction to student involvement (m=3.68) and persistence (m=3.64).

Table 4.11 Conceptual Framework Means

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Satisfaction	147	4.4354	.65237
Job Satisfaction	147	4.3304	.48425
Interaction with Faculty Staff and Peers	157	4.2134	.69153
Personal Development	157	4.1656	.58736
High Levels of Learning	157	4.0828	.72688
Stronger Identification and Attachment to College	157	4.0446	.84234
Student Involvement	157	3.6879	1.06731
Persistence	157	3.6433	1.14921

Knowledge Acquisition, Construction, Integration and Application

Table 4.12 presents information on how student employees relate their work in the college union to daily life. As a result of working in the college union, student employees agreed that they can make connections between their job and life as a student (m=4.22). Student employees reported to be moderately neutral when making connections between their job in the college union and academics (m=3.90).

Table 4.12 Knowledge Acquisition

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Made connections between my job and life as a student.	157	4.22	.685
Made connections between my job and academics.	157	3.90	.962

Cognitive Complexity

Table 4.13 displays information related to cognitive complexity. Student employees agree that their job in the college union has allowed them to use critical thinking skills to form opinions and solve problems (m=4.20).

Table 4.13 Cognitive Complexity

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Used critical thinking skills to form opinions and solve problems.	157	4.20	.774

Intrapersonal Development

Table 4.14 indicates that student employees within the college union experienced intrapersonal development by agreeing that they could identify their personal skills, abilities and areas of growth (m= 4.24) and by recognizing that they have experienced personal growth while working in the college union (m= 4.20).

Table 4.14 Interpersonal Development

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Identified my personal skills, abilities, and areas of growth.	157	4.24	.761
Grown personally through self-esteem, leadership abilities, and/or independence.	157	4.20	.835

Interpersonal Competence

Table 4.15 presents information on how student employees within the college union responded to a question concerning interpersonal competence. As a result of working in the college union, student employees indicate that they experienced interpersonal competence by agreeing that they established more meaningful relationships with peers, faculty and/or staff while working in the college union (m= 4.34).

Table 4.15 Interpersonal Competence

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Established more meaningful relationships with peers, faculty and/or staff.	157	4.34	.695

Humanitarian and Civic Engagement

Table 4.16 presents information on how student employees acknowledge their student employment position with humanitarian and civic engagement. As a result of working in the college union, student employees indicated that they have experienced personal development through humanitarian and civic engagement by interacting with people of diverse backgrounds (m= 4.31). The table displays that student employees remain moderately neutral when relating their job in the college union to increased awareness of other cultures (m= 3.96).

Table 4.16 Humanitarian and Civic Engagement

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Expanded my interactions with people of diverse backgrounds.	157	4.31	.782
Increased my awareness of other cultures.	157	3.96	.953

Practical Competence

According to Table 4.17, student employees agreed that while working in the college union they developed practical competence by becoming more self-sufficient (m=4.18), being prepared for a world of full-time employment (m=4.16), having effective time management skills (m=4.12), and discussing future career plans with faculty and/or staff at the university (m= 4.08).

Table 4.17 Practical Competence

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Become more self-sufficient.	157	4.18	.741
Prepared myself for a world of full-time employment.	157	4.16	.797
Developed effective time management skills.	157	4.12	.887
Communicated with faculty and/or staff member about my future career plans.	157	4.08	.862

Council for the Advancement of Standards

Table 4.18 includes information on how student employees within the college union responded, in descending order, to the Council for the Advancement of Standards Learning and Developmental Outcomes. As a result of working in the college union, student employees agree that their outcomes include interpersonal competence (m= 4.34) intrapersonal development (m= 4.21), cognitive complexity (m=

4.20), practical competence (m= 4.13), humanitarian and civic engagement (m= 4.13) and knowledge acquisition, construction, integration, and application (m= 4.06).

