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Professional Development Needs of Student Affairs Professionals Within the North Dakota University System

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PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT NEEDS OF STUDENT AFFAIRS
PROFESSIONALS WITHIN THE NORTH DAKOTA UNIVERSITY SYSTEM

by

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This dissertation, submitted by Donna K. Fishbeck in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy from the University of North Dakota, has been read by the Faculty Advisory Committee under whom the work has been done and is hereby approved.

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This dissertation meets the standards for appearance, conforms to the style and format requirements of the Graduate School of the University of North Dakota, and is hereby approved.

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July 21, 2006
Date

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<center>PERMISSION</center>

Title   Professional Development Needs of Student Affairs Professionals Within
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Overall, the competency categories indicating the greatest need for continued development were fiscal management, human resources management, legal issues, and research, evaluation, and assessment. All administrative levels indicated high mastery in technology. Significant differences were found with the variables, number of years in current position and highest academic degree obtained, on perceived need for development. No differences were found by type of institution (two-year or four-year).

Student affairs professionals use a variety of methods to gain competence. The three most preferred professional development activities were workshops, conferences, and discussions with colleagues. No significant differences were found between new professionals, mid-managers, and senior student affairs officers in preferred type of professional development. Significant differences were found in preference of professional development activity by years in current position and by the variable highest academic degree obtained.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Higher education is a large industry employing millions of people. According to the *Digest of Educational Statistics* (National Center for Education Statistics, 2004), higher education employed approximately 3.2 million individuals in the Fall 2003. A major portion of the operating budget of a college or university is for personnel expenditures. Between 75 and 85 percent of the total budget of most institutions is devoted to personnel costs (Winston & Miller, 1991). Recruiting and retaining the best and the brightest faculty and staff are constant challenges.

Campus climates are changing faster than ever with institutions of higher education experiencing shifting demographics and unprecedented diversity in the student body. Climates also reflect the perpetual issues of access, cost, quality, and accountability (Institute for Higher Education Policy, 1998; Edgerton, 1999; Kellogg Commission, 1999). Apart from, and in addition to, the societal trends that may require additional skills and competencies, issues of professional competence are important to divisions of student affairs. Kuk and Hughes (2003) assert that "securing competent professionals who will continue to remain competent throughout their professional lives is one of the most important tasks facing higher education today and in the years to come" (p.1).

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Besides basic functions within the job, professionals in student affairs are dealing with increasing challenges as they try to enhance the quality of life for students. For instance, assessment and accountability are of increasing importance on campuses (Kretovics & McCambridge, 1998; Angelo, 1999; Evenbeck & Kahn, 2001). In addition, declining budgets and limited resources together with greater demands and complexities of the student population confront current practitioners in the student affairs profession (Saxon, 2001; Faenza & Satow, 2002; Goldman & Malloy, 2002).

Focusing on staff development as a means to better equip professionals with new or enhanced skills and knowledge is one avenue to ensure quality services and educational programs for students. Through quality staff development, these professionals gain the opportunity to improve their skills and increase their effectiveness. Bryan and Schwartz (1998) emphasized the importance of professional staff development as follows:

> Student affairs staff provide the human capital necessary for a wide range of student programs and activities in higher education. To effectively serve their campuses and students, student affairs must be provided with the necessary tools, resources, and learning opportunities to enhance their personal and professional growth. Clearly recruitment, retention, and development of staff are critical to the success of an organization (p.1).

One of the primary goals of student affairs practitioners is promoting student growth and identity development (Erickson, 1968; Chickering, 1969). In order to be effective, these practitioners need to apply the same principles to their own human and professional growth (DeCoster & Brown, 1991; Komives, Woodard, & Associates, 1996). The continuing development and learning of these professionals will be vital in

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relation to the students they serve, using best practices in the profession, and confronting issues challenging student affairs.

Within student affairs, there are core competences and abilities identified as necessary to be effective in the field (Pope & Reynolds, 1997). Recent literature (Johnson & Cheatham, 1999; Woodard, Love, & Komives, 2000) suggests that because of the changes in the higher education environment (such as technological innovation, rising cost of higher education, increasing globalization, diversification of student bodies, accountability, and increased focus on student learning), new skills and competencies have been identified which have created new or updated categories for learning (Benke & Disque, 1990; Kruger, 2000; Lovell & Kosten, 2000; Scott, 2000).

This study is based on the theoretical construct of the competency approach to human resource management. Competencies are used in many areas of human resource management including selection, training and development, performance management, and organizational strategic planning (Rodriguez, Patel, Bright, Gregory, & Gowing, 2002).

Spencer and Spencer (1993) proposed a model for superior performance termed the Iceberg Model. This competency model includes both implicit and explicit traits that are related to the understanding and prediction of work performance. The Iceberg Model implies that explicit traits are relatively easy to develop, whereas implicit traits are more difficult to develop. The five categories identified by Spencer and Spencer that fall under competency are: motive; trait; self-concept; knowledge; and skill. Evidence suggests the increased use of competency frameworks as a basis for workplace learning initiatives (Garavan & McGuire, 2001).

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Statement of the Problem

Societal trends impact higher education and its environment. The trends identified in higher education include: improving access and success for diverse students; responding to the rising cost of education; focusing on learning and teaching; responding to and keeping abreast with technology; recognizing the importance of collaboration and partnerships; and responding to the calls for accountability (Ogilvy, 1994; Institute for Higher Education Policy, 1998; Johnson & Cheatham, 1999; Edgerton, 1999; Kellogg Commission, 1999; Woodard et al., 2000). In light of these trends, it is reasonable to conclude that the skill sets and competencies needed by mangers call for ongoing staff development in order for student affairs to continue to meet the demands of the position.

The literature indicates that student affairs professionals are not meeting the needs of changing environments. Lovell and Kosten (2000) identified skill gaps in the proficiency in technology, assessment, politics, and post-secondary public policy in student affairs and deemed these skills and competencies important for the future. When looking at future skills needed technology, emphasis on student learning, and collaboration between academic and student affairs, were identified as being significant in student affairs (Kruger, 2000). Scott (2000) identified technology, student demographics, legal issues, crisis management, diversity, assessment and evaluation and personnel and financial management as areas requiring continuing education in the field of student affairs. Campus environments must be supportive of the development of human capital.

Purpose of the Study and Research Questions

The purpose of this study was to assess the perceptions of student affairs professionals (new professionals, mid-managers, and senior student affairs officers) regarding their attainment of various skills in ten categories and the methods they use to gain competence and improve professional skills in order to provide a context within which to develop professional development programming. The following research questions guided the study:

Descriptive Questions

1. What are the perceptions of new professionals, mid-managers, and senior student affairs officers in the North Dakota University System with regard to the need for professional development in ten competency categories?

2. What professional development activities do respondents prefer to engage in to improve professional skills?

Comparison Questions

3. Are there differences between new professionals, mid-managers, and senior student affairs officers in the North Dakota University System in their perception of need for professional development in ten competency categories?

4. Are there differences between new professionals, mid-managers, and senior student affairs officers in the North Dakota University System in the types of professional development activities they prefer to engage in to improve professional skills?

5. Are there differences in the perception of need for professional development of student affairs professionals based on variables, such as, number of years

employed in present position, type of institution, or highest academic degree obtained?

6.   Are there differences in the types of professional development activities student affairs professionals prefer to engage in based on variables, such as, number of years employed in present position, type of institution, or highest degree obtained?

<div align="center">Significance of the Study</div>

This study will identify the staff development needs of new professionals, mid-managers, and senior student affairs officers so they may plan for their own development. The results will also help institutions of higher education in planning and supporting the professional development needs of their staff members. In addition, the study will determine the preferred types of professional development activities of student affairs professionals. The results of this study will provide recommendations to professional associations in ways that they could better serve the regional student affairs professional membership with professional skill development programs and resources.

Specific to the North Dakota University System, the data will be useful for new professionals and mid-managers in preparing for career advancement. The North Dakota University System will be able to develop programming, such as, workshops, conferences, and seminars specific to the needs of the student affairs professionals in the state. The data will also assist with graduate program development and enhancements in the curriculum offered in the state.

Delimitations of the Study

This study will be conducted with the following delimitations:

1. This study will include only student affairs professionals in the eleven institutions in the North Dakota University System. Because of unique issues such as state funding, governance, and the local and regional culture the study will address only specific needs of the state.

2. Data for the study will be limited to the perceptions of the respondents.

3. Since institutions, not only in the North Dakota University System but throughout the nation, vary in size and organizational structure, the student affairs professionals representing the various levels of management surveyed may not hold identical positions or have similar responsibilities.

Assumptions

The study assumes the following:

1. The participants in the study are assumed to answer accurately, honestly, and openly to the Student Affairs Skill Development Survey developed for this study.

2. The participants are able to accurately identify and report their skill levels on the Student Affairs Skill Development Survey.

3. The survey instrument accurately reflects the skills set needed for the various levels of management within student affairs in the North Dakota University System.

Definition of Terms

For the purpose of this study, the following definitions apply:

New professional: A person who is in their first full-time position and does not supervise other professional staff.

Mid-level student affairs manager: An individual who (1) occupies a position which reports directly to the Chief Student Affairs Officer (CSAO) or (2) occupies a position which reports to a person who reports directly to a CSAO and is responsible for the direction, control, or supervision of one or more student affairs functions, or one or more professional staff members (Fey, 1991).

Professional development: Participation in a variety of activities and programs to enhance and expand skills necessary to perform responsibilities common to student affairs professionals (Windle, 1998).

Student Affairs: The organizational structure or unit on a campus responsible for the out-of-class education, and in some cases in-class education as well, of students (Winston & Miller, 1991). Student affairs programs frequently include residence halls/housing, counseling, testing, career services, financial aid, student activities, recruitment, admissions, orientation, international student services, student union, recreational sports, student discipline/judicial affairs, student with disabilities, and learning assistance (National Association of Student Personnel Administrators [NASPA], 1987).

Skills and competencies: the terms skills and competencies are used interchangeably in the literature, however, for this study skills is referred to as the ability

to perform a certain physical or mental task (Spencer & Spencer, 2003); competency is referred to the ability to effectively apply skills to practice.

Senior Student Affairs Officer: A practitioner with ten or more years of experience and division-wide responsibility, including assistant and associate vice presidents, deans, and directors (Scott, 2000).

Organization of the Study

This dissertation is organized into five chapters. This chapter provided an introduction and overview of the problem. A review of relevant literature is covered in Chapter II. Chapter III describes the methodology used for the study. It will include the description of the subjects, development of the instrument, survey method and data analysis. Chapter IV provides a summary of the study's findings. Finally, Chapter V presents a discussion of the findings, conclusions, and recommendations for practice and future research.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The purpose of this chapter is to provide a review of the literature and research relating to the professional development needs for student affairs practitioners in higher education. A major outcome of professional development of staff is a positive enhancement in organizational performance. To provide a foundation for this study, Chapter II reviews the literature in three specific areas. The first section contains theoretical constructs of competency-based approaches in human resource management. In the second section, research regarding desired competencies is identified for various professional levels within student affairs. The final section focuses on professional development research and the various models and content needed for new and continued professional development in student affairs.

