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# Evaluating the State of Departmental Student- Employee Training and Employment

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Running Head: STUDENT EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING

Evaluating the State of Departmental Student-Employee Training and Employment

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Capstone Project Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Master of Education in Higher Education

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**Abstract**

Student-employment is an important aspect of a college student's experience. According to Kathman and Kathman (2000), students benefit from an on-campus job, as they are able to develop strong interpersonal skills, and develop experience for their resumes (p 176). In this study, I examined the dynamics of a campus center-based student employment program, and the related training program that is administered by a campus operations department. Using a focus group, a 13 item protocol was administered to nine undergraduate student-employees of this department, and an additional two alumni student-employees were interviewed individually. The focus of this research was rooted in improving practice, and enhancing the outcomes of student employees as they transition from student to professional. Through this qualitative study, major findings, included: a correlation between the experience of these positions and increased academic success; the gaining of transferable skills that benefit the student in the job-search, and that employment through this operations office is more agreeable to student-employees than other on-campus student employment, as well as compared with off-campus employment opportunities. Participants in this study identified the hands-on nature of training, and the level of staff bonding done as very influential to their job success. These findings indicated the need for continuation of student employment through this operations office, as well as the need to continually assess, and re-tool the training initiatives to ensure that it retains its inherent benefit.

*Keywords: staff training, student employment, operations, college students*

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### **Introduction**

Work on-campus is a very valuable asset to students who need to be employed to help finance their education (Perna, 2010; Watts & Pickering, 2000). As more students are working in order to earn a degree, the value of this employment rises. As described by Perna (2010), researchers have found that work on-campus during term time is more beneficial to students than working off-campus (p.32). Due to these factors, it is extremely important that student employment on-campus provide more than just a menial job for students to do while earning a small paycheck. Student employment on-campus can be an excellent way for students to gain real-world skills and experiences that can benefit the student long after graduation (Kathman & Kathman, 2000). Experiential learning can offer students a way to apply in-class learning, while polishing their resumes for ultimate employability immediately after graduation. This is especially helpful, as there are fewer “entry-level” jobs that are willing to hire an employee who doesn’t have work or internship experience.

In this study, I have explored the student training and employment program that is administered by a campus operations department. This student training program is administered twice each academic year to new and returning student employees to provide skill training for specific work-tasks, as well as general employee development. This project has been conducted as a research intensive project concluding with the formulation of recommendation. This format was selected as the student training program is already in existence, and is being reviewed for areas of improvement.

The institution in this study is a small, yet growing, faith-based liberal arts college in the northeast United States. The department has only two professional staff members, and is very reliant on student labor to accomplish all of its duties and responsibilities. These responsibilities include the oversight, and event management in three campus buildings, namely: the campus

center and a former church turned into a function hall, and the athletics and performance complex. The campus center and former church annually have 4,500 bookings, and over 1,300 setups of varying natures. The athletics and performance complex houses the college's 22 NCAA division one and two sports programs, a robust ice rental business, and serves over 2000 bookings and approximately 200 setups per year. The office has two professionals, an Associate Director, and an Office Manager, as well as two overnight staff members. Complementing the four professional staff members are a total of 45 student employees, who are placed on five separate staffs. The staff is divided into two building categories: the campus center staff, which also services the stand-alone building, and the athletics complex staff. Each building has a compliment of approximately ten Building Managers, and ten Information Center attendants, and the setup crew, who works with both buildings to provide extra assistance when the work calls for it. Due to the structure of the buildings and their different hours of operation, it can be expected that building managers will work 10-12 hours per week, the information center attendants will work eight to ten hours per week, and the setup crew will work six to eight hours per week. The campus center is open 24 hours per day, utilizing student staffing 16 hours per day, seven days a week, with the overnight hours covered by professionals. The Athletics complex is open approximately 20 hours per day, and only utilizes student labor.

The August training program is the main training administered each year, and takes place primarily in the two weeks prior to the opening of the fall semester, in a staggered fashion. In this training, the students are brought back on different dates, depending on their employment position, and the amount of training needed for each position. The area managers or student leaders of each staff come back to school the earliest, as they need to help plan the delivery of training, and also learn what it means to be a leader of student employees. The Building

managers are the group that comes in next, and then the setup crew, and finally the Information Center staffs come to initiate total team training.

Due to the important nature of the training that these students receive for their positions, it will be beneficial to learn how effective this training is from the recipient perspective. Through the data collected in this research, all findings were used to assess, and improve the training administration program, and to make the student-employees stronger in their positions.

Additional benefits of this research will be applied to the department's budget-building model in attempt to further justify the financial costs of training, and employing student employees. An example of topics covered during staff training is included at the conclusion of this document (see Appendix C).

Focus group and individual interviews were utilized to gather information in this study. This style of data collection allowed for ideas to be cultivated in small groups of present and former student employees. Focus groups were selected over other means of data collection to maximize the amount of qualitative knowledge that can be gained in a reasonable amount of time. Due to the nature of focus groups, the responses of one participant may expose a response by another participant that may have not been seen in a one to one interview, or survey. The intention of this study is to use the findings to improve practice and to ensure effective deployment of the student staff experience in years to come.

## **Literature Review**

### **Benefits and Costs of Working While in College**

Working during term time is an aspect of the college experience that many students undertake in order to defray the cost of attending college. Researchers have studied this

phenomenon to understand to what degree working during term time may aid, or detract from the college experience, and to set forth recommendations to assist students to be successful.

Watts and Pickering (2000) utilized a small sample of undergraduate students who are enrolled as full time students, and work part-time hours. The sample size of this study was quite small, with only nine qualified respondents. This study utilized interviews to gain qualitative data on the growing phenomenon of employment during term-time. The students that participated in this study indicated that working part-time had both positive and negative impacts on their college experience. When many participants asked by Watts and Pickering (2000) indicated that they worked off-campus in restaurant and hotel environments. Questions to participants related to the quality of their experience at work, how the employment impacted their academic progress towards a business degree, and if the employment had provided them with positive or negative experiences. Positive impacts of work on the students' experiences included the gain of transferable skills and a higher confidence level in their future employability. Study participants noted that some negative impacts of work included not having time for other extracurricular activities, a decreased social experience, and decreased academic performance. The university in this study did have an hour's recommendation for full-time students, which was set at 12 hours of employment per week. Out of the nine study participants, only two maintained this level of work, and were the two students who felt that their academics did not suffer as a result of employment.

In congruence with this study, Riggert et al. (2006) found that there could be a negative academic impact if a student worked too many hours per week. Riggert et al.(2006) examined many relationships between academic performance and student employment. The data from this study showed that there are varying correlations between undergraduate employment and



academic success as measured by grade point average (GPA), persistence, and ultimate career path. For example, Riggert et al. (2006), observed similar findings to Watts and Pickering (2000), that students who work under 15 hours of paid employment per week have a higher GPA, and level of persistence. Interestingly, students who work full-time employment while enrolled in postsecondary education were found by Riggert et al. to have the lowest rate of persistence (2006). The general consensus from these studies is that undergraduates should work no more than 20 hours per week in order to create a better balance between academic time and work time, as there was little difference between the GPA of non-working students, and students who worked up to 15 hours per week. However, Riggert et al. (2006) found that GPA declined as students hours increased over 20 hours per week. The researchers found that there is a high amount of statistical inconsistency between employments during term-time, through analysis of extant literature. As the students likely learn organization and time management skills and are more inclined to schedule time for studying into their schedules. The researchers examined contradictory data that showed positive and negative effects to work in general as an undergraduate student, as well for the location of the employment. The end advantages leaned in favor of students working on-campus, less than 20 hours per week. These types of work experiences generally allow for more flexible hours, and for students to make meaningful relationships with faculty, staff, and other students. Perna (2010) had similar findings related to the amount of hours worked per week by students, as well as agreeing with the standards set in Riggert et al (2006), regarding the amount of hours students can work, and expect to maintain academic success.

Perna's (2010) study regarding the impacts of working during the undergraduate years painted a picture of caution. Perna indicated that student success, as measured by retention, is affected by student employment:

Quantitative studies consistently show that retention rates are higher for students who work a modest number of hours per week (ten to fifteen) than they are for students who do not work at all or those who work more than fifteen hours per week. Research also shows increased academic success for students working on rather than off campus. (p30, 2010)

Research such as this, has helped to guide recommendations for student employment during term time. As noted in Perna (2010), student attain higher academic success when they work under 20 hours per week. Interestingly, as noted in Perna (2010), above, students who do not work at all, or exceed 20 hours of employment per week both see decreases in student success and retention. This reinforces student employment as a positive attribute to the student experience, if conducted appropriately.

At the time of publication, approximately 50% of full time students, and 85% of part time students were employed during college (Perna, 2010). During the 2000s, the amount of students working fewer than 20 hours per week declined, while the level of students working greater than 20 hours per week increased. The concern for the working student is finding enough time to complete both academic needs, such as attending class, and studying, and getting proper rest can be strained. Perna (2010) indicated that working on-campus was more beneficial to the student than working off-campus, as the on-campus employer was generally better prepared to supervise an employee who was a student. Implications are that students will need to work greater quantities of hours in the future if the tuition rates continue to increase. This trend will create an environment that is extremely constrained in allowing for student success. Both the increased financial-load caused by tuition and fee increases, and the declining retention rate

found in students working over 20 hours per week could create a system-wide decline in higher education.

### **Quality Customer Service and Student-Centered Training**

On-campus student employment can have a successful outcome for the students as well the on-campus employers. Students who while employed on-campus perform more meaningful tasks, are likely to have a stronger experience in their employment than a student-worker who does not perform a meaningful function. Developing a student-employment workforce can take a high amount of effort and time, though doing so may have many more benefits than costs.

In this study, Kathman and Kathman (2000) identified the best practices for student training in a library environment. Much of what the researchers have found can be transferred to other realms of on-campus student employment, how to structure initial employment training and conducting follow up training. The ultimate goals expressed by the researchers are to create an environment that is conducive to student-employee learning, and to provide top-tier services to the impacted patrons, in this example, library users. The approach in this study appeared to be very student-centered and has shown to be beneficial to the employing department as well as the student. Kathman and Kathman (2000) describe the benefit to this increased investment into a training program:

The library benefits from a productive worker who presents a positive image to the public. Students benefit because they have an opportunity to develop good interpersonal and job skills as well as to develop a source for future job recommendations that can comment on actual performance, not potential. As the experience through this type of employment training will have a better transition into the professional workforce after graduation. (p176, 2000)

Ultimately, going along with the goal of any post-secondary institutions, one of the major pillars of an institution's missions is to prepare a student for life after graduation. The approach

described by Kathman and Kathman (2000) provides the student with job experience that will better position them for employment success in the future.