Table 4.18 CAS Learning and Development Outcomes

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Interpersonal Competence	157	4.3439	.69535
Intrapersonal Development	157	4.2166	.73658
Cognitive Complexity	157	4.2038	.77409
Practical Competence	157	4.1369	.64329
Humanitarian and Civic Engagement	157	4.1338	.81332
Knowledge Acquisition, Construction, Integration and Application	157	4.0605	.72357

During the survey, students were asked to describe one specific skill that they learned as a student employee in the college union that has contributed to their success as a student at their institution. After analyzing the study, four major themes were found in the survey. Student employees within the college union documented time management, problem solving/conflict resolution, communication and customer service as skills that have contributed to their success as a student. These findings complement the findings related to student employment and personal development.

The majority of student employees described time management as the one skill that has contributed to their success as a student. One student employee wrote: “Working at the student union has greatly increased my time management ability.

Before working here I tended to procrastinate and even miss assignments' but since working here I have learned to be proactive and stay out in front of my coursework." Another student employee wrote, "I have definitely learned time management skills. Working 12 hours a week takes a large chunk of time out of studying opportunities. I have learned to balance work and studies to still achieve high standards of academic success." These remarks match the findings of the study as it relates to personal development.

Student employees who recognized problem solving and/or conflict resolution as a skill that has contributed to their success as a student wrote, "Thinking on my feet—when those phone calls come in with people asking difficult or unexpected questions, I have to use my critical thinking and problem-solving skills" and "Learned how to troubleshoot and tackle problems as they arise." These comments were not surprising with understanding the job responsibilities associated with student employment in the college union.

Several student employees reported customer service as a skill that has contributed to their success as a student. For example, one student wrote, "I have learned a lot about the importance of meeting the customer's needs and doing whatever needs to be done to meet their needs and guarantee customer satisfaction." Another student wrote, "customer service- how to provide information and communicate in the most efficient and effective ways."

A large number of student employees recognized communication skills as one skill that has contributed to their success as a student. One student wrote, "I have

had to learn how to communicate in various ways with various groups of people. This has helped me in every aspect of my life.” An additional student wrote, “I have learned communication skills, and it has helped me be able to talk to people more and establish great relationships.” These findings complement the data related to interpersonal development.

Research Question 2: What is the relationship between college union working conditions and student satisfaction?

Working Conditions

Table 4.19 analyzes, in descending order, how student employees described their working conditions in the college union. According to the data, student employees mean score for positive interactions with supervisors was $m= 4.63$, with similar scores of, $m=4.59$ for positive interactions with peer student employees within the college union and $m=4.24$ with being motivated by their supervisor. Student employees reported a lower mean score of $m=3.65$ for making decisions about day-to-day operations in the college union.

Table 4.19 Working Conditions

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Had positive interactions with my supervisor.	147	4.63	.524
Had positive interactions with peer student employees.	147	4.59	.547
Been motivated by my supervisor.	147	4.24	.782
Been involved in making decisions about day-to-day operations in the college union.	147	3.65	1.157

Working Conditions with Job Satisfaction

Table 4.20 shows a very high positive correlation between working conditions and job satisfaction. However, the results confirm that there is only a medium positive relationship between working conditions and satisfaction with college experience.

Table 4.20 Working Conditions and Satisfaction

Correlations

		Working Conditions	Job Satisfaction	Satisfaction
Working Conditions	Pearson Correlation	1	.960**	.428**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000
	N	147	147	147

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

During the survey, students were asked to describe one way their work in the college union has positively influenced their collegiate experience. Student employees explained that by working in the college union they have developed meaningful relationships, established a sense of belonging/community, became more informed of university resources and programs, and generated income. The comments provided in the survey provided a deeper understanding of how working in the college union influenced their collegiate experience.

The majority of students believed that by working in the college union they were able to develop relationships and have a sense of community. One student felt that her relationships were so strong that it felt like family, “.....We’ve all been working together for the past 3 years so it is like a family and home away from home. Without them, I wouldn’t have accomplished as many things as I have (internships, leadership conferences, etc.)” Another student wrote, “My position has made me feel connected to my campus and has given me a sense of purpose in making sure our school is as successful as possible.”

Other students commented on how producing money and being aware of campus resources/events influenced their collegiate experience. One student described how working in the college union makes them “aware of the activities going on around campus, so I have been able to really take advantage of all the things the university has to offer.” Another student mentioned how working in the college union has “decreased my worries about if I had sufficient money.” Previous research has found that financial stability aids in student success (NASFAA, 2016).