Introduction

Higher education, like many other industries, is considering the changing culture of institutions as a shift from a producer-driven to a consumer driven economy takes place (Zemsky, 2001). Because of the continued change in environments, literature suggests that a well-managed institution must employ effective managers at every level in order to accomplish institutional goals and missions (Hoff, 1999; Zemsky, 2001).

Common challenges faced by many organizations are identifying the most effective means to recruit, select, and retain a high-performing workforce and the creation

and maintenance of a dynamic culture for employees that fosters achievement (Rodriguez et al., 2002). Many organizations have embraced a competency-based model to enhance the ability to produce a high-performance culture (Athey & Orth, 1999). According to McLagan (1997), today's organizations are more concerned than in the past about their "human competence base" and its development.

In the past, technical knowledge was the focus for those who were hired. Today, organizations are realizing that with changing environments, the workforce must not only be highly skilled and technically proficient, but it must be one that can learn quickly, foster interpersonal relationships, communicate effectively, and adapt to change. Higher education is also recognizing the need for a high-performing workforce (Zemsky, 2001).

Evidence suggests an increase in the use of competency frameworks as a basis for workplace learning initiatives in both the United States and in the United Kingdom (Horton, 2000; Garavan & McGuire, 2001). Carroll and McCrackin (1998) purport that competencies are generally organized in three main categories: core competencies that refer to the elements of behavior that are important for all employees to possess in an organization; leadership/managerial competencies that relate to leading an organization and people to achieve an organization's objectives (managing, supervising, and developing people); and functional competencies that are those that are required to be performed in a particular job role or profession.

Competencies are used today in many areas of human resource management, ranging from individual selection, training and development, and performance management to organizational strategic planning (Rodriguez et al., 2002). Focusing on human resources management is a central foundation to equip managers and employees

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with information and tools to deal with environmental challenges, create maximum added value, and help the organization reach its goals and mission.

Iceberg Competency Model

Competencies are often identified with "whole-person assessment" as opposed to the traditional viewpoints of trait approaches (Stogdill, 1948), functional approaches (Katz, 1955), and situational approaches (Fiedler, 1967). Competencies are skill sets that are evident in successful performance. They are honed and developed through a series of work and life experiences, training, observation, learning, and feedback.

In his work to improve the selection processes within the United States Foreign Service Information Agency, David McClelland (1973) found that academic aptitude and knowledge content tests alone did not predict high job performance or success in life and that individual characteristics and competencies are important in identifying high performers. In studying the attributes and features of successful managers for the American Management Association, Boyatzis (1982) found that the "softer skills", such as, personal characteristics, experience, motives, and other attributes may have a significant impact on ultimate work success. These studies identified certain competency characteristics that differentiated superior from average workers. By 1991, this method had been used by more than 100 researchers in 24 countries (Spencer & Spencer, 1993).

Building on the work of McClelland, Spencer and Spencer (1993) proposed the Iceberg Model, purporting that competency includes both implicit and explicit traits that are related to understanding and prediction of work performance. They define a competency as "an underlying characteristic of an individual that is causally related to criterion-referenced effective and/or superior performance in a job or situation" (Spencer

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& Spencer, 1993, p. 9). According to Spencer and Spencer, an underlying characteristic implies the competency is a fairly deep and enduring part of a person's personality and can predict behavior in a wide variety of situations and job tasks. Criterion-referenced performance means a standard is established for a level expected and the competency is measured against it.

Spencer and Spencer (1993) identified five categories that fall under competency: motive; trait; self-concept; knowledge; and skill. They illustrate this concept with the Iceberg Model (see Figure 1) in which knowledge and skill competencies tend to be visible and above the surface, whereas characteristics of people, such as, self-concept, trait, and motive competencies are more hidden.

Figure 1. The Iceberg Model
(Source: From Spencer & Spencer, 1993, p. 11)

Spencer and Spencer (1993) further define these competency characteristics:

1. *Motive.* The things a person consistently thinks about or wants that cause action. Motives "drive, direct, and select" behavior toward certain actions or goals and away from others.

2. *Traits.* Physical characteristics and consistent responses to situations.

3. *Self-concept.* A person's attitudes, values, or self-image.

4. *Knowledge.* Information a person has in specific content areas.

5. *Skill.* The ability to perform a certain physical or mental task (pp. 9-10).

The Iceberg Model implies that the hidden characteristics of self-concept, trait, and motives, which are core or central competencies and are at the base of the personality Iceberg, are more difficult to develop. On the other hand, surface knowledge and skill competencies are relatively easy to develop and training is the most cost-effective way to secure these people's abilities. Core motives and trait competencies at the base of the Iceberg Model are more difficult to assess and develop; it is more cost-effective to select for these characteristics. It is suggested that self-concept competencies fall somewhere between the two. Attitudes and values, such as, self-confidence, can be changed by training and other positive development experiences, although with more time and difficulty (Guion, 1991).

By focusing on competencies, the emphasis shifts to potential rather than a set of narrowly defined tasks based on job requirements. This approach provides a human resource method broadly applicable to selection, career pathing, performance appraisal and development (Spencer & Spencer, 1993).

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The competency based approach has been adopted in three different areas: recruitment; skill assessment; and development (Rowe, 1995). This study focuses on skill assessment and development. The main focus of this study is the use of a competency-based approach to identify professional development needs of student affairs professionals.

Competencies for Student Affairs Professionals

The Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (CAS) was created as a response to the emerging student affairs profession's need to establish standards to guide both preparation and practice. They have published *The Book of Professional Standards for Higher Education* (CAS, 2003) as a guide for establishing standards for the knowledge, skills and competencies needed by student affairs professionals. As CAS has evolved as an organization, so has its focus and purpose. One of the primary purposes of the organization today is to promote standards that are current and reflect "best practices" of professional work in higher education, particularly in student affairs.

The Council, a consortium of 32 professional associations, promulgates 12 standards and guidelines for 29 functional areas (CAS, 2003). The twelve standards are (1) Mission, (2) Program, (3) Leadership, (4) Organization and Management, (5) Human Resources, (6) Financial Resources, (7) Facilities, Technology, and Equipment, (8) Legal Responsibilities, (9) Equity and Access, (10) Campus and External Relations, (11) Diversity, and (12) Ethics. These standards can help guide practitioners in using criteria to determine how well they are fulfilling their responsibilities and ultimately will help identify the skills and knowledge needed to achieve improved professional practice.

The CAS standards help guide the preparation for new professionals in student affairs through guidelines established for master's programs. CAS provides the following guidance for master's degree curriculum by recommending three key areas of study: 1) foundational studies, which include historical, philosophical, ethical, cultural, and research foundations; 2) professional studies, which include basic knowledge for practice in student development theory; student characteristics and effects of college on students; individual and group interventions; organization and administration of student affairs; and assessment, evaluation, and research; and 3) supervised practice (CAS, 2003).

The student affairs profession relies on CAS to establish guidelines and standards for the skills and knowledge needed to be competent in the field. Graduate preparation programs primarily provide acquisition of visible competencies such as skills and knowledge as well as experiences that allow graduates to develop the hidden competencies as referred to in the Iceberg Model. Through supervised practice, the graduates are given the opportunity to effectively apply the implicit and explicit competencies they are acquiring. In addition, the standards assist those individuals practicing in the field to identify the skills and knowledge in need of continued developed by promoting standards that adhere to best practices in the field.

Entry into the Field of Student Affairs

Many new student affairs professionals in the field are products of graduate programs that emphasize a combination of theory and practice (Winston & Creamer, 1997; Snyder & McDonald, 2002). A high value is placed on the master's degree in student personnel by employers at colleges and universities for hiring at entry-level

positions (Kretovics, 2002). These new master's-degree-level professionals are generally

hired with the understanding that they are "qualified" and will "hit the ground running"

(Winston & Creamer, 1997; Amey & Reesor, 2002).

Bryan and Schwartz (1998) stated, "In student affairs, graduate education

provides common knowledge and understanding of a body of theory and practice across a

diverse population. Through this educational process, new professionals become familiar

with the field and acquire the basics of professional knowledge and skills" (p.4).

Robertson (1999) reported areas of strength for entry-level professionals included

professional purpose and role identity, as well as, historical, philosophical, and social

foundations. Graduate programs in student affairs allow for new professionals to be

knowledgeable in the foundations of the profession.

In designing student affairs curriculum, McEwen and Talbot (2001) support the

idea that professionals hold at least a master's degree in student affairs or a closely

related field. They also promoted the recommendations of the CAS that "prescribe a

comprehensive set of professional knowledge and supervised practice essential for

minimum competency in student affairs" (p.129). McEwen and Talbot also suggested

three essential components in the curriculum for student affairs professionals. The first

component was foundational studies, which included history and evolution of higher

education, student affairs, and other disciplines. The second component was professional

studies and encompassed student development theory, student characteristics and effects

of college on students, individual, group, and organization interventions, organization and

administration of student affairs, and assessment, evaluation, and research. The final

component was supervised practice which included internships and practica in at least two functional areas of the professional practice.

There is an increasing concern by seasoned practitioners that preparation programs in student affairs are not adequately preparing graduates for the realities of student affairs work. According to Amey and Reesor (2002), one of the strengths of the master's-degree-level professional is knowledge about theory and research, but many are not appropriately skilled in their ability to apply theory and research to day-to-day practice. Kuk and Hughes (2003) promote a competency-based foundation, similar to Spencer and Spencer's (2003) Iceberg concept, for professional preparation in response to the gap in proficiency of successfully applying the knowledge and skills to practice.

Others in the field argue that preparation programs in student affairs are not integrating all the necessary components to make graduates competent professionals in today's workplace. Pope and Reynolds (1997) provided evidence that more and more graduates have not acquired the level of interpersonal and decision-making skills required to work in a diverse and multicultural campus environment. Lack of understanding of management theory, assessment skills, and ability to apply theory to practice are other identified deficiencies of graduates (Amey & Reesor, 2002).

What makes for a good graduate professional preparation program is becoming a prominent question among many hiring practitioners as it relates to staffing practices in student affairs (Kuk & Hughes, 2003). The graduate's success or failure as a new professional may be dependent on the size of the gap between what they have learned through their preparation program and the expectations in their new position (Evers, Rush, & Berdrow, 1998; Amey & Reesor, 2002).

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The literature identifies three types of preparatory programs for student affairs professionals. Some programs are designed to have an emphasis on counseling (Hyman, 1985) while others focus on understanding the theories of higher education and the development of students as key to success in the profession (Delworth, Hanson, & Associates, 1989). However, acquiring the selected skills and competencies deemed to be critical in the field of student affairs is the most emphasized area of preparation (Dewitt, 1991; Gordon, Strode & Mann, 1993; Hyman, 1985; Upcraft, 1998).

Practitioners hiring graduates are concerned with preparation programs effectively providing graduates with the competencies essential to be successful as they enter the field of student affairs. These practitioners would benefit by encompassing a competency-based approach to their staffing practices that not only focusing on skills and knowledge that master preparatory programs primarily provide new hires, but also examining the implicit categories that impact competency.

Competencies for Student Affairs

Although there is general agreement about qualifications for entering the field, there is no consensus about core competencies needed for student affairs practitioners in the literature. Barr (1993) suggests a list of essential competencies for middle and upper managements that include the areas of program planning, evaluation, outcomes assessment, budgeting and fiscal management, theory translation, ethical and legal knowledge, conflict and crisis management, and campus and community relations. Ten competencies deemed essential for student affairs work identified by Delworth, et al. (1989) include: assessment and evaluation; instruction; counseling and advising; program development; consultation; management; and using data and information resources.