In a different type of student employment, Rodriguez (2005) utilized Kathman and Kathman's (2000) student-centered training model to improve the training process of food-service workers. In research conducted by Rodriguez (2005), the researcher explored the nuances of training students in a service-industry setting. The researcher referenced and concurred with Kathman and Kathman (2000), stating that student training and supervision is different than training and supervising a full-time employee, as the student employee generally is working one quarter of the amount of hours as a professional, and by nature is not 100% committed to the work at hand. The researcher used qualitative methods, by means of a case study with focus groups to conduct this research. Rodriguez (2005) utilized three focus groups, and 23 participants. Participants were purposively selected based upon food-service experience of at least three months in a selected campus dining hall, and previous participation in initial training. The researcher found that student perception of the employment training they received was largely positive, though certain constraints were indicated, such as how long training presentations should be, how many people should be trained at the same time, and at which times of day training should be conducted, in order to achieve the highest knowledge retention. The positive perception of the training was linked to the nature of the specific training, which took place at the site where the students would be working, and integrated hands-on elements with the instruction. The implications of this finding are that students responded in a more positive manner to hands-on training versus classroom sessions where audio-visual presentations were made.

Research conducted by Michael (2013) extended the ideas set forth by Kathman and Kathman (2000) and Rodriguez (2005) and suggest that a student has specific metrics to carry with them into the professional workforce, and thus optimizing their student employment. In this study, Michael (2013) builds off the work of Kathman and Kathman (2000), and sets some clear, rubric-like standards for setting up an employment training program. The rubric designed in this research was given to student employees with examples of three qualities of work: needs improvement; satisfactory; superior, across six categories of job-related fields that the employer felt to be of importance. Such categories include quality of work, customer service, dependability and attitude. The author notes that student employment has not always been a favorite mechanism by some campus constituencies, in this case a library setting, but has become favored more in recent years, due to restrictions of funding for professional salaries and wages. The author notes the shift in library employment from being library-specific, to customer service focused, with the advent of other sources of information. An interesting point raised by the author was that training does not end with the conclusion of the formal training setting, but is an ongoing task that the supervisor takes on by role modeling the desired and appropriate actions for the benefit of the employee (s) that report to him or her. The experiences of the student in the examples raised by the researcher can also be taken with the student, after degree completion, to the workforce. Examples of these transferable skills and activities include working in a Professional department, engaging in proper inter-personal communication, adhering to the Appropriate attire expectations, and learning to be on-time to work –related functions. Implications are the ability for student-employees and supervisors to measure how an employee performs compared to a written standard of expectations. This written record can be turned into a

system used to evaluate a student-employee's skills and needs for the purpose of identifying areas of improvement, and affirming the employee's strengths.

### **Student employment and university funding**

Student employment in some institutions can make up the majority of the labor force in certain departments. As such, it is important that the financial resources invested in a student employment program be supported by data, and strong practice. Tingle, Cooney, Asbury, and Tate (2013) utilized a quasi-experimental technique to assess the leadership nature of a campus fitness and recreation program. The researchers surveyed 51 different employees of the program over the course of two years, and tracked their progressions against the existing *Student Leadership Practices Inventory*. The data showed that the program was effective, though since the sample population was only drawn from one university, the generalizability was limited. The goal of this research is to establish a mechanism for assessing the effectiveness of the existing recreation sport staff training program, both for improvement of practice, and budget justification. The researchers wisely draw attention to the demand for data to justify budget expenditures in a lean fiscal situation, as the program cannot be judged on intramural or recreation attendance numbers alone. In a more dire fiscal situation, Manley and Holley (2014) found a way to take a difficult situation and find a silver lining for their student employees.

In a similar situation of budgetary scrutiny, Manley and Holley (2014) explored the employment situation of a library at a small college in the Mid-West region of the United States that has been hit hard by budget cuts due to the Recession of 2008. The library found that their budget had been cut two professional positions, and were tasked with providing the same level of service and hours as in more budgetary fruitful years. To counter this problem, the library leaned heavily on using student employees to make up the difference but previously had not done well

retaining student employees, especially students with Federal Work Study (FWS) financial aid.

The extant training process was arduous, and inefficient for the professional staff to undertake, as the professional staff had additional responsibilities to attend to, and limited time resources.

The shift that greatly benefited the student employment program was to house the first phase of training digitally. This new method of training student employees allowed students to learn at their own pace, through the use of video presentations, and online class modules. This material also reduced the rate of re-training that took place, as students were able to access these materials at any time if a refresher was necessary. The second phase of student employee training included an extensive shadow period, so that students could observe, and demonstrate their tasks directly with their supervisor. A final change to the student employment program was to reconstruct the student employment job description, and responsibilities in a manner that attracted the appropriate high-caliber students to the position. As a result of the changes made to this training program, the college library was able to retain the same FWS students from year to year for the first time, and was able to grow the amount of students employed by the library, as the time commitment for training had decreased significantly

### **International perspectives on with student employment**

Similar to domestic institutions in studies described by researchers above, international institutions found that student employment had significant impacts on both the student, and the institution. In a study based in an Australian higher education context, Crebert, Bates, Bell, Patrick, and Cragolini (2004) conducted mixed-methods research with graduates, and employers, regarding the acquisition of generic skills during college employment. The research utilized focus groups consisting of 11 graduates sampled from institutions in the regional study, as well as employers. The researchers supplemented their qualitative data with a 32-question

survey that was administered to 664 graduates who had achieved work placements between 1997, and 2000. Questions asked by Crebert et al. (2004) to employers and graduates included:

What generic skills are best developed in a university context? The extent that graduate's generic skills were developed in the university; and how graduates' abilities and capacities were enhanced through professional work placements/ practicums linked to a university course (p5, 2004)

The data showed that the development of generic skills, such as teamwork, deadline management, and experience working with technology systems and software's was beneficial to overall employability of the graduate. The researchers found that generic skills were stressed in the classroom, such as group work, were very helpful in preparing students for a professional work environment. Implications from the study conducted by Crebert et al (2004) include the importance of experiential learning with post-secondary degrees. Exposure to "real world problems" (p 15, 2004) provided students with necessary problem-solving skills that made them attractive to employers after graduation.

Similarly, researchers at a different Australian university worked towards making a student employment program successful for the student(s) and the university. In this benchmarking study, O'Neil and Comley (2010) discuss the similarities and differences between student employment programs at college libraries in the United States, and Australia. This study conducted by an Australian university hopes to achieve the success that has been demonstrated by their American peers with regards to recruiting, training, and retaining a student employee workforce. The researcher's utilized interviews conducted using video-conferencing, to learn about the best practice for working with students. What did they ask, what did they find?



The university implemented some of these best practices in their own student employment program, as a mechanism to provide longer hours of operation, and to prevent the professional staff members from becoming overworked. While rocky at first, these challenges were overcome, as students and professionals alike adapted to the new system and scheduling. One highlighted best practice was to utilize the existing campus career services to provide a workshop for student employees so that they could work on creating or updating their resumes, to exhibit the professional skills they had gained while working at the library.

Through this literature review, I have found that student employment is a phenomenon that is handled very differently depending on the institution in question. Student academic success should be the ultimate goal of any student employment, and it is important for employers of students to understand that a student's academics should remain at the forefront of their priorities. That said, students who are employed during term-time are more-likely to be academically successful if their employment is located on-campus, and takes place for fewer than 20 hours per week. These on-campus employment opportunities provide students with an opportunity to develop meaningful relationships with their peers, faculty and staff, and the institutional community as a whole. Student employment programs have benefits to the institutions as they are able to assist students in developing their marketable skills that will be necessary after graduation. Part of the college experience is for students to grow and develop, as to prepare themselves for their endeavors after graduation. The literature reviewed in this study has generally asserted that student employment aids graduates into their professional transition after college. Training for student employment has been found to be most-useful when it is hands-on, and interactive, versus any off-site instruction. The literature reviewed in this study

has demonstrated the value of employment during term time, while advising of the areas of concern to ensure that the student does not lose focus on their academic goals.

### **Methods**

For the purposes of conducting this research, I studied the training program administered by this operations department from the accounts of current student employees, and recent alumni, as well as the overall employment experience. I hoped to learn more about the impact both have on the institutional experience of the participants. In studying this training, I have assessed, evaluated, and hope to guide the program towards any improvement that is necessary.

Research for this study has been conducted under the constructivist paradigm, as described by Mertens (2009). This paradigm was selected in order to get qualitative data related to the student employee training (Mertens, 2009). According to Mertens, constructivist researchers believe that knowledge is socially constructed and that researchers must understand how knowledge relates to lived experience (pp 15-16, 2009). By using this paradigm to shape this research, I have actively engaged my participants and encouraged their input on improving the practice of student employee training. To guide this qualitative research, I have worked under the following research question: “What is the present status of employment training conducted by the Campus center office, and how can it be improved to benefit the department, as well as the students who participate in the program?”

In this research, I have conducted two focus groups with purposively selected present and former student employees, in order to have good representation of students that are on or were on different staffs, and different levels of job performance. Student employees were selected from a current staff roster, by identifying students who had been on-staff the previous semester, Fall 2015 in this circumstance, and had participated in the comprehensive fall training

exercise. Student employees who were new to staff for the Spring 2016 semester, five in total, were still in the process of being trained, and, were excluded from this study. Email recruitment was conducted to gain participation from present student employees (see Appendix B). Two recruitment emails were sent out to a total of 39 undergraduate student employees. These 39 students made up the population, as they had completed at least one full-training, and were not new to staff during the spring 2016 semester.

From these emails, two separate focus groups were assembled and took place between February and early March, 2016. There were four participants in the first focus group, and five participants in the second focus group. Both groups represented a diverse section of the department being studied, as they represented different staffs, buildings, class years, and job performance. Each focus group was scheduled for approximately one hour, but had a 90 minute window allocated for scheduling purposes. Additionally, alumni recruitment for this study took place, in order to gain the perspectives of former employees now working full-time in a professional setting. The email for alumni recruitment was sent to five purposively selected former employees, and garnered two interviews, which were conducted in March 2016. One interview was conducted over the phone, and the second was in-person. The interviews were scheduled for one hour, though in actuality, the interviews did not take the full amount of time. A 13 item protocol was used for both focus groups and interviews (see Appendix A).

Human subjects involved in this study have been assured that the information will be confidential. However, given the nature of focus groups, and the connections made as a result of employment may affect the nature of this confidentiality. All names have been removed, and participants are referred to only by their academic class year. Additionally, the name of the institution and all proper names of offices at this institution have been altered to provide

anonymity to the institution. Present employees have been assured that their present employment situation will not be in jeopardy for participating in this research, as the focus of this study will be to improve the training practice. Participants have been compensated by a random drawing in each focus group. The randomly selected name from the focus group was provided a \$5 gift card to a national coffee chain with numerous locations locally. Light refreshments were served for those who participated in this research, and served the purpose of keeping the group on-topic.