V. DISCUSSION

Summary of the Study

This study investigated the relationship between student employment in the college union and student success at public universities in the Southeastern Conference (SEC). The study was designed to examine the relationship between satisfaction, persistence, student learning and personal development with student employees' who held positions in the college union. The subjects in this study included 166 college union student employees' employed at SEC public institutions during the 2016-2017 academic year. The University of Florida chose not to participate in the study with fear of creating survey fatigue for their students.

The survey gathered demographic information and data from the 2016-2017 academic year, such as GPA, enrollment status and their current student employment position in the college union. The survey also provided information on how students described their success as it relates to student learning, personal development, persistence and satisfaction. One-hundred-sixty-six surveys were anonymously returned, yielding a return rate of 21.8%. Descriptive statistics and correlations, computed through SPSS software, were used to analyze the data from the completed surveys. Correlations between variables were calculated using a Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient.

Discussion of the Findings

Research Question 1: How do student employees in the college union describe their success?

High Levels of Learning.

The high levels of learning average rating for student employees increased awareness of other cultures (m= 3.96) was slightly lower than expected. According to the literature and history of college unions, the purpose of a college union is to promote inclusion. According to Butts (1971), a college union is known as the social-cultural center that embraces the interest of all members of the university. Although student employees revealed a lower rating for awareness of other cultures, it was found that student employees agreed that working in the college union expanded their interactions with people of diverse backgrounds, which in return produced higher levels of personal development. Knowing that students are not learning about other cultures, but interacting with a wide array of groups, is good for college union professionals to recognize because the role of the college union is to provide support for the campus community and external groups who visit the institution. As universities continue to diversify, it's important for student employees to become knowledgeable of other cultures to be successful during and after college.

Personal Development

Student employees within the college union reported the lowest mean with making connections between their job and academics (m= 3.90). This discovery may

challenge the CAS (2012) standards and guidelines of a college union. According to CAS (2012), college unions should serve as an effective bridge for connecting out-of-class experiences or co-curricular learning with classroom learning; however, student employees expressed lower levels of agreement with this statement. Previous literature by Pascarella & Terezini (1991) implies that students who work during college, particularly in one's area of study, will have a positive impact on career outcomes. Understanding the need to connect student employment with academics, college union professional staff members who supervise student employees within the college union should seek students who are interested in obtaining a career that is related to student employment positions in the college union. This finding suggests that college union professionals should strengthen relationships with academic affairs divisions in order to intentionally create opportunities within student employee positions that connect to academic endeavors.

Student employees within the college union agreed that as a result of working in the college union they experienced personal development through interpersonal competence (m= 4.34), intrapersonal development (m= 4.21), cognitive complexity (m=4.20), practical competence (m=4.13), and knowledge acquisition, construction integration and application (m= 4.06). Students acknowledged that by working in the college union they were using critical thinking and problem-solving skills (m= 4.20), had more self-esteem and independence (m= 4.20), and developed effective time management skills (m= 4.12). These findings support Astin's (1993) theory of student

involvement, which states that a student's personal development can be enhanced by heavy involvement, which in this case is student employment.

Satisfaction

Student employees within the college union agreed that working in the college union resulted in a positive college experience (m= 4.44). According to Astin (1993b), satisfaction is a key indicator and direct measure of success in college; therefore it was exciting to learn that student employees reported that they were satisfied with their job in the college union, as the outcomes prove that there is a positive correlation between job satisfaction and satisfaction with their college experience. Working conditions that supported their job satisfaction included having positive interactions with their supervisor (m= 4.63), having positive interactions with peer student employees (m= 4.59), and being motivated by their supervisor (m= 4.24). Students also agreed that they experienced personal satisfaction in their work at the college union (m= 4.34) and felt that they contributed to the success of the college union (m= 4.32). These findings support Kincaid's (1996) literature that student employees sense satisfaction when they are motivated by their supervisor and challenged in their job functions.