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Moore (1985) identifies basic competencies for the student affairs profession. The list includes self-knowledge, interviewing, management, problem solving, supervision, group dynamics, conflict management, instruction, verbal and written communication, and resource use.

Pope and Reynolds (1997), building on work done by Barr (1993), Delworth, et al. (1989), and Moore (1985), offer seven core competencies or abilities necessary for effective student affairs work. The competency areas described are not tied to a particular administrative level or functional area but have been identified as important skills that student affairs professional should accomplish. They are as follows:

1. administrative, management, and leadership skills (e.g., fiscal management, resource use, program planning, supervision);

2. theory and translation skills;

3. helping and interpersonal skills (e.g., counseling, advising, group dynamics, crisis and conflict management, campus and community relations);

4. ethical and legal knowledge and decision-making skills (e.g., problem solving, knowledge of ethical standards);

5. training and teaching skills (e.g., consultation, workshop presentations, staff development);

6. assessment and evaluation skills (e.g., program evaluation, self-study);

7. multicultural awareness, knowledge and skills (p. 268).

A meta-analysis of student affairs characteristics conducted by Lovell and Kosten (2000) found that desired competencies for student affairs professionals included administration, management and human facilitation skills, and knowledge of student

development theory and higher education. Proficiency in technology, assessment, politics, and post-secondary public policy were skill gaps identified and deemed important for the future. Kruger (2000), when looking at skills needed for the future, indicated that technology, emphasis on student learning, and collaboration between academic and student affairs would be of high significance. In addition, technology, student demographics, legal issues, crisis management, diversity, assessment and evaluation, and personnel and financial management were identified by Scott (2000) as areas requiring continuing education in the field of student affairs.

The following sections will report in greater detail the competencies deemed essential, as outlined in the literature, for the various levels of management in the student affairs profession. Being knowledgeable of essential competencies for the three professional levels in student affairs assists professionals in improving and gaining skills in areas of low mastery.

Entry-level Professionals

New professionals entering the field of student affairs need specific skills and competencies in order to be successful. Scott (2000) defines a new professional as a person who has been working full time in the student affairs profession up to five years. Entry-level professionals expect to be involved with, and provide services to, individuals and groups of students on a daily basis (Burkard, Cole, Ott & Stofflet, 2005).

Competencies important for entry-level professionals have a small research base as compared to mid-level managers and senior student affairs officers. The literature that does exist reveals that there is no consensus about core competencies for the profession of student affairs (Pope & Reynolds, 1997; Herdlein, 2004). An earlier study conducted

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by Ostroth (1981) identified human relations, interpersonal and communication skills, and leadership skills as the competencies essential for entry-level work.

Hyman (1985) identified six categories of competencies for entry-level professionals: goal setting; consultation; communication; assessment and evaluation; and environmental and organizational management. Adding to the competencies already identified for entry-level professionals, Garland (1985) also emphasized organizational skills as a needed competency.

Scott (2000) asserts that new professionals have particular needs including understanding student development theory, learning to apply theory to practice, career development, learning how to network, developing a sense of professionalism, learning how to work with student leaders and groups, skill development, using technology, developing professional ethics, professional association involvement, relating to peers, colleagues, and supervisors, and balancing work and personal life. Kretovic's (2002) research also identified computer skills and diversity skills as important for new hires.

In a recent study by Herdlein (2004), 50 chief student affairs officers were surveyed about their perceptions regarding the relevance of competencies developed in graduate preparation programs for new professionals. Management skills, particularly budgeting, collaboration, leadership and writing abilities were most frequently identified as being essential. Human relations skills were the next competency identified as being essential. Human relations skills were identified as working with diverse populations, communication, empathy and firmness, caring, and interpersonal skills. The personal attributes identified as being important in order to be successful in student affairs were flexibility, work ethic, values, critical thinking and problem solving. In Herdlein's

study, Chief Student Affairs Officers identified both hidden and visible competencies, as supported by the Iceberg Model (Spencer & Spencer, 2003), as essential for success for new professionals entering student affairs.

Waple (2006) found that fourteen skills were determined to be of high attainment through preparatory programs and high and moderately high use in entry-level positions. The top seven skills were: effective oral and written communication skills; ethics in student affairs work; multicultural awareness and knowledge; problem solving; effective program planning and implementation; student development theory; and student demographics and characteristics. The remaining seven skills deemed moderately high in use were: crisis and conflict management; advising students and student organizations; leadership theory; career development; workshop presentations; legal issues in higher education; and organization theory. The research also suggested that the use of computers in research and strategic planning were skills not obtained and not used.

A study by Burkard et al. (2005) examined the perceptions of mid and senior level student affairs administrators regarding competencies essential for new student affairs professionals. The findings of the study suggest that human relations, administrative/management, technology, research competencies, and several personal attributes are important for successful entry-level practice. The personal attributes that emerged as important were: flexibility, interpersonal relations, analytical and critical thinking, problem-solving, creativity, and assertiveness.

The literature base to date suggests that entry-level positions still involve high student contact and program development and implementation. Human relations and counseling skills also remain highly rated competencies as well as administrative and

management skills. However, new competencies have emerged during the last ten and twenty years and are being identified as essential for entry-level positions. These include areas, such as, technology, multicultural sensitivity, legal issues, ethical standards, and decision making. Recent studies reflect the "whole person assessment" approach in acknowledging competency and have identified personal attributes, in addition to skills and knowledge, as important to be successful in entry-level practice.

Mid-level Managers

A mid-level student affairs manager is defined by Fey (1991) as an individual who occupies a position which reports directly to the Chief Student Affairs Officer (CSAO) or occupies a position which reports to a person who reports directly to a CSAO and is responsible for the direction, control, or supervision of one or more student affairs functions, or one or more professional staff members. Young (1990) asserts that a mid-level administrator manages professional staff and/or one or more student affairs functional areas.

Mid-level student affairs professionals have been studied by many researchers who reported that personnel management and leadership skills were found to be essential competencies for this position (Kane, 1982; Lemoine, 1985; Fey & Carpenter, 1996; Saunders & Cooper, 1999; Sermersheim, 2002). These competencies are defined as having the ability to supervise effectively, as well as, set goals systematically with staff and to evaluate the outcome of shared goals.

Competency-based approaches are being used more widely in selection of staff. A study of senior student affairs officers (SSAOs) by Gordon, et al. (1993) identified several competencies and personal attributes preferred when hiring for mid-manager

positions. From the most to least important, senior student affairs officers ranked leadership highest, followed by student contact, communication, personnel management, fiscal management, professional development, and research and evaluation. The SSAOs also ranked nine personal characteristics in order of importance. The two most important expectations were personal integrity and interest in students.

According to Scott (2000), mid-level professionals who had been in the field for five to eight years with budget and personnel responsibilities require essential competencies, such as, fiscal management (budgeting and financial planning), personnel management (supervision and performance evaluation), human relation skills (conflict resolution, mediation, mentoring, consultation, networking and advising student leaders and student groups), communication (skill development in chairing committees, writing reports, and problem solving), and technology management. Challenging issues mid-managers deal with are professionalism, broad-based competency, career issues including mobility and assessment of goals, balance, contributions to the profession, and developing broader perspectives. The important knowledge and skills sets for mid-level managers as identified by Mills (1990) are planning, supervising, managing funds, managing information, decision-making and communication.

Benke and Disque (1990) reported that the top ten skills for competent performance in student services identified by Chief Student Affairs Officer's for mid-level professionals are: to establish priorities; promote effective team work; evaluate staff performance; write clear, concise memoranda and reports; display leadership skills; select, train, and supervise staff; make effective decisions; establish rapport with administrative staff; formulate and manage a budget; and performance appraisal. Chief

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Student Affairs Officers identified the following as skills for competent performance in educational/developmental units: knowing group dynamics; empathizing with students; engaging in collaborative efforts with other faculty and staff; interpreting the special needs of racial and ethnic minorities; providing feedback to students regarding progress toward accomplishing their goals; setting goals; knowing college student development needs; knowing how to appraise individuals; knowing intervention/change strategies; and accepting personal differences (Benke & Disque, 1990).

Defining student affairs mid-level management is made more difficult because many professionals hold a variety of positions and titles (Penn, 1990). Although the mid-level role is challenging, they can be effective student affairs professionals if they are proficient in three domains: educator; manager; and leader (Creamer, Winston, & Miller, 2001). The following skills and knowledge are needed by student affairs administrators according to Creamer, et al.: 1) being an expert on higher education, able to transmit this knowledge to all staff members; 2) being an effective leader, with skills such as planning and organizing, problem solving, communicating, delegating, supporting, and rewarding; and 3) being adept in the management of human resources, institutional planning, assessment of program and environments, budgeting, and use of technology and information systems, and the stewardship of resources including human, facilities, money, and information.

Many of the competencies identified in this section have also been identified for new professionals in the field. Specifically, at a minimum, mid-managers are expected to possess the following skills that result into competency: leadership skills; personnel management skills; and fiscal management skills. Ongoing development is critical to

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the success of mid-managers as they are expected to gain higher levels of mastery than new professionals in many skills areas and because of the varied roles and responsibilities this administrative level of managers experience.

Senior Student Affairs Officers

A senior student affairs officer is defined as a practitioner with ten or more years of experience and division-wide responsibilities, including assistant and associate vice presidents, deans and directors (Scott, 2000). The need for continuing development and education about current issues for SSAOs is emphasized by Sandeen (1991) who further suggests that to improve their performance and enhance their professional development, SSAOs need to teach, read, research, write, and get involved in professional associations.

In a study conducted by Smeaton (1982), Senior Student Affairs Officers were asked to identify their needs in the area of professional development. The professional development skills rated highest or in critical need consisted of student retention, long-range planning, program evaluation, acquiring outside resources, management information systems, and grant writing. Conversely, the five items rated lowest by SSAOs were recruitment of staff, delegating authority, understanding internal political processes, decision making, and higher education literature.

Ten years later, in surveying college presidents about the importance of competencies for senior student affairs officers, Randall and Globetti (1992) suggested four main categories of competency. The four categories are: managerial skills; personal and interpersonal skills; professional involvement /scholarly pursuits; and institutional experiences. From most important to least important, the twenty-four skills ranked: integrity; commitment to institutional mission; conflict resolution; decisiveness;

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motivation; support of academic affairs; staff supervision; planning skills; flexibility; verbal communication skills; multicultural awareness commitment; vision; loyalty to the president's vision; policy enforcement; written communication skills; student development philosophy; budget planning; time management; student advising; understanding institutional history; five or more years of experience at a comparable institution; facility management; research capabilities; and scholarly publications. The four categories identified in Randall and Globetti's study mirror the concept of the Iceberg Model recognizing that both visible and hidden characteristics of an individual contribute to being successful. Obviously, core motives, traits and self-concept, in addition to high levels of skill and knowledge, play a critical role in being competent at this level of management.