Prior to the commencement of data collection, all participants were given an opportunity to review the project description, and consent to participation. Written consent was received from all 11 participants. During both focus groups and interviews, participants were reminded that they could skip a question or leave the session at any time. No participants needed to do this, and all questions asked received thoughtful answers. All focus group and interview sessions were recorded using two recording devices, in case of failure of one device.

To analyze my data, I used standard methods of coding qualitative data (Saldana, 2015). I transcribed each interview and focus group, and then conducted line by line coding to identify themes and patterns, from which my findings and subsequent recommendations are generated. Transcription was completed with the aid of an online free- transcribing tool.

### **Findings**

After collecting data, and undertaking the transcribing and coding processes, several main findings were identified through this research. The main findings have been grouped into similar categories, with three major categories being created: Past and Present Experiences with Employment; Impact of training on this employment experience; and Impact of employment on Institutional experience. Participants were very willing and eager to participate in this study, and have provided numerous profound statements that helped this researcher better understand the

student employee experience in the Frozen Pond operations staff. Participants indicated that employment through this entity is more than just a job, and exists as a strong, interwoven, interdependent community. Participants -- both present undergraduates and recent alumni -- indicated that their roles with this organization have helped them grow both personally, and academically, and that they feel prepared for future transition into the professional workforce. The overall employment experience has been documented as strong by participants in this study, though objective insight was provided that can help improve the experience.

The participants of this study were very invested in aiding practice for this program. The high level of commitment that these participants, and their peers who are employed in this department, demonstrate that this on-campus employment has taken on a role seen typically with affinity groups, and not on-campus employment.

### **Experiences with Employment: Past and Present**

Working within the campus center and athletics complex at Frozen Pond College is an opportunity that not many students are able to have. The operations staff of these facilities experience a low-turnover rate, with many students remaining on-staff from year to year. Furthermore, this office has seen an influx of applicants who have been employed through other departments across campus, to try another type of challenge.

Participants reported that the use of informal name provided for employees of the campus center and Frozen Rink Athletics and Performance Complex at Frozen Pond College had strong overall experience with employment. Through this research, I found that numerous participants indicated that they enjoyed their work experience to such a high degree, that it was their favorite affinity group in which they were involved on-campus. The employment experience within the Frozen Pond operations staff was enthusiastically supported during two focus groups made up of

present undergraduate employees, as well as two interviews with recent alumni. One participant detailed his experience as “always enjoyable.”

Working as part of the Frozen Pond operations staff pack, participants report gaining new skills and experiences that they would not have gained without this employment. A common theme between both focus groups and interviews was the level of interpersonal connection that was forged through employment in these two buildings. Participants noted that they were able to make new friends through working with different patrons, and staff members, and that these connections have developed into strong, lasting friendships. A recent alumnus commented that “... [While] helping other people, I met so many friends.” Additionally, participants report forging stronger connections with faculty and staff members of the institution, which has provided them with positive role models and mentors, and a deeper connection to their undergraduate institution. A male senior in a leadership role identified that “my experience has been very good. I enjoy working with a lot of people, and I meet a lot of people every day, which is something that I enjoy.” One undergraduate senior participant discussed their experience in the following way:

I would reiterate that [employment is a great opportunity to get involved in campus], also because I worked in other offices too, so getting to know other people that work on the campus, and as someone that wants to go into higher ed[ucation as a career], that’s been really helpful to me in thinking of my career path, and making those connections. I’ve had a really good experience with this office, and other offices as well.

Beyond connections with peers and others, participants noted that working a job in the Frozen Pond operations staff was a significant form of involvement for them. The job provided them the opportunity to get more knowledge about their institution, and to take a level of pride in the campus, and the building(s) that they worked in. Through employment with the Frozen Pond operations staff, numerous undergraduate participants described learning more about events

activities that took place, which they were able to share with their friends. This level of investment in the position allowed the students to demonstrate leadership abilities as indicated by a sophomore student:

I also want to say that it's a nice leadership role. Working as a building manager and other areas of campus, and getting connections with a lot of my peers, and higher up people too, bosses, and other people I see around campus, and it definitely gains more of an experience that coming out of college that is another thing that you can put on your resume, and enjoy.

Comparatively, participants reported having a pleasant experience working for other offices on-campus, but unanimously indicated that they preferred working as part of the Frozen Pond operations staff. Between the undergraduate and alumni participants, other on-campus employment included serving as a Resident Advisor, Orientation Leader, Admission Ambassador, and Shuttle Driver. The nature of these other positions varies from short term employment in the case of the orientation positions, to being a full-year commitment in the case of the Resident Advisors. Participants indicated that the flexible hours of the Frozen Pond operations staff were beneficial, as the students are able to select their regular hours around their class schedule. On average, student employees with the Frozen Pond operations staff work between 10-15 hours weekly. This figure includes regular, recurring weekday shifts, and weekend rotational shifts. One student indicated that in a previous role at the performing arts center, those hours were in-frequent and stated:

I worked for the center for the [performing] arts for about a semester, so I like having an actual schedule. They are more like give us the times that you can come in and if it matches up with something [a performance] then you come in, but I like knowing when I can actually work.

Other participants stressed that the team aspect of working with the Frozen Pond operations staff was beneficial to their experience. One alumni participant cited that her experiences employed through this operations office were centered on a strong connection to her

coworkers. She further indicated that while working a different on-campus job, she missed the connections shared by this operations staff, and cited this as her main reason for leaving her other position for her senior year. One current student described her experiences at previous positions in comparison to her current role as a Building Manager, noting:

Well I worked last year in [an office setting], and I just kind of sat at a desk, and did data collection for them. It was very much that I sat in a cubicle, and I was the only student worker at the time. And I also work for the service learning center driving vans, and that's very individualistic, whereas work that I've done through the office of student involvement with orientation, Res Life as an RA, and the work being a building manager has definitely been more group collaboration. I think specifically, getting on staff this year, just the environment of the office and the staff has allowed me to be really comfortable, and let me be me. Also it has motivated me to want to be a hard worker.

As noted by the participants of this study, the student-employment experience that they have with this operations department has been found to have a positive impact on their experience, and student-employees enjoy the work they do, even though it can be physically demanding at times. Participants who have held other on-campus jobs at this institution have noted that this experience was significantly more enjoyable than previous positions.

### **Off-Campus work Comparison**

In contrast to the findings and comparisons of working on-campus, participants did not have an “always positive” experience when working off-campus. Participants noted that working off-campus during term time was often more of a challenge. One senior noted that “I work at a place that's about 20 minutes away right now. I mean, I enjoy doing it, but it's much easier to work on-campus.” Participants in both focus groups indicated that in off-campus jobs in places of retail or commerce, that it was “more challenging to connect with coworkers,” and “that there wasn't a sense of community like there is in the Frozen Pond operations staff.” One participant indicated that when working on campus, supervisors understand the needs of the student, and the rigors of an academic schedule, where “...the other job doesn't appreciate it as



much, so, I think it's definitely better here [on-campus]." Despite the shortcomings with community in the workplace, it was noted by multiple participants that off-campus wages were slightly higher than what they were able to earn on-campus, though some of that was offset by commuting costs. One senior detailed her employment experiences, expressing:

I had an off-campus job for three and a half years at a pizza place, that I started before I came to college, and then continued working there for my freshman and sophomore years, and the shifts there were late, sometimes I need to work to 11:00 at night or until 1:30AM, and then come back to campus. I didn't have a car freshman year so it was kind of hard. I actually quit that job for this position my junior year, so making that transition from leaving campus, to just being on campus and being able to walk to work, and like everyone else has said, being able to see my friends, while working has been really enjoyable. So even though I had a good experience, and really like the job I had before, being a student, and working while you're a student, it's really convenient and nice that you can have a place that you can just work, during the week.

Not all off-campus work experiences detailed by these participants were as negative however. A senior undergraduate student expressed that a job that she held at a coffee shop at home she found similarities to her present position through "providing good customer service, and building rapport with the regular customers." One alumnus profoundly expressed that all of his past employment experiences, including his off-campus endeavors added to his overall employment profile:

Obviously very different experiences [working on-campus versus off] , but I like to think that each job I hold I'm taking something I learned at a previous job, and applying it to the one I'm at now. So I think each different position I learn something new to and can apply it to my professional career.

This finding is similar in nature to that of Perna (2010) who noted that students who work during term-time do better academically while working on-campus, versus leaving campus to work in a different environment.

## **Impact of Training on Employment**

### Positive impact of staff training

The topic of training brought many fond memories to the student and alumni participants alike. The tone set in training can dictate the tone of the year, so it is very important that staff training be conducted in a manner that sets up a successful school year. One alumni participant, who worked in numerous student positions on-campus, shared his opinion on staff training as part of the Frozen Pond operations staff:

I think this training was one of the better trainings I've ever been through. I didn't think we harped too much on the same topic. I feel like it moved smoothly, and never felt that I wasn't getting enough information, and didn't feel like we were dragging on anything, which was really great, as well as I think the training that I got has helped me.

By and large, participants noted that training was both relevant to their positions, and well executed. According to all participants, hands-on training with equipment was very useful, and prepared students to utilize the equipment in an independent fashion. Prior to employment with the Frozen Pond operations staff; few employees had experience working with facility and event operations, so material such as room setups, and audio/visual equipment usage was foreign to them. The perpetual re-configuring of meeting rooms and use of the more complicated equipment during training was named as major factor to success at the job by many participants. Some positions within the Frozen Pond operations staff are more reliant on utilization of equipment than others, such as the Building Manager role. One third year employee and area manager commented:

It's good to see all the technical pieces or just working with equipment all together [as a staff unit], and seeing the actual equipment you're going to use in the spaces you are going to use them. Seeing how they typically get set, because it's [the work order] not always step by step. It doesn't always tell you where to put things, but you know from going through the building during training.

The hands on use of complicated equipment, such as a JBL speaker system or video projector while in training encourages employees to gain comfort with the items at their own pace. One alumnus commented that this practice was “very helpful because I could kind of learn what to do, because you can't just be thrown into one of those positions.” Some participants had difficulty isolating a single most-beneficial aspect of training. In the first focus group session, a participant shared this observation:

There's not really like one point that is the most beneficial, but like every day we came in for training was effective, and every day we learned something new, and like new members, and returning members learned something new every day, and you're not seeing the same things every day.