Persistence

The lowest mean reported by student employees within the college union was persistence in regards to educational aspirations as it relates to graduate school. Student employees within the college union reported a relatively low average score of 3.64 when asked if their experience while working in the college union made them

think about graduate school. According to the findings, student employees within the college union agreed to establishing meaningful relationships with faculty, staff and peers (m= 4.34) and communicating with faculty and/or staff members about future career plans (m= 4.08). Student employees also agreed that they felt an attachment college (m= 4.04); however, these results could be interpreted as challenging Parcerella & Terenzini (2005) findings that found “student contact with faculty members outside the classroom appears to consistently promote student persistence, education aspirations, and degree completion....”(p. 417). However, the findings for persistence were only geared toward continuing with graduate school, not persisting with undergraduate school and graduating. These results do not measure a student’s success as it pertains to degree completion.

Student Involvement

The findings indicated that on average, student employees remained relatively neutral on being more involved in campus activities as a result of working in the college union. Student Involvement, as it pertains to being involved in campus activities, was one of the lowest reported averages by student employees in the college union. Student employees reported an average score of 3.69 for being more involved in campus activities. The findings challenge Astin’s (1993) theory that on-campus student employment increases the involvement between the student and campus community. According to previous findings, being a student employee on campus is a natural connection to a campus group which may be the reason student employees are not seeking additional activities on campus (Kincaid, 1996).

Interactions with Faculty, Staff and Peers.

Student employees agreed that during their student employment experience in the college union they established more meaningful relationships with members of the campus community (m= 4.34) and communicated with faculty and/or staff about their future career plans (m= 4.08). These results support Astin's (1993) findings that students who work on-campus are more likely to have informal interactions with faculty and their peers. Astin (1999) also indicated that "frequent interactions with faculty is more strongly related to satisfaction with college than any type of involvement or, indeed, any other student or institutional characteristic" (p.525). The results from this study also indicated that interactions with members of the campus community were strongly related to satisfaction with college.

Stronger Identification and Attachment to College

Student employees agreed that working in the college union gave them a sense of belonging to the campus community (m= 4.04). These results support Pascarella and Terenzini's (2005) findings that imply positive interactions aid in creating a bond between the student and institution. The findings prove that positive interactions, such as interacting with members of the campus community, create a bond or 'attachment' to the institution. These results also support Tinto's (1975) findings that indicate the greater degree of social integration creates a greater commitment to the institution, which increases the probability that the student will persist in college.

Job Satisfaction

Student employees reported high levels of job satisfaction in regards to working in the college union. These findings were not surprising because job satisfaction involves positive interactions with supervisors (m= 4.64), positive interactions with peer student employees (m= 4.59), personal satisfaction through work (m= 4.34), contributing to the success of the college union (m= 4.32), and being able to have input on decisions being made (m= 3.65). These findings support literature from Kincaid (1996), who discussed how being motivated by supervisors, experiencing personal satisfaction through work, and being allowed to contribute to decisions being made can produce job satisfaction.

Throughout the entire study, student employees reported higher ratings in areas involving relationships. Whether it was establishing meaningful relationships with members of the campus community, communicating with faculty/staff about future career plans, or expanding interactions with people of diverse backgrounds, it is obvious that relationships are critical to student success. According to the study, relationships are fundamental to a student's personal development and satisfaction in college.

As a student employee, students have the advantage of being more involved with campus; however, what was found during the study was students reported lower ratings when asked about their engagements on campus. Student involvement was one of the lowest rated categories during the study. Furthermore, student employees defined their involvement between job and academics, and involvement in making

decisions about operations of the college union, moderately lower than any other area. Previous research has found that student involvement during college contributes to student learning, personal development, satisfaction and persistence (Astin, 1984). It is possible that the ratings connected to involvement on campus are associated to the persistence rating found in the study.

Research Question 2: What is the relationship between college union working conditions and student satisfaction?

Working Conditions

This study found a very high positive correlation between working conditions and job satisfaction. This was not surprising because if an employee experiences positive working conditions then they are more likely to be satisfied with their job. This also coincides with the literature by Kincaid (1996) who listed motivation, personal satisfaction and providing input as producers of job satisfaction.