In a study conducted by Cooper, Chernow, Miller, Kulic, and Saunders (1999), past presidents of professional associations/organizations were invited to share advice to those desiring to obtain senior student affairs officer positions. Six themes emerged: contemplate your personal and family concerns; see a good fit with the president and the institution; develop your leadership abilities; gain relevant experience; maintain a strong work ethic; and be dedicated to students. Mahoney (2000) shared views as a president about the skills needed for those advancing to the level of senior student affairs officer. The skills identified by Mahoney as necessary to be competent at this level were: understanding policy in determining priorities; educating staff about the overall mission of the university; managing resources effectively; strategic thinking ability; understanding and promoting diversity; representing the university to outside constituents; and providing leadership in institutional emergencies.

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According to Scott (2000), today's senior student affairs officers have development needs in areas, such as, leadership development, personnel management, fiscal accountability and financial planning, crisis management, public relations, marketing, conflict resolution, legal issues, team building, strategic planning, managing technology, fund raising, campus politics, assessment strategies, external affairs, such as, working with alumni, trustees, and legislators, working with the president, and media management.

Senior student affairs managers develop a high level of competency in administrative skills. They are expected to continue their development and education through professional involvement and to contribute in a scholarly manner. Their role is to focus on the global issues while providing leadership not only to specific areas in their divisions but also in institutional and community-wide arenas. Senior student affairs officers depend on professionals within student affairs (new professionals and mid-managers) to carry out the day-to-day activities, therefore, hiring competent staff and providing opportunities for continued and improved development of skills is an important role of the senior administrator.

Professional Development

Professional development is a key component for assisting student affairs professionals in the acquisition and enhancement of competencies to increase their job performance. Merkle and Artman (1983) define professional development as "a planned experience designed to change behavior and result in professional and/or personal growth and improved organizational effectiveness" (p. 55). Kruger (2000) supports professional development in higher education as a continuous process by suggesting, "The very

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practice and philosophy of student affairs implies on-going, lifelong professional development" (p. 536).

Bryan and Schwartz (1998) outline five levels of professional development likely to be common is most settings: individual, group or program, departmental, divisional, and professional affiliation. In addition to different levels of professional development, Bryan and Schwartz (1998) describe types of professional development: formal, nonformal, and informal. Formal professional development activities are active and intentional training or education. Examples include: classes; specific workshops; or designed learning opportunities. Nonformal professional development may encompass activities, such as, brown bag lunches, speakers, departmental training programs, orientation programs, and professional association training and activities. Informal professional development activities include: observing; job shadowing; learning by example; and mentoring activities.

Winston and Creamer (1997) recognize that staff development has a dual purpose--to enhance both individual and institutional capabilities. However, they advocate that professional staff development has direct and obvious connections to supervision and performance appraisal. In order to truly address both institutional and individual staff needs, professional development cannot be isolated, but must be inherent as part of a staffing model and include certain components. "Effective staff development must attend to staff and organization improvement, derive from a developmental plan, include attention to both process and product, be anchored in day-to-day work, be multifaceted and ever changing, and recognize maturation and growth in staff" (Winston & Creamer, 1997, p. 238).

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Through their research, Winston and Creamer (1997) identified a wide variety of staff development activities found on campuses and found that the activities are generally supported by institutional funds and supervisors. They credited six generalizations about staff development in student affairs. The first is that staff development activities are sponsored universally in divisions of student affairs. Secondly, social events, invited speakers, and short departmental workshops are the preferred vehicles for sponsored staff development activities. Third, individual initiative accounts for a significant portion of the staff development that occurs in divisions of student affairs. Further, many colleges do not have specific line items in their divisional budgets for staff development. Fifth, most divisions of student affairs do not have written policies about staff development. And last, divisions exercise a variety of methods to carry out staff development activities; the most common approach is the division-wide committee.

There are a number of methods student affairs professionals use to develop their skills and competencies. More recent studies suggest the use of portfolios to document work related experiences and skills (Denzine, 2001) that provide an opportunity to provide reflection. Kruger (2000) identified methods of professional development that included the following activities: professional, scholarly, and informal writing opportunities; internships; professional presentations; service learning and community service; and workshops and institutes. Scott (2000) also reviewed methods of staff development in student affairs and included topic specific workshops, teleconferences, discussion groups, training videos, administrative sabbaticals, self-directed programs, administrative internships, administrative shadowing, administrative exchange programs, and site visits to other institutions.

Need for Professional Development in Student Affairs

A college or university measures its effectiveness in relation to how it responds to internal pressures and external forces in fulfilling its educational mission. Nine dimensions of organizational effectiveness that can be used to evaluate the performance of all forms of higher education have been identified by Cameron (1978; 1986). They are: 1) student educational satisfaction; 2) student academic development; 3) student career development; 4) student personal development; 5) faculty and administrator employment satisfaction; 6) professional development and quality of faculty; 7) system openness and community interaction; 8) ability to acquire resources; and 9) organizational health. According to Lawler (1992), effective organizations focus on quality and customer satisfaction, respond quickly to environmental changes, innovate, are able to develop and implement appropriate strategies, have a global mindset, are willing to network with strategic partners, can cope with changes in management, and are committed to continuous learning.

The importance of staff development in higher education has increased because of the perceived link with performance and quality that leads to organizations being effective as they respond to internal and external pressures (Grace-Odeleye, 1998). Training and professional development strategies to promote continuous improvement should be derived from human resource programming to ensure that the organization has the human resource skills and knowledge required in order to achieve its goals and mission (Holmes, 1998; Scott, 2000). Continuing professional development and lifelong learning are vital to individual and organizational success.

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Institutions of higher education have continually strived to increase organizational effectiveness as they respond to the societal trends that impact them. The field of student affairs is also confronted with many of these trends. A report entitled *Higher Education Trends for the Next Century: A Research Agenda for Student Success* (Johnson & Cheatham, 1999), identified eight trends which impact the field of student affairs and supports the need for professionals in the field to have the ability to cope with rapid changes in institutional orientation, focus, funding, and demographics; these help find new strategies for good student affairs practices. The eight trends identified by Johnson and Cheatham (1999) are: 1) improve access and success for diverse students; 2) respond to the rising cost of education; 3) focus on learning and teaching; 4) respond to and keep abreast with technology; 5) respond to the changing nature of work in higher education; 6) recognize the importance of collaboration and partnerships; 7) respond to the calls for accountability; and 8) respond to changing government roles vis-avis higher education.

Woodard et al. (2000) assert that societal change drivers influencing higher education and student affairs are: 1) demands for higher education institutions to become more relevant in the lives of their communities; 2) demands for an increased focus on student learning; 3) growing recognition that, more than ever, knowledge was capital (i.e., those with knowledge are wealthier, more prestigious, and more powerful than those without knowledge); 4) concerns related to rising costs of higher education; 5) the need to respond to a variety of new markets (e.g., distance learning, for-profit higher education), increasing globalization, technological innovations, and the accelerated diversification of their student bodies.

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Investing in the development of human capital can translate into the organization being more effective. The literature (Grace-Odeleye, 1998; Holmes, 1998) indicates that there is increasing recognition of the role of staff development programs in contributing to the effectiveness of an institution. In the previous sections, essential competencies have been identified for new professionals, mid-managers, and senior student affairs officers in order to be successful in the field of student affairs. Professional development is a method by which student affairs practitioners can develop and advance in competency.

Grace-Odeleye (1998) describes staff development programs as being able to "indirectly assist with promoting institutional growth and development by providing tools and processes that that allow staff to participate actively in formulation change through encouraging innovative ideas, approaches, research, and publication in professional journals" (p.84). Canon (1980) explains the rationale for staff development programs in student affairs in three common areas:

- the remediation and rehabilitation of marginally trained or skilled professionals;

- the enhancement of accountability to the institution for what one does as a professional;

- the exercise of professional responsibility in the form of ensuring one's own continuing professional growth.

Increased accountability, efficiency and results, coupled with declining or diminishing budgets, will force student affairs divisions to examine creative alternatives to maintaining and supporting current and future staff development programs. Grace-

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Odeleye (1998) offers the following recommendations as a starting point for student affairs administrators of the 21st century:

- Be creative in identifying financial support to fund staff development activities. Administrators must more actively pursue outside agencies in their quest for funding to support specific staff development needs.

- Seek opportunities to jointly sponsor programs with other institutional divisions and with academic and student affairs professional organizations. Common staff development needs exist across institutional administrative lines of authority.

- Investigate the option of contracting for or out-sourcing types of programs and functions because of budgetary constraints.

- Seek resources to expedite the use of technology for distance learning (interactive capability) as a main delivery system for providing staff development. Cost associated with the use of technology can be shared within institutions.

- Use assessment and evaluation tools to intensify responsiveness to staff development needs and assess the effectiveness of delivery models.

- Provide a strong design model for staff development programs in such areas as consensus building, conflict resolution, and teamwork with students, parents, board members, and legislators in order to be responsive to constantly changing expectations (p. 92).

Conclusion

As campus climates change in higher education, it will be critical that professionals in student affairs are highly motivated, knowledgeable, and competent in order to assist an organization in meeting it mission and goals. Professional development

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is a component of both the human resources and organizational development practices and requires the support of campus administrators.

There are different administrative levels within student affairs, each with its own needs and competency areas. Each level provides position-related challenges and learning opportunities. Identifying the competencies needed to be successful in student affairs and providing development opportunities to acquire and continually improve on knowledge, skills, and competencies are important as it will assist student affairs professionals in being successful in meeting the needs of students.

The purpose of this study was to assess the perceptions of student affairs professionals in the North Dakota University System in regard to their attainment of various skills and competencies and the methods that they use to gain competence. The results will assist the NDUS Student Affairs Council and Senior Student Affairs Officers in planning and presenting staff development programs that directly improve the quality of performance of student affairs professionals and ultimately enhance the effectiveness of individual campuses and the university system.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

This chapter describes the research methods and procedures developed and used in collecting and analyzing data for this study. Specifically, the following topics are covered: participants in the study, survey instrument, data collection, and data analysis.

Purpose of the Study and Research Questions

The purpose of this study was to assess the perceptions of student affairs professionals (new professionals, mid-managers, and senior student affairs officers) regarding their attainment of various skills in ten categories and the methods they use to gain competence in order to provide a context within which to develop professional development programming. The following research questions guided the study:

Descriptive Questions

1. What are the perceptions of new professionals, mid-managers, and senior student affairs officers in the North Dakota University System with regard to the need for professional development in ten competency categories?

2. What professional development activities do respondents prefer to engage in to improve professional skills?

3. Are there differences between new professionals, mid-managers, and senior student affairs officers in the North Dakota University System in their perception of need for professional development in ten competency categories?

4. Are there differences between new professionals, mid-managers, and senior student affairs officers in the North Dakota University System in the types of professional development activities they prefer to engage in to improve professional skills?

5. Are there differences in the perception of need for professional development of student affairs professionals based on variables, such as, number of years employed in present position, type of institution, or highest academic degree obtained?

6. Are there differences in the types of professional development activities student affairs professionals prefer to engage in based on variables, such as, number of years employed in present position, type of institution, or highest degree obtained?

Participants

The participants in this study included all student affairs professionals (new professionals, mid-level managers, senior student affairs officers) in the North Dakota University System (NDUS). The sample comprised of the entire population as identified by the Senior Student Affairs Officers at each respective institution. There were a total of 319 participants that constitute the population in the North Dakota University System. These professionals serve in roles in the various institutions in areas such as admissions, counseling, financial aid, student activities, student records, disability support services, career services, health and wellness, academic advising, judicial programs, and special populations.