Participants who work at one of the two information centers also felt that hand hands-on experiences were important to their employment preparedness. These participants indicated that though room setups and technical equipment are not a part of their function as it is that of the Building Managers or Set-up crew, they felt more comfortable with the job after practicing with their work stations. One information center attendant indicated the building-wide tour is useful to that position for directing patrons to the appropriate locations within the building. Though the staff manual (referred to by participants as the binder) read through was sometimes called tedious, an alumnus commented on its importance, stating “You can give everyone a manual and say ‘here, read through this,’ and half of the people aren’t going to flip it open.” Interestingly, senior female employee who is a current information center attendant indicated that hearing the policies read aloud was instrumental to her:

The binder is actually really helpful. Even though we go through and literally read everything out loud. I wouldn't say that specific moment is most beneficial, because I won't remember everything that is read at that moment in time, but knowing that I have that to go to if I need to reference it is helpful.

Similar to findings noted in the study conducted by Michael (2013), participants indicated that training continued beyond the time set aside for formal instruction. Initial shifts, as well as weekly staff meetings allowed participants time to continue to learn new materials, and ask questions that would help them better understand the position, or a specific task. One recent alumnus indicated that he even practiced aspects of more challenging equipment on his own just to ensure he was prepared to use it when the time came.

This finding resonated with a study conducted by Rodriguez (2005), who reported that as student employees understandably develop greater comfort for the work that they do through hands-on experiences. Hands on, experiential learning has been a strong pillar of the training program within the Frozen Pond operations staff, as participants have indicated that they are able to retain and comprehend information better than only utilizing lecture and discussion about a training matter. Having all employees experience this type of learning at the same time also provides an environment that is conducive to the next finding, the team-building aspect of training.

Team building was considered by all participants to be a major pillar to their training experience. One alumni participant shared that through team building activities, she felt “comfortable asking people questions, and working with them.” She added that this was useful “when you talk to them on the walkie [hand-held radio] so you know who you’re talking to.” In the first focus group, participants indicated that the bonding was one of their favorite components of the job, and it’s what set their experience apart from other employment that they have held. “I also think the bonding was huge. Just doing activities... it helps new members feel more welcome.” In the second focus group, a senior participant shared his views on the team building aspect of training:

...[Teambuilding and staff bonding] is a big part of the job training, but at the same time so is when everyone is with each other and you feel like you are connecting with anyone with the games that we played. Just that team building forms the chemistry of the Frozen Pond operations staff. I consider all of these guys my friends, right now, instead of just co-workers. So, just getting to know them, and building the bond that we have is pretty important to me.

Participants noted that the involvement of returning staff members in training is influential, and complimentary to the two professional staff members that conduct training. One form of this involvement by returning staff members is through a shadow shift program, where a new employee works side by side a returner to practice and apply skills learned during “formal” training sessions. One participant indicated that shadowing is “When I really got the experience of ‘okay, this is what I’m going to do for the rest of the semester.’” That participant also identified shadowing as “one the biggest parts of training for me.” Participants in focus group one identified the area managers being instrumental to training, and their experience in employment. Area managers are the formal leaders of each staff and have performed at a high level in the appropriate staff position prior to being promoted. One participant, a junior male student provided his insight about the area manager’s role: “I think it's really good that the area managers end up leading a lot of the training sessions.” The idea was floated to this group to see if a formal mentor relationship would be beneficial to new staff members. A senior female building manager indicated that it would not be necessary:

I think having a mentoring thing would be kind of overdoing it. As John said, the area managers are approachable, and through all the bonding we do, and all of the connections we do with different people on staff, and without it being a kind of forced thing, I was able to reach out to returners on staff, and ask them questions, rather than being paired with them and feeling obligated.

As indicated previously in this section, the delivery technique of training was appreciated by participants in this study. Hands on learning intertwined with lecture, discussion and read through were noted as helpful by participants in being successful at their positions. One alumni

participant presently employed in the field of higher education commented “I like the split of how it was: Hands on as well as just sitting and reading through things. “One specific example cited by a senior female was related to the uniform policy discussion, which was adjusted recently to a new visual format:

One of the visual things that I thought was helpful was the slideshow that the area managers that the area managers made about what was okay to wear to work, and what was not. It is helpful to visualize because even though it appears that it's clear cut and written out, I remember people having questions about a shade a pant, and things like that. I felt that it was a really good tool for that sort of thing, and you didn't need them to come in all dressed up, but it was nice.

As noted previously by Michael (2013), hands-on training that is conducted in the environment in which the work will be done proves to be beneficial to the employees and the employer. A well-planned and executed plan for training will continue to pay the organization back, and the overall program will prosper.

### **Negative aspect of Staff training**

In order to obtain a comprehensive perspective regarding the effectiveness of staff training, participants were asked how training was not performing well, and how it could be changed. By and large, participants indicated that their training and employment experience within this operations department was largely positive, and impactful. However, participants were able to objectively identify areas of improvement for future training exercises.

When participants were asked if there were any negative aspects to the training, very few were reported. In both focus groups, one negative reaction was directed towards the shorter winter training that is offered by the Frozen Pond operations staff. This training is often more of a refresher, but for employees who are hired mid-year to fill vacancies of students studying abroad, it is very much a crash course. Due to participant's level of engagement with

employment in the respective facilities, as well as the department as a whole, there was some concern for new employee readiness. A senior employee, who initially was hired by this department during the middle of the school year, indicated that “It's tough because there's a lot fewer days than summer training, so we have to cram things in.” This topic was further elaborated in the first focus group by a senior information center attendant:

I was putting myself in the shoes of new staff members [during winter training], and I was wondering if I would know my position at all, and known what to do? I don't think I would have felt confident in that position.

The strongest negative reaction to training came from focus group two where the pool of participants who represented both buildings, and had a mixture of first year and returning staff members. One staff member indicated that doing a thorough tour of the building that you work in is good, but doesn't feel that a tour of the same level of detail is appropriate for the building you don't work in. Perceptions of this practice indicated that most participants felt that was one aspect of training that could be modified. One participant provided further detail on this experience, which resonated with others in the focus group:

As [athletic facility] people, we went down to the kitchens [in the campus center], and I was like ‘why are we down here? We are never going to be down here again.’ I mean you should definitely know what's going on in the other building, but we didn't need the same level of detail.

The few negative aspects of training that were uncovered through this study are useful for the critique, and improvement of this training and employment program. Overall, this program is operating well, but like any program, there can always be adjustments made to improve the practice.

### **Impact of Employment on Institutional Experience**

Participants, both alumni, and current undergraduate employees indicated that the employment and training within the Frozen Pond operations staff affected them beyond the

scope of employment. The impact of employment through the Frozen Pond operations staff was cited by participants as being a strong foundation to their institutional experience that: improved their academic studies; provided transferable skills to their academic studies, and towards their transition to the workplace; learned and practiced leadership skills, and strengthened their connection to Frozen Pond College.

The transferable skills gained by participants resonates with similar findings noted in studies conducted by Michael (2013), as well as Crebert, Bates, Bell, Patrick, and Cragolini (2004). The gaining of transferable skills in college has helped students as they transition into the professional workforce following graduation. The participants noted that staff training and employment uses an intentionally method of providing experiences that build transferable skills that benefit both in and outside of classroom endeavors.

Academic study is of course the foremost reason why most students attend a postsecondary educational institution. The departmental focus that is presented to each student employee at training is that all employees are students before anything else. This expectation informs students that they have a higher priority job than work, that the department expects that they treat academics as their first priority. Every participant in this study indicated that they gained skills through employment that has helped them be successful academically. Through the use of interpersonal communication that is an important aspect of any job, but particularly the operations roles within the Frozen Pond operations staff, participants indicated being better prepared than other non-employees. A senior participant detailed this change when speaking about how communications has impacted his academics, stating:

Yeah, just to add on to that, this Fall I had to give 1 hour 15 minute presentation to the whole history department, on a 25 page paper. I've been more comfortable talking in



front of groups based on what we've done in training, which made it a lot easier for me, and I wasn't choking up as much as I otherwise would have if it wasn't for training.

Additionally, participants noted that working for the Frozen Pond operations staff assisted students with completing their academic assignments in a more timely fashion. One undergraduate participant indicated that having a work commitment encouraged him to do his homework prior to leisure time. "Oh I don't want to do this [homework] after work, or at work, so let me get this done now, so yeah; it [work] kind of motivates me." This statement was elaborated by another participant, who commented, "You want to do a good job at work, but you also want to do a good job with school." She detailed that having both commitments helped the other commitment. Participants of the undergraduate focus groups expressed that their work experiences utilizing technology benefited the quality of their presentations for class. One junior participant indicated the nature of his employment as a student strengthened his abilities in the classroom:

I would say that this job and the training with this job have definitely made me more tech savvy. So like doing and creating presentations and power points, just had to do this the other day for a Bio lab report and I knew what I was doing in my group because I knew how to work my computer, and Macs, and stuff like that. Everyone else had no idea, and I learned that through this job, the technical part of it.

As noted by Kathman and Kathman (2000), the "[employing department] benefits from having productive workers, who project a positive image to the public. (p176). Participants noted that the training and work environment present within the Frozen Pond operations staff have helped them become better students, and representatives of campus to others. The gaining of skills in these areas is a great source of pride within the department, as student employees see this transformation, and apply it back to the campus community.

Participants in both interviews and focus groups noted that time management skills were a major take-away from their employment experience. In one alumni interview, the participant expressed her appreciation for the time management and accountability skills that she gained through student employment with the Frozen Pond operations staff, which has helped her in her professional career. One student participant in the first focus group indicated a statement that resonated with the alumnus' above discovery of time management skills, stating that "For me to be successful, I know if have work later today, so I need to do my homework now." Another alumnus also had a similar experience with gaining time management skills while employed as a student:

When I was a freshman, and I was just going to class, and I had no involvements, I definitely saw a slide in my academics. But as I became more involved, I wasn't procrastinating, and I was getting my work done, because I knew I had a work shift, and I needed to make sure my work was done before hand. So I think having a job really helps you on a college campus, as far as really figuring out your time

Time management and stronger academic performances are not the only skills that participants noted they have gained through employment with the Frozen Pond operations staff. Both Alumni participants indicated that their experiences working with professionals have greatly assisted their transitions to the workforce as professionals. The more-recent graduate indicated that his experience with the operational side of event planning makes him a better event planner for his work. This alumnus further commented "In the job I'm in now, I can't just wait until the day before an event...I understand that it's a process." One student participant, who is a prospective higher education graduate student herself, revealed a similar realization:

Also because I want to work at a college, I have a unique spin on it because I have a perspective on operations, and how things work. Like 'Oh, this table doesn't just magically appear here for this event. Someone put it here, and planned to put it here, and if someone else wanted to come in and do something else on that table, they can't.' It's not something I would have thought about before joining this office and staff

An interesting phenomenon arose multiple times, in different sessions. Participants indicated that the Frozen Pond operations staff employment was more significant to them than way to earn a living. In both focus groups, and alumni interviews, the concept of a family-like community was raised, and stressed. For example, one participant enthusiastically detailed “Going to work isn't like ‘Oh I have to go to work [said begrudgingly],’ it’s actually something that he looks forward to, because of the people that he works with. The community of the Frozen Pond operations staff is seemingly strong, as indicated by participants, who provided numerous examples of helping and being helped by fellow coworkers, even when they are not presently on-shift. Interestingly, one alumnus shared a similar comment regarding his experience, and how it contrasted from other on-campus positions he held “it wasn't just a job. It was more than that it was a whole new community where everyone was relying on each other.” One alumnus continued by saying that “Even though we were two separate buildings, and five separate staffs, we were all able to help one another out in the case that we ever needed it.”