Working conditions that assisted with student satisfaction included positive interactions with supervisor(s), positive interactions with peer student employees, being motivated by supervisor(s), and being involved in making decisions about day-to-day operations. Somewhat surprised, students did not report elevated ratings on being involved in making decisions about day-to-day operations in the college union. Being recognized as a student run facility, it was surprising to find that student employees within the college union felt relatively less a part of making decisions about the operations of the college union. According to Perozzi (2009), "encouraging input during decision-making processes provides a way for employees to support the

organizational goals and objectives and promotes positive relationships between managers and employees” (p.170). Like professional staff, student employees also want to have a say in how they execute their jobs.

Recommendations for Practice

The study found that there is relationship between student employment in the college union and student success. Students quantified a relatively low assessment in regards to being involved with making day-to-day decisions about college union operations. College union professionals who supervise student employees should solicit input from student employees when making decisions about college union policies and procedures.

Student employees reported lower results in making connections between their job in the college union and academics, which in return created lower scores for their knowledge acquisition, construction, integration and application. College union professional staff members who supervise student employees within the college union should seek students who are interested in obtaining a career that is related to student employment positions in the college union. College union professionals should strengthen relationships with academic affairs divisions in order to intentionally connect student employment with academics. In addition, supervisors should have continuous discussions with their student employees about what they are gaining from their experience of working in the college union. According to Woods (2016), having those conversations will help students be aware of their development and will assist supervisors with creating a more effective employment program.

Student employees reported slightly lower scores in the area of discussing and thinking about their future. According to the data, student employees reported less agreement with discussing their future career plans with faculty and/or staff or thinking about graduate school. Whether it's graduate school or a career after undergraduate school, professional staff should inspire those conversations with student employees. In addition, supervisors must assist student employees by connecting their student employment position in the college union to their future career. Doing so, will allow the supervisor to create a meaningful employment experience.

As a result of working in the college union, student employees agreed that they experienced high levels of learning, personal development and satisfaction. For supervisors to understand the progress of each student employee, it would be beneficial for supervisors to issue a pre and post-test of student employees to measure their progress and success rates while working in the college union. As student employees' increase and the number of full-time staff decrease, the findings may result in supervisors assisting other departments and academic colleges across campus with developing an effective and meaningful student employment program for their area.

Recommendations for Future Research

Data collected during this study led to some important directions for further exploration of the relationship between student employment in the college union and student success. While data in this study explained how student employees within the

college union described their success, there is still a need for further research. This section explores questions and makes suggestions for future research.

The study only focused on how student employees described their success as a result of working in the union. The study did not compare student employees within the college union to non-student employees. A qualitative study should be administered to compare student employees within the college union to non-student employees. More studies need to measure student success for student employees; the result may assist supervisors of student employees with designing more effective employment opportunities for students.

As a result of working in the college union, student employees agreed that their student employment experience assisted in higher levels of learning, personal development and satisfaction with their overall college experience. The study did not determine how working in the college union influences degree completion or success after college. A longitudinal study is needed to assess the success of student employees in the college union during and after college.

College unions were originally structured as a student affairs unit; however, over the years it has become common for college unions to identify as an auxiliary and be organized with Auxiliary Services. The organizational structure of the college union was not analyzed during this study; however, the study recognized college unions within the SEC are reporting to different divisions within their University. A study should be administered to determine if student employees in the college union

describe their success differently depending on the organizational structure of their college union.

The sample population of this study was student employees who work in the college union at Universities within the Southeastern Conference (SEC). To gain a greater understanding of the relationship between student employment in the college union and student success, it is recommended that the survey used for this study be administered to another group of colleges and universities outside of the SEC. Universities within the SEC are typically known for larger budgets; therefore, it would be beneficial for college union professionals to study universities outside of the SEC who may not have the benefit of large budgets and new buildings.

Professional staff members are responsible for producing a meaningful experience for student employees (Perozzi, 2009). Student employment programs can provide opportunities to enhance learning outcomes during college and make students more employable after college. Future studies should compare student employment programs designed by college union professionals and establish best practices for student employment within the college union. In addition, a qualitative study should be done to examine the relationships between supervisors and their student employees. This information could assist supervisors with developing effective student employment programs and facilitate discussions related to student development needs.