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The North Dakota University System consists of 11 public colleges and universities governed by the State Board of Higher Education. The North Dakota University System includes two doctoral universities, two master's degree-granting universities, two universities that offer only bachelor's degrees and five two-year colleges that offer associate and trade/technical degrees. The total headcount for the NDUS for fall 2005 was 42,082 with student enrollment ranging from 523 students at the smallest institution to 12,954 students at the largest (North Dakota University System, 2006).

The institutions of the North Dakota University System include the following four-year and graduate institutions: Dickinson State University; Mayville State University; Minot State University; North Dakota State University; University of North Dakota; Valley City State University; and two-year institutions: Bismarck State College; Lake Region State College; Minot State University-Bottineau; North Dakota State College of Science; Williston State College (North Dakota University System, 2006).

Survey Instrument

The survey instrument used in this study (Appendix A) was developed to gather data from student affairs professionals about their perceived mastery of identified skills and the need for continued skill development. The instrument was originally developed by Kane (1982) and focused on the mid-level professional. Many authors have continued to use the instrument in modified versions in their research (Roberts, 2003; Sermersheim, 2002; Fey, 1991; Windle, 1998; Lemoine, 1985). The original instrument divided competencies into seven categories: leadership; fiscal management; personnel management; communication; professional development; research and evaluation; and student conduct. The original instrument by Kane (1982) yielded a Cronbach's alpha

(reliability coefficient) of .72 to .88. In Roberts' (2003) version of the instrument, three additional areas were created based on current literature and research in student affairs. The areas added were legal issues, technology, and diversity. Roberts (2003) provided evidence of validity for the additional categories by the current literature base, previous studies and expert feedback.

The survey for this study was based on modifications to Roberts' (2003) instrument. The instrument was modified in the demographics section and the methods of learning section to answer the research questions, as well as to provide guidance in designing professional development opportunities for student affairs professionals at various administrative levels in their careers. The instrument was offered in an online format in lieu of the traditional paper-pencil for ease of distribution and completion by participants. The actual survey was designed using SurveyMonkey (SurveyMonkey, 2006), a professional online software program for web based surveys and databases.

The instrument consisted of three sections of questions: demographics; skill areas; and methods of learning. In the first section, participants were asked to identify which administrative level best described their current position based on the definitions provided and to respond to questions about employment and institutional information as related to the study. This section brought forth information concerning the participant's functional area of responsibility, number of full-time professionals directly supervised, number of students enrolled at their institution, type of institution, the number of years employed in their present position, and total years in student affairs and highest academic degree obtained.

In Section II, the participants were asked to identify their perceived mastery of identified skills by responding to a scale based on the work of Carpenter (1979). An additional choice of non-applicable to my current position was added to the likert-type scale. The likert-scale is as follows:

1. I have not begun working on this yet.

2. I have begun working on this.

3. I am actively working on and am concerned with this.

4. I am still working on this, but I am less concerned with it than I once was.

5. I believe that I have essentially mastered or accomplished this.

6. This is non-applicable to my current position.

This section consisted of 72 items divided into 10 competency areas. The ten competency areas include: leadership; student contact; communication; human resources management; fiscal management; professional development; research, evaluation, and assessment; legal issues; technology; and diversity. The respondents were asked to identify their level of skill development for each of the 72 questions. Each of the ten competency categories were defined by the items within the category:

1. *Leadership* was defined by 13 items, including skills, such as, promoting the academic mission of the institution, developing and communicating the departmental/divisional mission, strategic planning, following the profession's ethical principles, role modeling, delegating, and developing collaborative relationships.

2. *Student Contact* was defined by 7 items, including skills, such as, applying student development theories in decision making, assessing student needs,

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including students in policy making, advising student groups, and responding to student crises.

3. *Communication* was defined by 5 items, including skills, such as, writing effective correspondence and reports, making oral presentations, and communicating effectively with the media.

4. *Human Resources Management* was defined by 9 items, including skills, such as, using appropriate staff selection techniques, training, supervising and evaluating professional staff, mediating conflict among staff, and developing staff through continuing education programs.

5. *Fiscal Management* was defined by 7 items, including skills, such as, analyzing financial reports, writing grants and contracts to garner additional resources, understanding the financing of higher education, and projecting future priorities and needs.

6. *Professional Development* was defined by 6 items, including skills, such as, assessing one's own professional development needs, attending professional development activities, keeping abreast of current issues in the profession, and being involved in professional association leadership.

7. *Research, Evaluation, and Assessment* was defined by 8 items, including skills, such as, interpreting research and utilizing results of studies, evaluating program effectiveness, describing students at the institutions to external constituents, and developing a comprehensive assessment plan.

8. *Legal Issues* was defined by 5 items, including skills, such as, keeping abreast of current legislative issues and court cases, using proactive risk management techniques, and implementing due process concepts.

9. *Technology* was defined by 6 items, including skills, such as, using technology to find information, communicate with staff, in marketing and delivery of services, developing services for distance learners, and utilizing software programs to perform job functions.

10. *Diversity* was defined by 6 items, including skills, such as, understanding the needs of and providing services to underrepresented students, considering the needs of diverse students when making decisions, and participating in educational events to understand people different than you.

In Section III, participants were asked their preferred methods of learning in order to improve professional skills. The list of preferred methods of learning were: books; professional journals; sabbaticals; discussions with colleagues; staff meetings; workshops; conferences; internships; mentor relationships; on-line course; academic courses in a preparation program; and academic courses outside an academic program.

Data Collection Method

The NDUS Student Affairs Council, which consists of Senior Student Affairs Officers (SSAOs) of each of the 11 campuses, was informed of the study and asked to support the project. This group has recognized the importance of staff development needs of student affairs professionals on the campuses in the system (NDUS Student Affairs Council, 2006). Approval from the Institutional Research Board at UND was granted on April 5, 2006. Prior to this, senior student affairs officers and the Institutional Research

Boards at each of the campuses were contacted resulting in letters of support from each campus and IRB approval from one campus and the decision that UND IRB approval was sufficient on other campuses.

Senior Student Affairs Officers of all the NDUS campuses were identified by the investigator by representation on the NDUS Student Affairs Council. The SSAO's from each of the institutions were asked to identify student affairs professionals at his or her institution and to forward to the investigator their names and email addresses.

In mid-April 2006, an email cover letter (Appendix B) with a link to the online survey was emailed to the entire population, which included the Senior Student Affairs Officers. In the cover letter, participants were assured that neither they nor their institutions would be specifically identified in the study.

The surveys were coded to identify non-respondents in order to conduct a follow-up email and an invitation to receive the summary of results. The survey was available online for two weeks. One week after the initial cover letter and survey were mailed out, an additional email was sent to participants who had not completed the survey requesting participation.

In summary, 319 surveys were emailed with three returned with undeliverable addresses adjusting the population to 316. There were 180 responses to the survey with 30 respondents not choosing to respond to the complete survey. One-hundred and fifty surveys were usable yielding a response rate of 57%.

Data Analysis

The data were analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). The frequency subprogram in the SPSS was used to compute the frequency distributions and percentage tables. The statistics subprogram provided the mean scores and standard deviations for the ten variables (leadership, student contact, communication, human resources management, fiscal management, professional development, research, evaluation, and assessment, legal issues, technology, and diversity) being researched. An analysis of variance was conducted to determine the relationships between the demographic variables and the ten competency category variables.

Research Question 1): What are the perceptions of new professionals, mid-managers, and senior student affairs officers in the North Dakota University System with regard to the need for professional development in ten competency categories? Data from Section I (question 1) and Section II (ten major competency categories) were used to answer this question. The data was analyzed by computing mean scores and standard deviations for the ten variables.

Research Question 2): What professional development activities do respondents prefer to engage in to improve professional skills? Data from section III (question 1) were used to answer this question. The data was analyzed by computing means for the fourteen variables.

Research Question 3): Are there differences between new professionals, mid-managers, and senior student affairs officers in the North Dakota University System in their perception of need for professional development in ten competency categories? Data from Section I (question1) and Section II (10 major competency categories) were

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used to answer this question. The data was analyzed by computing means, F scores and pairwise difference comparisons.

Research Question 4): Are there differences between new professionals, mid-managers, and senior student affairs officers in the North Dakota University System in the types of professional development activities they prefer to engage in to improve professional skills? Data from Section I (question1) and Section III (question 1) were used to answer this question. The data was analyzed by Chi-Square tests run for each of the crosstabs.

Research Question 5): Are there differences in the perception of need for professional development of student affairs professionals based on variables, such as, number of years employed in present position, type of institution, or highest academic degree obtained? Data from Section I (questions 2 -10) and Section II (10 major competency categories) were used to answer this question. The data was analyzed by computing means, F scores and pairwise difference comparisons.

Research Question 6): Are there differences in the types of professional development activities student affairs professionals prefer to engage in based on variables, such as, number of years employed in present position, type of institution, or highest degree obtained? Data from Section I (questions 2-10) and Section III (question 1) were used to answer this question. The data was analyzed by Chi-Square tests run for each of the crosstabs.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study was to assess the perceptions of student affairs professionals (new professionals, mid-managers, and senior student affairs officers) regarding their attainment of various skills in ten categories and the methods that professionals use to gain competence in ten competency categories. Chapter IV presents the results of this study. The chapter is divided into two major sections: the demographic characteristics and the research question results.

Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Of the 316 instruments sent to student affairs professionals in the North Dakota University System, 180 were returned, with 150 of the instruments usable. This yielded a 57% return rate. The respondents self selected, based on a description provided, whether they were new professionals, mid-managers, or senior student affairs officers. Mid-managers were the largest group of responders (59%), followed by new professionals (31%), and senior student affairs officers (10%).

Table 1 displays the functional areas that are represented with the largest number of respondents working in Housing and Residential Life (13.3%), then Admissions (10.7%), Student Activities/Student Union (8.0%), Counseling (7.3%), Health Services/Wellness (6.7%) and Career Services (6.0%).

Table 1

Functional Areas of Student Affairs Professionals

Functional Area	Total Responses n=150	%
Academic Advising	5	3.3
Admissions	16	10.7
Career Services	9	6.0
Counseling	11	7.3
Dean's Office	3	2.0
Disability Support Services	7	4.7
Financial Aid	7	4.7
Health Services/Wellness	10	6.7
Housing/Residential Life	20	13.3
Judicial Programs	2	1.3
Learning Assistance Programs	8	5.3
Minority Student Programs	4	2.7
Orientation	2	1.3
Recreation/Athletics	0	0
Registrar's Office	8	5.3
Special Populations Programs	6	4.0
Student Activities/Student Union	12	8.0
Other	20	13.3

Table 2 shows years of employment in current position and total years in student affairs. Twenty-seven percent of respondents reported being in their position for 1-3 years and another 27% reported being in their position for 10 or more years. Twenty-two percent of respondents had been in their position between 4-6 years, while 16% reported having less than one year, and 8% reported 7-9 years. Working within the student affairs profession for 10 or more years (39%) received the greatest number of responses, while 11% of the respondents reported being in the field for less than one year. Twenty-one percent of respondents had been in the student affairs profession for 1-3 years, while 15% reported being in the field for 4-6 years and another 15% reported they had worked in the student affairs profession for 7-9 years.