Michael (2013) noted in his study, that through a well-designed student employment experience, participating employers observed an influx of stronger student employment candidates. In return, students returned to the position year to year, and the entire program was lifted into higher standing. In similar fashion, the Frozen Pond operations staff has a very low rate of attrition, with many employees returning year to year, and recruiting others to join the ranks. Participants indicated that this community is important to them, and more than just a job. This level of investment by even the non-manager employees provides a continuing stream of well-qualified candidates to fill limited openings.

Numerous participants noted that they are recognized by members of the community and peers while being on shift. A junior female participant commented, “People will text me asking

‘Oh, do you know about this or about that,’ since they know I’m from the Information Center.’”

One alumnus shared that while a student, he was often asked to assist his professors with in-classroom technology troubleshooting. “Being in a classroom, and your professor is having trouble hooking up the Power Point, you're able to be like ‘Hey let me help you out with that.’”

The strength of the community, and commitment to the position and the department, has also become something that is thought about by participants prior to engaging in any activity that could interfere with the group. This researcher was very impressed with this aspect of the Frozen Pond operations staff employment. One senior, detailed his experience with the group dynamic:

I think not that I conducted myself badly before, but I think it comes into consideration all the time that I’m a member of this group of people that represents the school, and that’s very visible on-campus. So if I do anything [go out socially] then, I keep it in that consideration it reflects not only on me, but on everyone else as well.

As indicated by the participants of this study, the effect of this on-campus employment has made an impact on the institutional experience of these students. Multiple participants noted that due to their work in this operations office, they were better connected to their institution. Furthermore, the development of community in this employment program aids students in working as part of a team, while understanding that their actions , both positive, and negative, reflect on their team as a whole, which can in part have an effect on the decision-making of these individuals.

### **Career preparation outcomes**

One aspect of employment in the Frozen Pond operations staff noted by participants was the resume experience that they gain while a student employee. A female alumnus indicated that the job experience helped teach her much about “being professional, even in the way that I dressed.” This alumnus also found that her work experience generated a positive job reference, which helped her set herself apart in employment interviews. “You don't really get that job

reference if you don't work, and it's hard to work when you're in school." The advantage of work experience is not just a secret held by alumni staff members. One undergraduate participant, a sophomore, profoundly expressed this observation as well:

It's also important for when you go off for an interview, and they ask you what you have been doing in college. When you say I was just doing school work it detracts from your candidacy. But when you have [work] experience, and I have gained time management skills, and customer services skills, and communications skills through training, and the clubs I'm in, and having a job on-campus will make me stronger as a candidate.

The participants as a whole expressed an appreciation for this aspect of student employment within this operations department. The ability to graduate from college with a degree, as well as work experience, was positively described by one focus group participant as being "huge." Further participant commentary related to career development was noted in conversations about one of the training sessions done each year, with the college's career development office. Both alumni and current undergraduate students noted that having an outside presenter conduct this training session about including student employment activities on their resume provided them the opportunity to learn more about the value of their student employment positions. Overall, participants in this study indicated that understanding how to utilize and market the skills acquired in their student employment roles would help them in their future endeavors. In a follow-up question, one senior participant indicated her opinions on this matter:

I think it's important for our staff to understand how to apply the skills learned through our positions to potential careers. Being able to talk about transferrable skills and knowing what exactly to highlight on a resume under this job description is helpful for the future. I think stressing these things during training and employment is a good thing to continue for future staffs.

Through the findings detailed above, the student employment and training program in place in this operations office is working generally well. Student-employees enjoy the overall

work experience, and gain from this employment beyond their hourly wages. Participants, both alumni, and present undergraduates, indicated that this employment has taught them how to work as part of a team, communicate with others, develop new skills including technology usage, and has provided them with resume-quality experience to assist them in post-graduation endeavors. Furthermore, participants noted that their experiences in this employment have helped them become better students, through the acquisition of time management. Alumni participants noted that their experiences through student employment helped to prepare them for the transition they faced when entering a professional environment, and indicated that it helped them stand out from other applicants. The few negative responses to the training portion of the program provide an area to make some necessary improvements to take a good program to the next level of success.

### **Recommendations**

In order to improve practice within the campus center and athletics facilities department that was the subject of this research, I have developed the following seven recommendations. These recommendations have been created through thoughtful integration of findings, review of extant literature, and application of practices in use at other institutions. Recommendations intended for the department head, and above command structures in the department and institution of this study. The following recommendations pertain to various categories, including: training assessment; alumni involvement; application of technology; staff attendance at conferences; and the addition of a professional staff member. These recommendations will help the department in this study to amplify existing practices and procedures, as the findings of this study have indicated that there are very few areas of concern at present.

***Recommendation #1: The campus center office at Frozen Pond College should develop a tool to measure the effectiveness of training, to be administered shortly after formal training sessions.***

Based upon the findings of this study, there is a need for the staff responsible for the campus center and athletic complex student-staff training at Frozen Pond College to evaluate the effectiveness of any particular training session on a regular basis. Participants of this study indicated that the majority of training topics were well executed, and that they were prepared-well for the jobs that they do. However, given the financial resources expended as well as time commitment that is invested in staff training, measurable data can support the practice of training student-employees. Much of the foundation of the job performance in a given school year is built during the annual staff training exercises that take place in August. Within the department, it is generally understood that a strong training leads to a strong year's execution of duties, whereas weak staff training leads to inefficiencies and frustrating challenges that last well beyond the anticipated learning curve. The significance of ensuring that training is appropriately conducted will allow the campus center department to amplify the aspects of job training that are working well, and to "correct the course" of the topics that have gone adrift. Prior to this study, there has not been a formal assessment of the delivery of training, and the assessment of training delivery has been focused on perception over the course of the year.

This training assessment tool can be built with relatively low effort or cost, through the use of the Google Forms platform. The department has familiarity working with these forms, and uses them for various roles all ready. This tool can be built as an online survey, and distributed through the college-email system. The assessment tool will have qualitative and quantitative components that will allow student-employees to evaluate each session and the overall experience. The assessment tool will be delivered to student employees early in the semester,

after a few weeks of work at the position. The timing of this delivery provides time for mid-semester adjustments to practice, prior to future formal training periods. The timing also allows the student employees to gain some important on-the-job experience, which may allow them to provide more thoughtful insight about their experience, as opposed to evaluating material that is still being processed, or hasn't yet been utilized in true employment situations. Additionally, utilization of this form of assessment, allows for anonymous participation, which can provide better-quality of responses.

The assessment tool may also provide a mechanism to justify the financial resources, and time invested into staff training. Increasingly, this operations office is being asked to provide evidentiary justification for expense, and data harvested through this assessment tool could be used to benefit the office's budgeting process. Data gained through this assessment will not be a stand-alone justification for the budgeting process, but can be used in conjunction with other data to depict a fuller picture of the department's functions and value.

The development of this survey assessment should be conducted by the professional staff of the campus center office in concert between the two professionals presently employed through this office. Having both professionals that presently make up this office collaborate on the development of this survey will provide a comprehensive survey that can be useful to the department in many ways. In all likelihood, the junior professional will be responsible for designing the final product, while the senior professional will be responsible for administration of the survey. The improvement in practice will occur as a collaborative effort, based upon results of this survey, as compared to the department's mission, and employee manual.

***Recommendation #2: The Frozen Pond Campus Center office should develop and administer a survey to receive alumni commentary regarding their experience with Frozen Pond operations staff employment, and how it impacted former employees' transition to the professional workforce.***

The Frozen Pond operations staff works with a degree of intentionality to ensure that transferable skills are developed that will aid student employees in, and after their college experience. Some transferrable skills, as indicated previously in the findings section of this study



include the gaining of time management skills; learning how to have professional interactions with a multitude of different people; gaining knowledge of utilization, and troubleshooting of various pieces of information technology equipment; and gaining work experience that enhances their resume and compliments an academic transcript.

The degree that employment within the Frozen Pond operations staff aids alumni as they transition into a professional role is still relatively unknown. Informally, numerous alumni of the Frozen Pond operations staff have indicated that their work experiences within the Frozen Pond operations staff have positively contributed to their transition into the professional workforce. The survey that would be developed would be distributed to alumni during a selected time period after graduation, to determine how student employment contributed to that workforce transition. As to not bombard recent alumni with numerous surveys that focus on similar issues, the best technique for administering this survey come from partnering with institution's career development center that presently conducts an alumni survey. Through coordination with the career development center, these data could be harvested and compared to other on-campus employers, which would benefit each department, and the institution as a whole.

In the case that the department in this research study is unable to cultivate a collaborative survey to recent alumni, the professionals of this operations department would utilize direct communication to recent alumni. Similar to the student employee tool to assess training, the alumni assessment device would be built using the Google forms system. This assessment tool will attempt to provide insight regarding the effectiveness of the overall experience. This recommendation stems from the alumni who participated in this research, and cited the beneficial nature of student employment to their first and second professional jobs. (An example of an alumni survey that could be used for these purposes can be found in Appendix F).

Information gained through this alumni assessment tool will be used in the development of future learning outcomes, which will be explored in the upcoming recommendations. The alumni data can also be utilized to enhance departmental recruiting initiatives for the attainment of transferable skills. Furthermore, the information from this alumni assessment tool will be used to update, how present and future student employees experience their on-campus job within the Frozen Pond operations staff

***Recommendation #3: The Frozen Pond Campus Center staff should integrate an alumni panel into the annual training exercises.***

As indicated by one of the alumni participants of this study, alumni involvement with an institution can typically be driven by the level of involvement that a student had while they were a student (Thomas & Smart, 2005). Given the level of involvement shown by student employees, and participants of this study, they are likely to remain involved as alumni.