Conclusions

The development and success of students in college often relies on student-centered professionals in higher education; therefore, professionals in higher education must be knowledgeable with practices linked to student success. As student employment remains crucial to the operation of the college union, and possibly other areas on campus, it is important for professional staff members to structure student employment programs in ways that positively affect the learning and development outcomes of students, as well as enrich their persistence and satisfaction with the college union and institution.

As funding and support decreases for institutions across the country, college union professionals may be asked how their programs and services impact the institution. College union professionals must assess the influence college unions have on student success, and provide intentional programs and services that create a meaningful experience for all students attending the institution. College union student employment programs are a great way for college union professionals to showcase their impact on student success; therefore, it is imperative for college union professionals to create metrics to demonstrate their role on campus as it relates to student success. This study revealed that student employees within the college union recognized the value of their student employment program; therefore, it is up to college union professionals to continue assessing student success within the college union, while learning the needs of student employees and creating a meaningful student employment experience that enhances their success during and after college.

The results of this study generally confirm that there is a relationship between student employment in the college union and student success as it relates to learning, development, persistence and satisfaction. However, college union professionals who supervise and train student employees must be intentional when it comes to utilizing student employment opportunities to influence student success. The findings of this study will hopefully provide guidance for professionals in higher education to incorporate these research findings to structure on-campus student employment opportunities in ways that positively affect a student's experience outside the classroom.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: SURVEY INSTRUMENT

Appendix A: Survey Instrument

The Relationship Between Student Employment in the College Union and Student Success

Q1 This survey is being administered as part of doctoral research at Eastern Kentucky University. The intent of this survey is to better understand the relationship between student employment in the college union and student success. While your participation is voluntary and you are not required to answer any of the questions herein, your cooperation and participation is important to the success of the project and is greatly appreciated. If you choose to participate, please understand that all responses are strictly anonymous and no personally identifiable information is being requested. Moreover, whether you agree to participate or not, your decision will have no effect on your grades, your standing in class, or any other status. If you have any questions or would like to see the results of the study, please contact the researcher, Ashley Casteel Reed at ashley.casteel@uky.edu.

Q2 What is your gender?

- Male (1)
- Female (2)
- Non-binary/ third gender (3)
- Prefer not to say (4)

Q3 What is your age?

Q4 What institution are you affiliated with?

- Auburn University (1)
- University of Alabama (2)
- University of Arkansas (3)
- University of Florida (4)
- University of Georgia (5)
- University of Kentucky (6)
- Louisiana State University (7)
- Mississippi State University (8)
- University of Mississippi (9)
- University of Missouri (10)
- University of South Carolina (11)
- University of Tennessee (12)
- Texas A&M University (13)

Q5 What is your current year in school?

- Freshman (1)
- Sophomore (2)
- Junior (3)
- Senior (4)
- Graduate Student (5)

Q6 What is your student enrollment status?

- full-time student (1)
- part-time student (2)

Q7 What is your cumulative Grade Point Average (GPA)?

- 3.8-4.0 (1)
- 3.6-3.79 (2)
- 3.4-3.59 (3)
- 3.0-3.39 (4)
- 2.5-2.99 (5)
- < 2.5 (6)

Q8 Do you currently work in the college union?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

Q9 What job do you currently have in the college union?

- Building Manager (1)
- Information Desk (2)
- Technical Service Representative (3)
- Program Coordinator (4)
- Set-Up Crew (5)
- Graduate Assistant (6)
- Other (7) _____

Q10 Are you a supervisor to other students?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

Q11 How long have you been employed with the college union?

- 0 Semesters (1)
- 1 Semester (2)
- 2 Semesters (3)
- 3 Semesters (4)
- 4 Semesters (5)
- 5 Semesters (6)
- 6 Semesters (7)
- 7 Semesters (8)
- 8 Semesters (9)
- ≥9 Semesters (10)

Q12 Thinking about your work as a student employee in the College Union, please rate your agreement with the following statements. As a result from working in the college union, I have:

Q13 Established more meaningful relationships with peers, faculty and/or staff.