Table 3 displays the number of full-time professionals supervised, type of institution, and institutional enrollment. Reports from respondents ranged from no supervisory responsibility (54%) to supervising more than twenty employees (2%). More respondents were from four-year institutions (75%) than from two-year institutions (25%). The institutional enrollment of respondents ranged from 1,500 students or fewer (17%) to 5,001 plus students (51%). Fourteen percent of respondents were from institutions with 1,501–3,000 students while 17% from institutions with 3,001-5,000 students.

The highest academic degree completed and whether participants were currently pursuing a degree responses are displayed in Table 4. The bachelor's degree (44%) and the master's degree (43%) were the two highest academic degrees obtained by the participants. When asked the question, "Are you currently pursuing a degree?", 78% of

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respondents said that they were not pursing a degree, while 22% said they were currently

pursuing a degree.

Table 2

Years in Current Position and Total Years in Profession

Demographic	Total Responses n=150	%
Years in Current Position		
Less than 1 Year	24	16.0
1 - 3 Years	41	27.3
4 – 6 Years	33	22.0
7 – 9 Years	12	8.0
10 or More Years	40	26.7
Years Total in Student Affairs		
Less than 1 Year	16	10.7
1 – 3 Years	31	20.7
4 – 6 Years	22	14.7
7 – 9 Years	22	14.7
10 or More Years	59	39.3

Table 3

Number of Full-Time Professionals Supervised, Type of Institution and Institutional Enrollment

Demographic	Total Responses N=150	%
Number of Employees Supervised		
None	81	54.0
1 – 5 Employees	47	31.3
5 – 10 Employees	15	10.0
10 – 20 Employees	4	2.7
20 Plus Employees	3	2.0
Type of Institution		
Two-Year	37	24.7
Four-Year	113	75.3
Institutional Enrollment		
1,500 or Fewer	26	17.3
1,501 – 3,000	21	14.0
3,001 – 5,000	26	17.3
5,001 Plus	77	51.4

Table 4

Highest Academic Degree Completed and Currently Pursuing a Degree

Demographic	Total Responses N=150	%
Highest Academic Degree		
Bachelor's	66	44.0
Master's	64	42.7
Doctorate	13	8.7
Not Reported	7	4.7
Currently Pursuing a Degree		
No	117	78.0
Yes	33	22.0

Research Question Results

Presented below are the data corresponding to the six research questions that guided the study. The results come from sections two and three of the Student Affairs Skill Development Survey.

In section two of the survey, respondents were asked to indicate on a six- point scale their level of mastery in 72 skills. The following scale was used:

1 = I have not begun working on this yet.

2 = I have begun working on this.

3 = I am actively working on and concerned with this.

4 = I am still working on this, but I am less concerned with it than I once was.

5 = I believe that I have essentially mastered or accomplished this.

6 = This in non-applicable to my current position.

The 72 individual skills were grouped into ten categories. The ten categories are as follows:

Leadership

Student Contact

Communication

Human Resources Management

Fiscal Management

Professional Development

Research, Evaluation, and Assessment

Legal Issues

Technology

Diversity

To verify the accuracy of the groupings, reliability coefficients were calculated for each category. A coefficient of 1.0 would verify that all items in each category were answered by respondents in a perfect pattern. Good coefficients provide evidence of the reliability of scales. The calculated coefficients shown in Table 5 indicate that items in each category are adequate in measuring of a similar attribute.

Table 5

Cronbach's Alpha for Competency Categories

Competency Category	Number of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
Leadership	13	0.89
Student Contact	7	0.82
Communication	5	0.72
Human Resources Management	9	0.93
Fiscal Management	7	0.89
Professional Development	6	0.84
Research, Evaluation, and Assessment	8	0.92
Legal Issues	5	0.90
Technology	6	0.84
Diversity	6	0.90

Research Question One

What are the perceptions of new professionals, mid-managers, and senior student affairs officers in the North Dakota University System with regard to the need for professional development in ten competency categories?

Table 6 displays the rank order of the ten categories based upon the perceived need for skill development. The higher the mean score reported, the lower the need for continued development of that particular competency. Conversely, the lower the mean score, the higher the need for continued development as reported by the respondent.

The competency categories indicating the greatest need for continued development were: Fiscal Management (2.63); Human Resources Management (2.66); Legal Issues (2.68); and Research, Evaluation, and Assessment (2.70). Overall, Technology (3.88), Communication (3.67), and Leadership (3.45) seemed to be the areas in which student affairs professionals perceived the most amount of mastery. The competency categories of Diversity (3.24), Student Contact (3.22) and Professional Development (3.17) were reported as being actively worked on.

Table 6

Need for Continued Development of Ten Competency Categories in Rank Order

Competency Category	N	Mean	SD
Fiscal Management	150	2.63	1.04
Human Resources Management	150	2.66	1.16
Legal Issues	150	2.68	1.12
Research, Evaluation, & Assessment	150	2.70	1.07
Professional Development	150	3.17	0.87
Student Contact	150	3.22	0.89
Diversity	150	3.24	0.97
Leadership	150	3.45	0.74
Communication	150	3.67	0.75
Technology	150	3.88	0.94

Research Question Two

What professional development activities do respondents prefer to engage in to improve professional skills?

In section three, respondents were asked to indicate the top three methods, out of twelve options, that they used to improve their professional skills and gain competence in the ten categories. Table 7 displays in rank order the preferred methods of professional development.

Student affairs professionals, in general, use a variety of methods to gain and maintain competence. The preferred methods are more commonly available and were conferences (78%), workshops (49%), and discussions with colleagues (45%), rather than more specialized events, such as, internships (3%), academic courses outside of a preparation program (5%), sabbaticals (9%), and on-line courses (9%).

Research Question Three

Are there differences between new professionals, mid-managers, and senior student affairs officers in the North Dakota University System in their perception of need for professional development in ten competency categories?

The Wilks' Lambda indicated there were significant differences (p<.001) among new professionals, mid-managers and senior student affairs officers in the 10 competency categories. Specifically, eight of the ten competency categories showed a significant difference between the various administrative levels in student affairs and their perceived need for skill development. The two competency categories that did not show significant difference were the categories of Technology and Diversity.

Table 7

Preferred Methods of Professional Development in Rank Order

Professional Development Activity	N	%
Conferences	150	78
Workshops	150	49
Discussion with Colleagues	150	45
Professional Journals	150	26
Mentor Relationships	150	24
Books	150	20
Academic Course In Preparation Program	150	10
On-line Course	150	9
Sabbaticals	150	9
Staff Meetings	150	8
Academic Course Outside Of Preparation Program	150	5
Internships	150	3

An Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was computed to compare the means of the administrative levels for each of the competency categories. The F statistic indicated that the means are far apart relative to the variation with each group for all the categories, except for the two categories of Technology and Diversity (see Table 8).

Table 8

Means, *F* Scores and Pairwise Difference Comparisons Between Administrative Levels on Perceived Need for Professional Development

Competency Category	New Prof. (n=47) M_1	Mid-Mgr. (n=88) M_2	SSAO (n=15) M_3	F	M_1-M_2	M_1-M_3	M_2-M_3
Leadership	3.17	3.52	3.93	7.38*	-0.35*	-0.76*	ns
Student Contact	3.02	3.22	3.88	5.60*	ns	-0.86*	-0.66*
Communication	3.34	3.74	4.27	10.84*	-0.40*	-0.93*	-0.53*
Human Resources Management	1.91	2.86	3.88	25.64*	-0.95*	-1.97*	-1.02*
Fiscal Management	2.09	2.75	3.60	16.20*	-0.66*	-1.51*	-0.85*
Professional Development	2.79	3.26	3.80	9.81*	-0.47*	-1.01*	ns
Research, Assessment, & Evaluation	2.20	2.80	3.70	14.18*	-0.60*	-1.50*	-0.90*
Legal Issues	2.20	2.78	3.55	10.20*	-0.58*	-1.35*	-0.77*
Technology	3.86	3.86	4.05	0.28	ns	ns	ns
Diversity	3.04	3.28	3.62	2.33	ns	ns	ns

$p < .05$; ns=not significant

As would be expected, the new professionals rated lower mastery in the ten competency categories than mid-managers and senior student affairs officers, except in the Technology category in which they indicated the same level of mastery as mid-managers.

For new professionals the category of Human Resources Management (1.91) was the only one that fell into "I have not begun working on this yet.", but was close to the next level of mastery, "I have begun working on this." Four categories are identified under the "I have begun working on this.", they were: Fiscal Management (2.09); Research, Evaluation, and Assessment (2.20); Legal Issues (2.20); and Professional Development (2.79). The remaining categories were identified by new professionals as "I am actively working on and concerned with this."

Overall, the use of the technology seemed to be the area in which new professionals perceived the most amount of mastery. New professionals seemed to have the least amount of experience with Fiscal Management, Human Resources Management, Legal Issues, and Research, Assessment and Evaluation.

Mid-managers appear to have the least amount of mastery in the categories of Fiscal Management (2.75), Legal Issues (2.78), Research, Evaluation, and Assessment (2.80), and Human Resource Management (2.80). Technology (3.86) and Communication (3.74) seemed to be the categories in which mid-managers perceived the most mastery.

Fifteen senior student affairs officers responded to the survey. Senior student affairs officers appeared to be closest to mastering all the competency categories. The highest rated categories were Communication (4.27) and Technology (4.05). The category rated the lowest was Legal Issues (3.55).

In summary, new professionals and mid-managers rated Technology as the area in which they perceived the most mastery, while Communication was rated the highest

among senior student affairs officers. Both new professionals and mid-managers perceived the following four categories as the least amount of experience: Human Resources Management; Fiscal Management; Research, Evaluation, and Assessment; and Legal Issues. Senior student affairs officers also perceived Legal Issues and Fiscal Management as areas in need of continued development when compared to the other skill categories. Diversity was a competency category that was identified as not being mastered by the senior student affairs officers in relation to the other categories.

Research Question Four

Are there differences between new professionals, mid-managers, and senior student affairs officers in the North Dakota University System in the types of professional development activities they prefer to engage in to improve professional skills?

Table 9 displays the preferred type of professional development activity by student affairs administrative level. No significant differences were found between new professionals, mid-managers, and senior student affairs officers.

Research Question Five

Are there differences in the perception of need for professional development of student affairs professionals based on variables, such as, number of years employed in present position, type of institution, or highest academic degree obtained?

The Wilks' Lambda indicated there were significant differences ($p<.05$) based on years in current position on the perceived need for professional development in four of the ten categories. The four categories that indicated a significant difference were

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Table 9

Preferred Type of Professional Development Activity by Student Affairs Administrative Level

Method of Learning	New Prof. (n=47) %	Mid-Manager (n=88) %	SSAO (n=15) %	Chi –Square Significance
Books	14.9	21.6	26.7	0.52
Professional Journals	17.0	27.3	46.7	0.07
Sabbaticals	4.3	11.4	6.7	0.36
Discussions with Colleagues	44.7	45.5	46.7	0.99
Staff Meetings	8.5	9.1	0	0.48
Workshops	53.2	51.1	26.7	0.18
Conferences	83.0	72.7	93.3	0.13
Internships	0	3.4	6.7	0.30
Mentor Relationships	25.5	26.1	6.7	0.25
On-line Course	12.8	8.0	6.7	0.61

Leadership, Student Contact, Communication, and Professional Development (see Table 10). Communication appears to be the category indicating a relationship based on years in current position and perceived need for development. The greatest difference in this category was between those respondents 1- 3 years in their current position and those with 10 or more years with a mean difference of -0.47. Those with 10 or more years indicated they mastered this competency as opposed to those fairly new (1 – 3 years) in

their positions. In addition, those individuals with less than one year of experience in their current position showed significant mean differences in the need to master the communication competency category in relation to respondents with 4 - 6 years (-0.62) and respondents with 10 or more years of experience (-0.68).