The Frozen Pond Campus Center office should call upon this network of alumni employees to host a panel during training each year. This panel will connect present staff with former members, to allow for networking; alumni will also be able to share their experiences, and provide guidance for the work ahead. The involvement of alumni staff members can supplement the training and job insight provided by returner student employees, and the professional staff. Additionally, students will have the unique opportunity to professionally network with alumni who shared similar involvement experiences during their time at Frozen Pond College. The networking opportunity may provide another mechanism to assist the employees of the Frozen Pond operations staff to transition into the professional world following graduation. Some sample question for this panel include: asking alumni members to detail the most-significant

experience they had in their student employment; what advice they have to be successful in this student-employment position; and what they struggled with the most as a student-employee.

***Recommendation #4: The Frozen Pond Campus Center office should develop and declare the competencies/learning outcomes that employees can work towards during employment within the Frozen Pond operations staff.***

The Frozen Pond Campus Center office has existing procedures in place that evaluate student employees at the midpoint of each academic year. The associate director of the campus center, the department head, should bolster this part of the employment program building out the expectations into competencies and learning outcomes. This amplification of existing practice will provide student employees a measureable goal to work towards during the course of their employment, as well as provide additional resume-building skills that can prepare a student for the transition to a professional environment.

The practice of developing job-specific competencies will help students learn and grow, even outside of the classroom environment. The student Union at Ohio State University (Ohio State University Student Life, n.d.) advertises that student employees will have the opportunity to grow along six competencies that will transfer easily to any workplace. The student union lists those areas of growth as: Learning, Application, and Integration; Critical Thinking and Problem Solving; Interpersonal Competence; Interpersonal Development; Humanitarianism and Civic Engagement; and Practical Competence. (Ohio State University Student Life, n.d.)

According to Clawson (2014), a college degree is no longer the instant qualification for professional employment as it once was. As indicated by Clawson (2014), competency-based programs provide employers with a mechanism to evaluate recent graduate more thoroughly than by using the academic transcript alone. Though Clawson (2014) primarily supported the use of

competency-based programs in an academic environment, the position can be modified to include extra-curricular and employment opportunities where learning also occurs. Clawson (2014) indicated “Institutional leaders have a responsibility to all students to create conditions that allow them to showcase their knowledge and applied skills in ways that are meaningful to potential employers” (Clawson, 2014)

Western Connecticut State University’s Campus Center and Student Center website (n.d.) lists similar core-competencies that have been identified by participants of this study. The institution indicates that student managers will gain experience with leadership and supervision; communication, building and equipment oversight; customer service; and financial management (Western Connecticut State University, 2009). The competencies listed here can easily be implemented formally in the campus center office at Frozen Pond College. One way to implement these competencies is to follow the lead set by the University of Texas-Pan American, now known as the University of Texas-Rio Grande Valley, after a 2015 merger. UTPA provides a rubric (Appendix D) that is utilized to evaluate student employees at their position that is as detailed as the typical academic rubric (UTPA, 2014). The thoroughness, and articulation found on this rubric provides students and their supervisors with a very organized manner to evaluate job-performance, while encouraging learning.

***Recommendation #5: Based on student recommendations, the Frozen Pond Campus Center office should move to implement and integrate portable technology into the daily operations to streamline outdated paper processes, and to enhance the workflow of the student employees.***

The campus center office at Frozen Pond College should identify processes that can be streamlined by incorporating technology. Based on focus group data from this study, the use of iPads, as well as online reporting systems were suggested as a strategy that would make daily operations easier. In this situation, the participant noted that the distance of the building from the

campus center, combined with the absence of dedicated, professional staff in that building, makes the day to day scheduling more challenging. During focus group number two, one participant offered a solution of utilizing Apple iPad technology, which is already owned by the Campus center office, to replace the existing paper-based system of notifying on-duty student employees of action items, and their specific timing. An example of the difficulties that have resulted in this paper –based system is that changes, and updates to the reservation system need to be typed into the document, printed, and walked over to the building. In times where there is an absence of available-time by the existing professionals, the item can be telephoned over to be hand-written into the schedule. In this scenario, the Building Managers are then at the mercy of being able to read someone’s handwriting, or worse, the message not being received correctly, such as in the game of “telephone.”

By integrating the existing technology utilized by the college in the form of Google Documents, and deploying information on an iPad-based delivery mechanism, the student employees of both buildings will benefit from having access to more current information, and will be able to serve the Frozen Pond campus and community with greater efficiency. The use of Google Documents and the iPad will enable the written schedules to be changed in real-time, which allows the schedule for building operations to be both fluid, and more customer-friendly.

Additionally, the use of mobile tablet technology can have additional benefits for both student employees, and professionals of the Frozen Pond operations staff. One example of an added benefit would be the ability to utilize the devices built-in features such as video-calling, to show a particular room setup, or maintenance emergency, without needing a person to drop their work load to be at a site in-in person. The devices also will allow students to have digital access to various references, including technical manuals for equipment, and setup guides or diagrams

for all spaces that they are responsible for. Additionally, student employees will be able to complete their duty logs while conducting rounds of their building, versus needing to spend time at the end of their shift to complete the log on a computer inside the office.

***Recommendation #6 The Frozen Pond Campus Center office should lobby for funding to be utilized on professional conference attendance for student employees.***

A widely-held belief within higher education, and many fields for that matter, is that conferences are beneficial to the interchange of ideas, and professional development for employees who attend them. In the field of higher education, there are numerous professional organizations that promote student attendance at conference, and some organizations that even host conferences specifically targeted at the undergraduate student. The website for the Centennial Student Union at the University of Minnesota, Mankato lists advertise conference attendance and participation as a benefit to working in the Student Union for undergraduates (n.d.). Students of the Centennial Student Union have the opportunity to attend the Association for College Unions International (ACUI) regional conference as it “gives student-leaders the opportunity and to gain new insight and perspectives on being an employee of a Union.” ACUI is the international organization that links student unions, campus center, and student centers, to allow for the sharing of best-practices. ACUI offerings include conferences and workshops that are routinely held on a regional, and national scale, as well as online webinars.

For the upcoming FY17 budget, the Frozen Pond Campus Center should allocate funding to send 5 to 6 students, and 1 or more professionals to conferences, such as the ACUI (Association for College Unions International), which provides a conduit for facilities and programming discussion. Through this study, participants have indicated that working with the Frozen Pond operations staff has provided them with a perspective of the campus that their peers do not have. Participants have also noted that they now better understand operations, and even

have an interest in logistics and operations after working as a part of the Frozen Pond operations staff.

By providing funding to send student employees to conferences, the attendees will be able to gain further insights into facility operations, and student affairs best practices, and can share these insights with their fellow staff members upon their return. The attendance of conferences by student employees will not only better the individual employee, but will also allow the staff as a whole to improve through the application of new learning. The upcoming ACUI Building Manager's institute appears to be a great opportunity to send students to learn about facility operations, event planning, and team building, along-side students and professionals from other student unions across the United States. The call for programs (Appendix G) appears to have a strong level of correlation with the functions of the operations department in this study.

With the mission of the institution and department centered on "Enlightening Hearts, Engaging Minds, and Empowering Minds," conferences can be seen as a way to support our students, while providing an opportunity to learn. The initial funding will likely be the most-challenging aspect of this recommendation, but with careful, and intentional budgeting, the funds can likely be found. The investments in Frozen Pond students, as well as the department will likely add-value to all who are involved, and aid the institution in continued pursuit of excellence.

***Recommendation #7: The Frozen Pond Campus Center and Frozen Rink Athletics and Performance Complex office must hire an additional full-time professional employee to facilitate the operation of the department, and to ensure the department's offerings can be enhanced for the Frozen Pond College community.***

The campus center department has experienced a growth in the amount of programs that utilize the campus center each year. Additionally, in 2013, the campus center office was given supervision over the college's burgeoning athletic facility. Despite the growth of responsibilities, and increased amount of programming taking place, the department has been re-structured, and is woefully understaffed to meet present demand adequately.

At present, the Frozen Pond campus center and Frozen Rink Athletics and Performance Complex is supported by two full-time professionals who make up the majority of the professional staffing (by responsibility) as well as two-full time, academic year professionals who work a graveyard shift in a role occupied by students during the day. In the 2014-2015 academic year, the campus center supported over 4000 different events of all sizes, such as pre-event tabling by student organizations, to Presidential-level events such as Commencement. Of these 4000 events executed in the 2014-2015 academic year, over 1300 included setups to be executed. In the Frozen Rink Athletics and Performance Complex, the room reservation system accounted for over 2000 events, and 200 setups, though much of the official activity in that building went un-recorded, as the lion's-share of events surrounded the ice rink rentals, which are not controlled by Frozen Pond College. The hum of activity in these facilities is constant, and ever-increasing in frequency and complexity. With the recent growth of the student body seen by Frozen Pond College, events require more equipment, and larger spaces. Given the finite nature of meeting space in these buildings, this translates into multiple uses of a particular space in a given day, with numerous room changeover required. During academic periods, the campus center, and Frozen Rink Athletics and Performance Complex are open 24 and 20 hours per day respectively, meaning that event activity routinely occurs outside of the professional workday.



In order to support the growing level of activity seen in the campus center, and the athletics and performance complex, the campus center must restructure and add additional professional staff. The department at present has an Associate Director, and an Office Manager. This precarious level of staffing leaves the operations of the buildings of responsibility, at risk of ceasing to function if a matter urgent attention, such as very intricate event setup, arises. Furthermore, the department sees a burden of responsibility shift onto the remaining employee when the other is out of the office. In a situation where more professionals were present, this load would be shared between multiple employees, making the absence of one employee not adversely affect the remaining ones.

The growth of a professional employee within this department can provide an opportunity to enhance the student employment program and overall experience. By adding one or more professionals to this office, training duties can be spread out among more staff members, which will allow for an improvement in the delivery of training. Furthermore, an additional employee will provide the professional staff an opportunity to better plan the total experience. At present, it is can be possible for both existing professionals to be at the mercy of the day to day work flow. An additional professional can aid this office in getting ahead of the day to day operations, and extending the degree of planning for training, and policy matters farther into the future.

The addition of an additional full-time professional would not only allow for an increased balance in the daily and annual operations, but would allow for further strengthening of the training and employment program, and increased support to the student employees, as well as groups that utilize space in these buildings. The hire of at least an additional employee also provides the ability for a director of the department to advocate those outside the department, such as in the budget process, while having a professional present to oversee the day-to-day

operations of each building. The hire of an additional full-time employee is the influential in the completion of the above-listed recommendations to improve practice within the Frozen Pond operations staff at Frozen Pond College. Participants in these focus groups and interviews indicated that the professionals in this office are helpful, useful, and guiding; one alumni participant even went as far as saying that the professionals are “amazing.” In an undergraduate focus group, a junior male shared his feelings regarding the Campus center office professional staff:

I think recognizing the importance of you [the researcher] and [the department head] and what you have taught the area managers and the staffs [is important]. A lot of that can get lost over the years, but [these professionals] make sure it doesn't, and I don't think you guys receive enough credit for that. A lot could get lost... such small things which can lead to bigger problems. So I think the leadership is very strong

The Frozen Pond operations staff, has plentiful strengths, and doesn't require any course-altering readjustments according to participant indication. Small changes that have been detailed here, and if implemented will continue to allow the Frozen Pond operations staff employment to play an instrumental role in the student experience of its employees at Frozen Pond College. Furthermore, the recommendations presented here will allow the department as a whole to continue to support all members of the Frozen Pond Community, and to enhance the overall experience of those who utilize the facilities. Financial challenges are understood to be a grounding factor to the implementation of these recommendations, and that the implementation of these recommendations may occur only on a partial basis.