- Strongly Agree (5)
- Agree (4)
- Neutral (3)
- Disagree (2)
- Strongly disagree (1)

Q14 Communicated with faculty and/or staff member about my future career plans

- Strongly Agree (5)
- Agree (4)
- Neutral (3)
- Disagree (2)
- Strongly disagree (1)

Q15 Been more involved in campus activities

- Strongly Agree (5)
- Agree (4)
- Neutral (3)
- Disagree (2)
- Strongly disagree (1)

Q16 Felt a sense of belonging to my campus community.

- Strongly Agree (5)
- Agree (4)
- Neutral (3)
- Disagree (2)
- Strongly disagree (1)

Q17 Made connections between my job and life as a student.

- Strongly Agree (5)
- Agree (4)
- Neutral (3)
- Disagree (2)
- Strongly disagree (1)

Q18 Made connections between my job and academics.

- Strongly Agree (5)
- Agree (4)
- Neutral (3)
- Disagree (2)
- Strongly disagree (1)

Q19 Expanded my interactions with people of diverse backgrounds.

- Strongly Agree (5)
- Agree (4)
- Neutral (3)
- Disagree (2)
- Strongly disagree (1)

Q20 Increased my awareness of other cultures.

- Strongly Agree (5)
- Agree (4)
- Neutral (3)
- Disagree (2)
- Strongly disagree (1)

Q21 Identified my personal skills, abilities, and areas of growth.

- Strongly Agree (5)
- Agree (4)
- Neutral (3)
- Disagree (2)
- Strongly disagree (1)

Q22 Grown personally through self-esteem, leadership abilities, and/or independence.

- Strongly Agree (5)
- Agree (4)
- Neutral (3)
- Disagree (2)
- Strongly disagree (1)

Q23 Developed effective time management skills

- Strongly Agree (5)
- Agree (4)
- Neutral (3)
- Disagree (2)
- Strongly disagree (1)

Q24 Become more self-sufficient.

- Strongly Agree (5)
- Agree (4)
- Neutral (3)
- Disagree (2)
- Strongly disagree (1)

Q25 Used critical thinking skills to form opinions and solve problems.

- Strongly Agree (5)
- Agree (4)
- Neutral (3)
- Disagree (2)
- Strongly disagree (1)

Q26 Thought about graduate school.

- Strongly Agree (5)
- Agree (4)
- Neutral (3)
- Disagree (2)
- Strongly disagree (1)

Q27 Prepared myself for a world of full-time employment.

- Strongly Agree (5)
- Agree (4)
- Neutral (3)
- Disagree (2)
- Strongly disagree (1)

Q28 Thinking about your work as a student employee in the college union, please rate your agreement with the following statements. During my student employment experience in the college union, I have

Q29 Had positive interactions with my supervisor

- Strongly Agree (1)
- Agree (2)
- Neutral (3)
- Disagree (4)
- Strongly disagree (5)

Q30 Been motivated by my supervisor.

- Strongly Agree (5)
- Agree (4)
- Neutral (3)
- Disagree (2)
- Strongly disagree (1)

Q31 Had positive interactions with peer student employees

- Strongly Agree (5)
- Agree (4)
- Neutral (3)
- Disagree (2)
- Strongly disagree (1)

Q32 Experienced personal satisfaction in my work.

- Strongly Agree (5)
- Agree (4)
- Neutral (3)
- Disagree (2)
- Strongly disagree (1)

Q33 Contributed to the success of the college union.

- Strongly Agree (5)
- Agree (4)
- Neutral (3)
- Disagree (2)
- Strongly disagree (1)

Q34 Been involved in making decisions about day-to-day operations in the college union.

- Strongly Agree (5)
- Agree (4)
- Neutral (3)
- Disagree (2)
- Strongly disagree (1)

Q35 Had a positive student employment experience.

- Strongly Agree (5)
- Agree (4)
- Neutral (3)
- Disagree (2)
- Strongly disagree (1)

Q36 Had a positive college experience.

- Strongly Agree (5)
- Agree (4)
- Neutral (3)
- Disagree (2)
- Strongly disagree (1)

Q37 Please describe one specific skill you have learned as a student employee in the college union that contributes to your success as a student at your institution.

Q38 Please describe one specific way your work as a student employee in the college union has positively influenced your college experience.