Table 10

Mean, *F* Scores and Pairwise Difference Comparisons Between Years Employed in Current Position on Perceived Need for Professional Development

Competency Category	Less Than 1 Year (n=24) M_1	1-3 Years (n=41) M_2	4-6 Years (n=33) M_3	7-9 Years (n=12) M_4	10 Plus Years (n=40) M_5	F	Mean Differences
Leadership	3.26	3.25	3.68	3.22	3.65	3.09*	ns
Student Contact	3.06	2.93	3.43	3.16	3.46	2.59*	ns
Communication	3.24	3.45	3.86	3.88	3.92	5.17*	$M_2-M_5(-0.53)$* $M_1-M_5(-0.68)$* $M_1-M_3(-0.62)$*
Human Resources Management	2.49	2.32	2.91	2.80	2.88	1.84	ns
Fiscal Management	2.61	2.38	2.81	2.31	2.85	1.58	ns
Professional Development	2.81	3.02	3.33	3.17	3.41	2.48*	ns
Research, Assessment and Evaluation	2.47	2.52	2.96	2.44	2.90	1.55	ns
Legal Issues	2.56	2.41	2.72	2.45	3.06	2.00	ns
Technology	3.83	3.82	4.19	3.82	3.75	1.17	ns
Diversity	3.00	3.17	3.50	3.06	3.00	1.16	ns

*p<.05; ns=not significant

No significant difference was found on perceived need for professional development by type of institution (four-year or two-year). On the contrary, a significant

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difference (p<.001) was found between highest academic level obtained (bachelor's, master's, and doctorate) on perceived need for professional development in nine of the ten competency categories (see Table 11). Technology was the only competency category in which there was not a significant difference.

Table 11

Mean, F Scores and Pairwise Difference Comparisons Between Highest Academic Degree Obtained on Need for Professional Development

Competency Category	Bachelor (n=66) M_1	Master (n=64) M_2	Doctorate (n=15) M_3	F	M_1-M_2	M_1-M_3	M_2-M_3
Leadership	3.26	3.53	4.09	8.18*	ns	-0.83*	-0.56*
Student Contact	2.97	3.36	4.18	12.48*	-0.39*	-1.20*	-0.82*
Communication	3.42	3.83	4.26	10.68*	-0.41	-0.84*	ns
Human Resources Development	2.40	2.74	4.00	12.14*	ns	-1.60*	-1.26*
Fiscal Management	2.34	2.73	3.92	15.86*	ns	-1.58*	-1.19*
Professional Development	2.89	3.34	4.19	17.38*	-0.45*	-1.30*	-0.85*
Research, Assessment, & Evaluation	2.19	3.05	4.14	32.67*	-0.86*	-1.95*	-1.09*
Legal Issues	2.22	2.93	4.00	20.71*	-0.71*	-1.79*	-1.07*
Technology	3.82	3.92	4.15	0.73	ns	ns	ns
Diversity	2.96	3.45	4.17	12.05*	-0.49*	-1.21*	-0.72*

*p<.05; ns=not significant

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As would be expected, mean differences were greatest between respondents with doctoral and bachelor's degrees. The difference in perceived need for professional development was the greatest in four categories: Research, Assessment, and Evaluation (-1.95); Legal Issues (-1.79); Human Resources Development (-1.60); and Fiscal Management (-1.58). The differences in mean scores were least in Leadership (-0.83) and Communication (-0.84).

The largest difference in means between bachelor's and master's respondents on perceived need for development were in the categories of Research, Assessment and Evaluation (-0.86) and Legal Issues (-0.71). The following are the remaining differences in rank order between bachelor's and master's degree respondents: Diversity (-0.49); Professional Development (-0.45); Communication (-0.41); and Student Contact (-0.39). No significant differences in means were found in Leadership, Human Resources Management, Fiscal Management, and Technology.

Mean differences between respondents with master's degrees and doctoral degrees were greatest in Human Resource Management (-1.26) and Fiscal Management (-1.19), followed by Research, Assessment, and Evaluation (-1.09), and Legal Issues (-1.07). The difference in means was least between these two groups in the Leadership category (-0.56).

Research Question Six

Are there differences in the types of professional development activities student affairs professionals prefer to engage in based on variables, such as, number of years employed in present position, type of institution, or highest degree obtained?

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Tables 12–14 display the percentages of the respondents preferred type of professional development activity based on years employed in current position, institution type, and highest academic degree obtained.

Significant differences were found in sabbaticals and workshops in preferred type of professional development activities by years employed in current position. Only nine percent of the respondents preferred sabbaticals. Of those respondents indicating sabbaticals, the highest percentage (20%) came from those working 1-3 years in their current position. Those respondents working less than one year and 7-9 years in their current position had zero respondents preferring this activity for development. Six percent of respondents working 4-6 years prefer this activity, while those working 10 plus years showed only 8% preferring sabbaticals. Workshops were the other professional development activity showing significant differences in preference by years employed in current position. As Table 12 displays, 49 percent of respondents preferred workshops as a method of learning. Of those respondents, the rank order of preference of workshops by years in current position are: 10 plus years (63%); 1-3 years (59%); 7-9 years (50%); less than 1year (46%); and 4-6 years (24%).

Table 13 displays the data for preferred type of professional development activity by institution type, 2-year or 4-year. Significant differences were found by institution type on preferred type of professional development activity in only one area, professional journals. Although only twenty-six percent of respondents preferred professional journals as a top choice for professional development, more respondents from two-year institutions (41%) preferred it than from four-year institutions (21%).

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Table 14 shows significant differences by highest academic degree obtained on preferred type of professional development activity. Significant differences were found in five professional development activities based on this variable. The activities were books, professional journals, sabbatical, workshops, and on-line courses.

Forty-nine percent of respondents chose workshops as a preferred method of learning. Within this category, the majority of respondents preferring this activity were respondents with a bachelor's degree (65%) compared to those with a master's degree (36%) and those with a doctorate (31%), Interestingly, of those respondents choosing sabbaticals (8%) and professional journals (27%), it was the master's degree respondents who had the higher percentages of preference in these two categories (17% and 41% respectively). The respondents holding a doctoral degree had the least preference for sabbaticals (0%) and the bachelor's degree respondents had the least for professional journals (14%). Of those respondents who chose books (20%), doctoral respondents were the highest (39%) in preferring this activity, followed by master's (27%) and then bachelor's (11%). In terms of on-line courses, 10 percent of all respondents prefer this type of professional development activity, with the majority of respondent having a bachelor's degree (18%) while no one with a doctorate chose this particular activity.

Table 12

Preferred Type of Professional Development Activity by Years Employed in Current Position

Method of Learning	Less Than 1 Year (n=24) %	1-3 Years (n=41) %	4-6 Years (n=33) %	7-9 Years (n=12) %	10 Plus Years (n=40) %	Chi-Square Significance
Books	17	12	36	25	15	0.09
Professional Journals	25	27	37	33	15	0.32
Sabbaticals	0	20	6	0	8	0.04*
Discussions with Colleagues	42	37	52	33	55	0.39
Staff Meetings	17	5	3	8	10	0.37
Workshops	46	59	24	50	63	0.01*
Conferences	88	78	79	58	78	0.41
Internships	0	0	3	0	8	0.22
Mentor Relationships	29	27	21	25	20	0.91
On-line Course	4	10	9	17	10	0.82

*p<.05; ns=not significant

Table 13

Preferred Type of Professional Development Activity by Institution Type

Method of Learning	Four-Year (n=113) %	Two-year (n=37) %	Chi-Square Significance
Books	23	11	0.12
Professional Journals	21	41	0.02*
Sabbaticals	8	11	0.59
Discussions w/ Colleagues	50	32	0.07
Staff Meetings	6	14	0.15
Workshops	50	49	0.94
Conferences	81	70	0.19
Internships	4	0	0.25
Mentor Relationships	25	22	0.70
On-line Course	10	8	0.77

*p<.05; ns=not significant

Table 14

Preferred Type of Professional Development Activity by Highest Academic Degree
Obtained

Method of Learning	Bachelor's (n=66) %	Master's (n=64) %	Doctoral (n=13) %	Chi-Square Significance
Books	11	27	39	0.02*
Professional Journals	14	41	31	0.01*
Sabbaticals	2	17	0	0.01*
Discussions w/ Colleagues	49	44	54	0.75
Staff Meetings	11	3	0	0.13
Workshops	65	36	31	0.01*
Conferences	80	77	85	0.76
Internships	2	3	8	0.46
Mentor Relationships	21	28	23	0.65
On-line Course	18	3	0	0.01*

*p<.05; ns=not significant

In the next chapter, a summary of the findings, conclusions, and recommendations
for practice and further research are discussed.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, DISCUSSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The preceding chapters presented the introductory statement of the problem and purpose of the study, a literature review, the methodology and procedures used in the study, and the presentation of the data in reference to the answer to each research question. This chapter provides a summary of the research, findings and discussion, and recommendations for the profession and future research.

Summary

The purpose of this study was to assess the perceptions of student affairs professionals (new professionals, mid-managers, and senior student affairs officers) in the North Dakota University System regarding their attainment of various skills in ten categories. The secondary purpose was to determine the methods used to gain competence and improve professional skills.

The study surveyed 316 student affairs professionals within the North Dakota University System. The demographics of this study indicated that the a majority of the respondents in this study came from the functional areas of Housing and Residential Life (13%), Admissions (11%), Student Activities/Student Union (8.0%), Counseling (7%), Health Services/Wellness (7%), and Career Services (6%). Respondent's working 10 or more years (27%) and 1-3 years (27%) in their current position and those working 10 or more years total in student affairs (39%) were the majority of the participants. Fifty-four

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CHAPTER V

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percent of the respondents reported not having supervisory experience, with 75% of respondents working at four-year colleges, and 52% of respondents from institutions with enrollments of 5,001 plus students. Most of the respondents either held a bachelor's degree (44%) or a master's degree (43%). Seventy-eight percent of respondents reported they were not currently pursuing a degree.

The findings of this study further indicated the need for continuing development for all administrative levels in student affairs. Overall, student affairs professionals perceived high mastery in the competency category Technology while the highest need for continuing development was in the area of Fiscal Management. The perceived level of mastery in the ten competency categories was assessed for each administrative level (new professionals, mid-managers, and senior student affairs officers) to gauge continued development needs. In addition, the study assessed the preferred methods of learning.

Findings and Discussion

This study was guided by six research questions; three related to competency areas and three related to professional development activities. The questions and answers are summarized below in two categories: competency areas and professional development.

Competency Areas

Research Question # 1

What are the perceptions of new professionals, mid-managers, and senior student affairs officers in the North Dakota University System with regard to the need for professional development in ten competency categories?