### **Limitations of this study**

This qualitative study was conducted with purposively-selected participants who were present or former employees of a campus operations department. The information learned about this department's training and employment program is insightful, and can be utilized to improve

practice. However, given the importance of this information, there are some limitations to this research. Of the undergraduate participants in this study, all were employees who had a generally-favorable job performance. Student-employees that did not have as strong of a job performance were invited to participate during the recruitment process, but did not respond to either written invitation, or verbal encouragement from their student area managers during regular staff meeting time. It is the opinion of this researcher that the opinions of employees that have not historically performed at the highest level would have been insightful, especially to the “Negative Aspects of Training” finding. Additionally, Alumni participation of this study was very limited, with only two participants. The alumni represented also had a similar history as the undergraduate participants, as strong performers. Increased alumni participation would have provided stronger insights related to the “Career Preparation” and further development of transferable skills.

### **Recommendations for further study**

This research should be continued at the institution in this study, across the spectrum of student-employment. The operations department featured in this study should attempt to conduct this study with student employees who choose to leave this student employment prior to graduation. Though this does not happen often, there are student-employees that elect to pursue other opportunities, despite being in good-standing with the department. Future study of this phenomenon can provide insight into helping these student-employees to continue their growth, and to attempt to retain those on-staff.

Additionally, elements of this study can be applied to different types of student employment at the institution in this study. The student-employment experience at this institution

has not been studied at the institutional level, so it is unknown at this time how the department in this study is performing compared to other departments at this institution.

### **Conclusion**

Student employment is well-regarded as being a beneficial aspect for student employees as well as the institutions that hire them (Kathman & Kathman, 2000; Rodriguez 2005; Michael, 2013). The conduction of this study provided this researcher the impact of student employment from the perspective of the student employee in an operations department at a small, private, faith-based, institution located in the northeast United States.

Through the experience of this study, student employees and alumni of this operations department demonstrated that they receive a positive experience through their time as student-employees. The student employees of this study could be limited to learning job-specific knowledge only, such as how to setup a folding banquet table, or how to deploy a projector for visual presentations. However, participants of this study have demonstrated what has been perceived for many years. Student-employees of this department do not simply learn job-specific tasks; rather they grow across a full-spectrum. As a result, the student employees benefit from learning numerous transferable skills that help to prepare them for stronger academic experiences while still a student, as well as employment after the attainment of their college degrees. Both undergraduate and alumni participants indicated that their experiences gained through this employment opportunity have assisted them in forging stronger links to their institution of study, while also providing them time management skills that made them better students. The degree of recognition due to their employment position was seen as a badge of honor by participants, as

their role distinguished them from their peers' on-campus, as candidates for professional employment.

In assessing the state of the student employment training program for the Campus center office at Frozen Pond College, my research has been grounded in improving practice for this department, this institution, and the students that attend the institution. From this study, I have gained insight on a major departmental initiative, to ensure that the process is working efficiently, and productively. Through the initial research, and data collection phases of this study, I have been able to identify numerous strengths of the training and employment process in this operations department. The department is strong, committed to the flawless execution of events of all sizes, while ensuring that value is added for the students, and the department. The lifeblood of this department is the student employees, and it is clear that the student employees benefit from their experiences as much as the department benefits from having them on-staff.

As a result of this research, I have learned the impact that I am able to provide as a professional working with student employees. Furthermore, seeing numerous participant responses that resonate with the outcomes identified while planning this employment experience encourages this practice to continue. As a former student employee during my undergraduate years, I can speak to the importance of working while on-campus, as it provides an opportunity for students to learn outside of the classroom, to build relationships with faculty and staff of an institution, and as an avenue to apply knowledge gained in a classroom setting. Provided that college is viewed as a very important time period of transition, and the ever-increasing focus on student to professional transition and success, I recommend that student employment be viewed with importance by college and university decision-makers. The benefits of a well-designed

student employment experience can be shared by the student, the department that takes on student-employees, and the institution as a whole.

As a result of this research, I hope to implement an annual assessment of training, and work experiences to continually improve practice. These data will also help to demonstrate the need for the department's use of student employees, and may become an example for the college to use for all student training programs. In a data-driven institution, this information can translate to student success and persistence, as well as towards justifying budgetary expense and time spent in training.

For this research project, I have attempted to answer the following research question: "What is the present status of employment training conducted by this operations office, and how can it be improved to benefit the department, as well as the students who participate in the program?" I believe this study has answered this research question, and has provided an opportunity to amplify existing practice. Ultimately, the improvement of practice has meaning that extends to the student, the department, and the institution. The student will continue to learn outside of the classroom, and gain transferable skills. The department will benefit by strengthening the human capital that it relies so heavily upon. These benefits will also impact the institution as a whole. There is potential for the improvement to help shape the institution's reputation externally and internally as well.

Through the implementation of the recommendations listed above, I believe that the employment and training program operated through this department can be improved to better-enhance the student employees and departmental function. The amplification of the on-going practices will serve the department in a positive note, as the department sees an ever-increasing demand for services, as the population of the college grows.

Ultimately, the institution in this study is a liberal arts college, and not a vocational training institution. As is common with liberal arts institutions, students gain knowledge beyond a specific field of focus, and become well-rounded citizens of this world. In the liberal arts model, out of classroom learning can have a positive impact on a student's future, at or even beyond the level in-classroom learning will have. With this assumption, it is important for all elements of the college experience to have an impact in the shaping of a student into a well-rounded citizen. Through the findings of this research, I believe that student employment in a general sense aids students in this out-of-classroom education. Furthermore, the department studied in this research has a very positive impact on the growth and development of students, and actively prepares students for the challenges of today, tomorrow, and the future. The transferable skills that are acquired at all phases of training and employment help to distinguish these student employees from any pool of applicants, and aid in re-emphasizing why these students selected a liberal arts education to begin with. Each year, a very significant portion of this student staff graduates, and move on to new endeavors. At times, this can be sad, but observing how their time as an employee has impacted the former students life, growth, and development, are reasons alone for individuals to pursue a career in higher education.

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UTPA. (2014). Spring 2014 Student Employee Learning Outcomes Student Union PDF

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## Appendices

### Appendix A

Protocol for undergraduate focus groups and one on one interview with recent alumni.

Clinton Student Employment Research Capstone.

- 1) How would you describe your experiences with employment at Frozen Pond College?
- 2) If you have had other on-campus jobs while a student, how do/did your experiences in this department compare to your other employment experiences?
- 3) If you at any time you worked off-campus during your time as a student, describe that experience.
- 4) In what ways did employment training as part of the Frozen Pond operations staffs help prepare you for the work that you did?
- 5) What was the impact on your student employment, and your student experience?
- 6) What parts of training were the most beneficial to your employment?
- 7) Were there any parts of training that we should re-emphasize?
- 8) What if any were the least beneficial parts of training?
- 9) Thinking about all training topics, how could the material be presented in a manner that is more conducive to your job-learning?
- 10) Are there any pieces of training that can or should be removed from our program?
- 11) How has your employment training prepared you for your outside of classroom activities and endeavors, if you are a present student?
- 12) If you have graduated, has employment with the Frozen Pond operations staff helped your transition to the workforce? Please explain.
- 13) Is there anything that I haven't asked you that you feel would be good for me to know about as far as your training and employment?

## Appendix B: Email Recruitment Tool

Greetings!

As a present/former member of the Frozen Pond Staff operations staff, we are hoping to get your opinions related to working for our office. Specifically, we are interested in assessing our training practices so that we can improve our training programs for future waves of operations staff employees. You have been identified for this research as a recipient of at least one full training at the beginning of a new academic year. To conduct this research, I will be running a focus group at a few different times. Please see below for more information. Each focus group will be approximately 1 hour in length, and will have no more than 10 people participating. At the conclusion of the focus group session, there will be a raffle for restaurant gift card, as a token of my appreciation. Anyone in attendance will be entered into the raffle unless participant does not wish to have their name submitted.

Focus groups are presently scheduled for the times and dates below. Please respond to this email with your 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> choices for the session you would like to participate in. Participation is voluntary, and will have no effect on your employment with the campus center office. You will receive a follow-up email with the confirmation of your scheduled session time and date.

Wednesday 2/24: 6:00PM-7:00PM

Thursday 2/25: 4:30PM-5:30PM

Thank you in advance for helping with this research, and improving training for the Frozen Pond operations staff.

Best,

Brandon

## Appendix C:

Frozen Pond College Campus Center/Frozen Rink Athletics and Performance Complex  
(FPCCC/FRAPC) training Schedule (**abridged**)

Frozen Pond operations staff  
Fall Training 2014 (Area Manager)

Day/Date Location

Thursday 8/14/14

9:00AM- 12:00PM (Area Managers Move In ) Keys at office

1:00PM- 5:00PM Area Manager Training PRA

- Welcome
- Team Builder (*Road map*)
- Training Overview
  - Expectations
  - Attendance of your area
  - Staff Check-in (arrival, Tax ID, start time/location, DRY)
- Other/Secondary
  - Payroll Project (Lauren)
  - Binder Project (Kelly)
  - Training Social (Sam)
  - Building Inventories/Equipment (Andrew/Nick/Eddie)
- Binder Review (front- full staff training)

Wednesday 8/20

Set-up Crew move in	Keys in Office	
Building MANAGER TRAINING (9am-5pm)	(8:00AM-12PM)	BLC-FRAPC
-9:00 DiCroce Lobby Tour	(8:00AM-12:00PM)	Murray
-Blue Line Club/Boxes	(1:00PM-3:00PM)	MPR
-Mock Hockey	(8:00AM-5:00PM)	Cascia
-Lunch		
-Cascia- Setups and AV		
-3:00 Frozen Pond Club		
- MPR (sound/screen/lights/doors)		

Thursday 8/21

Building MANAGER/ Setup Crew TRAINING	(8AM-2:30PM)	MPR
	(8:00AM-6:00PM)	Murray

- Office/Paperwork
- MPR Equipment / Set-ups
- Hoops/Volleyball/Divider
- Stage/AV/Projector
- Rounds

- Appendix D: Student Employee Learning outcomes: University of Texas: Pan American

**Spring 2014 Student Employee Learning Outcomes: Student Union**

Subject: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Evaluator Name: \_\_\_\_\_

	1 - Beginner	2 - Developing	3 - Accomplished	4 - Advanced	N/A	Comments
<b>Understanding role and procedures</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lacks understanding in one or more of the following: the role that Student Union plays in the campus community, the project goal(s), or office procedures</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Knows the general role that the office plays on campus, typically understands project goal(s) for assigned tasks, and seeks clarification on procedures</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Familiar with the role that the office plays on campus, demonstrates understanding of assigned projects, and generally aware of applicable procedures required for completing task.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Clearly articulate office functions and the role the office plays in enhancing the campus community, able to complete tasks with little assistance and follows applicable procedures required for completing task.</li> </ul>		
<b>Customer Service</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fails to greet customers or answer the telephone. Often provides inaccurate or incomplete responses to customer questions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Usually greets and responds to customers and telephone, but could be more timely and attentive. Responds to questions accurately but may struggle to clarify what the customer needs and may not provide a comprehensive response</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Greets and responds to customers or telephone in a timely manner with few exceptions. Fully clarifies customer questions and provides accurate and comprehensive response.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Always greets and responds to customers or telephone in a timely manner. Fully and clearly response to customer questions, often anticipating questions, but demonstrates active and courteous listening.</li> </ul>		
<b>Initiative</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Needs specific and step-by-step instructions from supervisor to complete a project. Supervisor is required to work alongside employee to complete project.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Able to develop a basic plan to complete a project and follows instructions to complete a project when given by supervisor.</li> <li>Needs to be checked for progress and quality.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develops a plan to complete a project and needs little instruction from supervisor to complete a project. Asks clarifying questions when unsure.</li> <li>Little checking of work is needed.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Executes a plan to complete project and needs no instructions from supervisor. Checking of work is not needed.</li> </ul>		
<b>Knowledge of University resources</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Needs assistance with identifying and obtaining basic University resources needed to complete a project and/or answer questions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Can identify and obtain some but not all basic University information needed to complete a project and/or answer questions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Familiar with basic University information needed to complete a project and/or answer questions. Consults when appropriate.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Seeks out additional University resources/information needed to complete a project and/or answer questions and does so efficiently and in a timely manner.</li> </ul>		
<b>Use of time</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Inappropriately uses time and/or excessive procrastination that leads to a project not being completed and/or being completed with unacceptable quality.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Needs guidance in managing time to complete a project with barely acceptable quality.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Manages time to complete a project, however some quality is compromised. If project is complete, seeks additional tasks to contribute to the office.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Efficiently manages time to complete a project without compromising quality. Takes initiative to complete tasks that enhance office operations.</li> </ul>		

	1 - Beginner	2 - Developing	3 - Accomplished	4 - Advanced	N/A	Comments
<b>Communication</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fails to demonstrate appropriate phone etiquette, often does not communicate clearly or ask questions when needed, written communication is incomplete (taking messages) with spelling and grammar mistakes.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Struggles to clearly articulate ideas or provide helpful information in person or on the telephone, sometimes written communication lacks clarity or necessary information.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Able to answer questions about office procedures, accurately shares information about the office's programs and services. Able to promote the office to the campus community and prospective students. Communicates clearly and effectively via telephone and in person. Able to provide accurate telephone messages and draft written communication that has clarity and is grammatically correct.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communication is accurate, concise, and appropriate. Written communication is clear and grammatically correct. Promotes the office to the campus community and prospective students.</li> </ul>		
<b>Reliability</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fails to complete tasks and duties efficiently or on time.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Struggles completing tasks in an efficient and timely manner.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Completes tasks, occasionally requests extensions on deadlines.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Completes tasks efficiently, often before deadline.</li> </ul>		
<b>Maintaining Confidentiality</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is irresponsible with sensitive/confidential information.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Often needs to be reminded of the office procedures when handling sensitive/confidential information.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is cautious when handling sensitive/confidential information and operates within office policy.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Handles confidential/sensitive information appropriately and follows University &amp; office policy.</li> </ul>		
<b>Professional Appearance</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does not keep professional demeanor with customers and does not have proper telephone etiquette.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Keeping a professional environment is a challenge but is willing to change demeanor.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Manages to keep a professional environment through the different venues within the office.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exceeds expectations to maintain a professional demeanor at all times.</li> </ul>		
<b>Respect for Difference</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is disrespectful with students, faculty, &amp; staff that have different perspectives or background from their own.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Displays lack of respect to students, faculty, &amp; staff that have different perspective or background, corrects behavior after reminder.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shows respect to students, faculty, &amp; staff who show different perspectives and background from their own.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is always respectful to students, faculty, &amp; staff regardless of their perspective and background.</li> </ul>		
<b>Adapting to Change</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does not adapt to change, protests when tedious and work outside the scope of typical responsibilities is assigned.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does not like change and complains when tedious tasks are assigned.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does not mind tedious and work outside the scope of typical responsibilities; adapts to change well.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is open to tedious and work outside the scope of typical responsibilities, sees that the little tasks help connect the big picture.</li> </ul>		
<b>Total:</b>						
<b>Overall Comments:</b>						

Appendix E: Ohio State University Student Employee Learning Competencies

2015–2016

# STUDENT EMPLOYMENT *Experience*

THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY OFFICE OF STUDENT LIFE

The Office of Student Life believes that student employment is about more than the paycheck, and that it can empower students to champion their own learning and growth. The Student Employment Experience provides opportunities to build transferable skills for a lifetime by connecting campus jobs with academic coursework and career preparation.

All student employees have the opportunity to learn and develop in these six competency areas:

**LEARNING, APPLICATION, & INTEGRATION**

Use multiple sources of information to build knowledge base in a variety of subjects, make connections between curricular and co-curricular learning



**INTRAPERSONAL DEVELOPMENT**

Assess and articulate knowledge and skills, incorporate values into decision-making, act with integrity



**CRITICAL THINKING AND problem solving**



Identify problems and analyze possible approaches, reflect on new ideas and perspectives, apply creative thinking to find solutions

**INTERPERSONAL DEVELOPMENT**



Build healthy relationships based in respect, work collaboratively, lead teams by empowering action in others

**HUMANITARIANISM and CIVIC ENGAGEMENT**

Appreciate individual differences, manage resources in sustainable ways, actively participate in the community

**PRACTICAL COMPETENCE**

Set and achieve goals, communicate effectively, maintain healthy balance with time, finances, physical health, and personal interests.



To build these competency areas, student employees will be supported in three key areas:



**EMPLOYMENT ROLE:** Through their job-specific duties, student will build and strengthen the necessary skills, knowledge, and teamwork to perform at a high level.

**REFLECTION & COACHING:** Through supervisor coaching and regular reflection conversations, students will identify goals, develop relationships, and connect their employment to academic coursework and career goals.

**TRAINING WORKSHOPS:** Through a variety of training resources, students will expand their development of transferable skills as it applies to their work, academic, and personal life.

**In addition to job-specific responsibilities, all student employees are expected to complete these experiences every semester:**

Engage in OSU GROW\* reflection conversation with one's supervisor

Attend at least one (1) training workshop

Participate in assessment efforts as needed

\* GROW is used with permission, © The University of Iowa.

[go.osu.edu/SEE](http://go.osu.edu/SEE)





Frozen Pond College Frozen Pond College Campus Center/Frozen Rink Athletics and Performance Complex (FPCCC/FRAPC) Survey for Alumni:

- 1) How did your work experience with the Frozen Pond operations staff assist you in your professional employment search process?
- 2) Since graduation/departure from Campus Center/Athletic Complex staff, how would you describe your employment experience as a part of your overall Frozen Pond Experience?
- 3) What if any skills did you gain or refine as result of your student employment in the Campus Center/Athletics Complex office?
- 4) What aspects of the Campus Center/Athletic Complex training and employment did you find to be the most helpful to you as a student, and now as a graduate?
- 5) What aspects of the campus Center/Athletic Complex Training or employment were the least beneficial to you as a student and as a grad. Were any of these aspects detrimental to your transition to the professional world?
- 6) Have you utilized the professional staff or your peers for recommendations or references when applying to professional jobs?
- 7) Do you feel that your employment experience had an impact on the length of time that you spent searching for post-graduate employment, as compared to your peers who were not employed through this office?
- 8) Have you been in-contact with other staff members (past or present) since graduation?
- 9) Do you have any advice about working in the campus center/athletics complex that you feel would be beneficial to present and future staff members?
- 10) Would you be interested in participating in a panel discussion to talk about your experiences? The panel would take place during training in August.



### 2016 Building Managers Institute

Program Description and Learning Outcomes  
Transportation and Lodging  
Contact Information

Home > Programs > Seminars and Institutes > 2016 Building Managers Institute



Registration not yet available

### 2016 Building Managers Institute

**Core Competencies:** Communications, Facilities Management, Leadership, Planning, Student Learning  
*September 16 – September 18, 2016*  
*Indiana University – Bloomington, Bloomington, IN*

#### Program Description

The Building Managers Institute is designed to emphasize the key area concepts of leadership, conflict management, supervision, building management, and the role of the college union. This program will offer an opportunity for those students who work in union operations or who serve as building managers to focus on further developing their skill set to perform tasks needed in their current role on their campus. The Institute would prepare students to develop skills that will serve them as leaders in any situation.

ACUI is seeking for experienced professionals to help facilitate and plan curriculum for the inaugural Building Managers Institute at Indiana University, Sept. 16-18.

Professionals are needed to facilitate workshops related to:

- Leadership/supervision
  - Supervising peers
  - Conflict management
  - Emotional intelligence/ strengths
  - Critical thinking/problem solving
  - Empowering your peers
  - Team building
  - Hiring, training, and performance feedback
- Career development
  - How to translate skills on a resume
  - How to translate your experiences as a student building manager to your future career
  - Students interested in pursuing student affairs
- Customer service
  - Best Practices in customer service
  - Customer service models (i.e., Disney, FISH Philosophy, etc.)
- Facilities management
  - Risk/emergency management
  - Facilities management 101
  - Building manager best practices
  - Reservations systems
  - Setups, space management
  - First aid training
  - Active shooter training
  - Handling large-scale events/ dances
- Role of the college union
  - The role of the college union (ACUI Values)
  - Building community through student union
  - Creating a caring community
  - Free speech/protests/social justice space
  - Diversity and inclusion
  - Campus partnership
- Audio-visual/technology
  - Audio-visual 101, the fundamentals
  - Trouble shooting basic technology