This study shows that the competency categories with the greatest need for continued development of student affairs professionals in the North Dakota University System were in the areas of Fiscal Management (2.63), followed by Human Resources Management (2.66), Legal Issues (2.68), and Research, Evaluation, and Assessment (2.70). These findings confirm research done by Scott (2000). The skills identified by Scott needing continuing development for student affairs professionals included: assessment and evaluation; personnel management; and financial management. Student affairs professionals across all levels appear to be continually concerned about the continuing development of certain competency areas. The findings of this study suggest more emphasis needs to be placed on the professional development needs of student affairs professionals, especially mid-managers and senior student affairs officers, in the North Dakota University System. Numerous researchers, as literature supports, have identified competencies in Fiscal Management, Human Resources Management, Legal Issues, and Research, Evaluation, and Assessment as essential competencies for mid and upper level managers in student affairs (Randall & Globetti, 1992; Gordon, et al., 1993; Fey & Carpetner, 1996; Scott, 2000). It appears that the essential competencies for mid-managers and senior student affairs officers are the ones in most need of development for practitioners in the North Dakota University System.

The findings of this study showed that the competency category of Technology (3.88) ranked the lowest in the need for continued development for student affairs professionals in the North Dakota University System. These findings conflict with some of the literature. For example, Lovell and Kosten (2000), in a meta-analysis of student affairs characteristics, found that technology was one of the proficiencies in which a skill

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gap was identified and was deemed important for the future. According to this study, it appears the North Dakota University System has focused on technology training consistently as all three levels of student affairs professionals perceive themselves as having a high level of competency in technology and did not differ significantly in their skill perception regarding this category. The results also suggest that North Dakota University System has the infrastructure to sufficiently support this type of training. These finding compliment the effort of the North Dakota University System in their commitment to technology.

These findings are encouraging as student affairs professionals in the North Dakota University System appear to be prepared for, and have the ability in which to respond to the technological demands of the future. Technology is a relatively easy area to train and measure concrete results. The continued focus and support of only the technology area, and not on other competencies identified as being low in mastery in this study, should be explored by Senior Student Affairs Officers to ensure all the professional development needs of student affairs professionals in NDUS are addressed. It is sometimes more convenient to concentrate on those areas of competency that are easier to develop and readily produce tangible results.

Research Question #3

Are there differences between new professionals, mid-managers, and senior student affairs officers in the North Dakota University System in their perception of need for professional development in ten competency categories?

A significant difference was found among the different administrative levels in student affairs in eight of the ten categories. Technology and Diversity did not show a significant difference.

The finding of the study support the obvious in that new professionals rated lower mastery in all the eight categories than did mid-managers and senior student affairs officers. Human Resources Management (1.91), Fiscal Management (2.09), Research, Assessment, and Evaluation (2.20), Legal Issues (2.20), and Professional Development (2.79) appear to be the areas with the least amount of experience for new professionals. These findings are not surprising as new professionals are in entry-level positions and expect to be involved with, and provide services to, individuals and groups of students on a daily basis (Burkard et al., 2005). However, based on these results, opportunities, such as mentoring, should be explored to develop some of these lower mastery competencies, such as professional development.

The results of the study also suggest that new professionals report higher mastery levels in areas which are used more frequently in relation to their responsibilities. They areas consist of: Technology (3.86), Communication (3.34), Leadership (3.17), Diversity (3.02), and Student Contact (3.02).

The greatest differences in perception of need for development between new professionals and mid-managers are in the areas of Human Resources Development, Fiscal Management, Research, Assessment, and Evaluation, and Legal Issues. Roberts (2003) found the same to be true in her study. This makes sense since new professionals may not have had the opportunity to develop these skills until they gain positions with greater responsibility in these competency areas.

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The findings suggest that managers strive to be good fiscal managers and believe they are effective communicators. Mid-managers indicated Technology (3.86) and Communication (3.74) as the areas of highest mastery, while Fiscal Management (2.75), Legal Issues (2.78), Research, Evaluation, and Assessment (2.80), and Human Resources Management (2.86) appear to be categories in need of the most development. Consistent with the findings of this study, Fey (1991) and Kane (1982) also found that mid-managers have rated Communication as a skill low in need for continuing development and Fiscal Management as a top skill requiring continued development

In referring to the literature that identifies the skills essential for mid-managers (Scott, 2000; Mills, 1990) as discussed in a previous section, the results of this study indicate proficiency gaps in the areas of Fiscal Management and Human Resources Management for mid-managers in the North Dakota University System. Since the majority of respondents of this survey were mid-managers (59%), Senior Student Affairs Officers need to garner support and resources and commit to focusing on providing opportunities for this administrative level to enhance their competencies in fiscal and human resources management.

Senior student affairs officers seem closest to mastering all skill categories with Communication (4.27) ranking highest in mastery and Legal Issues (3.55) ranking lowest in mastery. It appears that senior student affairs officers, like mid-managers, are confident in their communication skills. It is somewhat concerning that legal issues is the lowest ranking competency category for SSAO with the complexities of today's environments on campus. Senior student affairs officers are looked to in provide guidance and direction in a variety of situations that require high levels of competencies

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in the ten categories. On the other hand, perhaps this area is ranked lowest because of limited exposure dealing specifically in this area due to referring to the NDUS system legal council or for minimal quantity of legal issues in student affairs in the NDUS as compared to other systems.

Mid-managers and senior student affairs officers differed significantly in six of the ten competency categories. They were Human Resources Management; Research, Assessment and Evaluation; Fiscal Management; Legal Issues; Student Contact; and Communication. As individuals move into senior management, they face more complex issues that require knowledge, expertise, and resources.

Research Question #5

Are there differences in the perception of need for professional development of student affairs professionals based on variables, such as, number of years employed in present position, type of institution, or highest academic degree obtained?

In this study, the variable years in current position showed a significant difference in the category of Communication. Those student affairs professionals with more years in their current position indicated mastery in this competency as opposed to those professionals fairly new in their current position. As would be expected, those just beginning their careers perceived lower mastery in their ability to be competent in things, such as, writing effective correspondence and reports, effectively communicating with the media, accurately interpreting attitudes and needs of others, and making oral presentations/public speaking when compared to those who have been in the field for at least four or more years. Over time, as new professionals remain in their positions they

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are able to gain experience and encounter more opportunities to practice skills related to communication and improve their competency in this category.

The findings of this study found significant differences between highest academic level obtained on perceived need for professional development in all competency categories, except Technology. Student affairs professionals who held higher degrees perceived themselves to have less continuing development need. This supports the need for the NDUS to promote education and training of student affairs professionals in advanced degree programs. Such programs add knowledge and skills needed to make student affairs professionals more competent.

Many new student affairs professionals are products of graduate programs (Winston & Creamer, 1997; Synder & McDonald, 2002) and as reported by Kretovics (2002), a value is placed on the master's degree in student personnel by employers at colleges and universities for hiring at least at the entry-level positions. This study indicated almost half of the respondents held only a bachelor's degree and that seventy-eight percent of the respondents were not currently pursuing a degree. Bachelor programs are not necessarily designed to develop the competencies essential in student affairs. Emphasizing the importance of a graduate degree for new professionals and mid-manager may assist in narrowing the proficiency gaps and providing these practitioners with the skills and competencies to be more successful. The demographics of this study suggests to Senior Student Affairs Officers in the North Dakota University System that they should explore the reasons (access to graduate programs, lack of incentives and reward systems) regarding why well over two-thirds of student affairs practitioners are not currently pursuing a degree, especially those with only a bachelor's degree. Senior

student affairs officers should seriously consider the implications of these results in regard to recruiting, hiring practices, development and training, and career pathing of employees.

Professional Development

Research Question #2

What professional development activities do respondents prefer to engage in to improve professional skills?

Student affairs professionals use of variety of methods to gain competence (DeCoster & Brown, 1991; Scott, 2000; Kruger, 2000). This study indicated the preferred methods of learning of student affairs professionals were: conferences (78%); workshops (49%); and discussions with colleagues (45%). These results support previous studies that have been conducted by Sermersheim (2002) and Roberts (2003) who also found conferences, discussions with colleagues, and workshops to be top preferences of student affairs professionals as methods to improve skills.

Although the results of this study are consistent with other findings in the literature, it is unknown if these are effective means to gain competence. Conferences were overwhelmingly the preferred activity to improve or gain competency, however, change in practice and behavior does not necessarily result from attending a conference. Adult learning theories may want to be considered when planning professional development activities. With conferences overwhelming being the choice of professional development, SSAOs are encouraged to look at the cost-benefit issue of attendance at conferences.

Workshops and discussions with colleagues were two other methods of learning indicated as preferences for developing competencies. With the high level of mastery in technology by all professionals, discussions with colleagues can occur in different venues such as list serves, emails, and instant messaging. The North Dakota University System should explore the use of technology as a resource to support competency development as encouraged by Gluckman (2005). He also advocates technology as an effective tool in supporting competency based models of human resource development.

Some learning methods are not frequently used by student affairs professionals. They were internships, taking academic courses inside or out of a preparation program, sabbaticals, staff meetings, and on-line courses. Student affairs professionals seem to respond to interacting with other professionals and these methods may not be able to provide that interaction. Also, many of these methods may be inconvenient, costly, and involve time away from the office which could be burdensome for their colleagues as well as the institution with budgets and staffing limitations. More recently, Denzine (2001) suggested student affairs practitioners use portfolios, as do other fields, to document work related experiences and competencies. These portfolios provide an opportunity for self-assessment, reflection and can be an "effective and low-cost strategy for encouraging professional growth among staff" (p.505).

Research Question #4

Are there differences between new professionals, mid-managers, and senior student affairs officers in the North Dakota University System in the types of professional development activities they prefer to engage in to improve professional skills?

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No significant differences were found between new professionals, mid-managers, and senior student affairs officers in preferred type of professional development activity. This may be a result of the familiarity and exposure to popular methods such as conferences and workshops. These professionals may not have the opportunity, support, or knowledge of professional development activities, such as, sabbaticals, mentoring, courses in or outside of a preparatory program, and internships. The lack of significant differences between the groups may have resulted in not having a more inclusive list of professional development activities from which to choose. Kruger (2000) identified methods, such as, professional, scholarly, and informal writing opportunities, professional presentations, service learning, and community service. In addition, Scott (2000) mentioned activities, such as, teleconferences, training videos, self-directed programs, administrative shadowing, administrative exchange programs, and site visits to other institutions.

Research Question #6

> Are there differences in the types of professional development activities student affairs professionals prefer to engage in based on variables, such as number of years employed in present position, type of institution, or highest academic degree obtained?

For the variable, years employed in current position, a significant difference was found in preferred activities of sabbaticals and workshops. Interestingly, those individuals working 1-3 years choose sabbaticals at a significantly higher percentage than others working more than three years. These findings may indicate the desire of new professionals to have opportunities to explore and experience other roles in the field of

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student affairs early in their careers. Depending on how sabbatical may have been defined by these new professionals, these results may suggest a need for mentoring relationships. It appears that generational differences in the perspective of the appropriate use of a sabbatical may need to be explored.

A significant difference was found by institution type on preferred type of professional development activity in only one area, professional journals. Of the respondents preferring professional journals, those from two-year institutions preferred this activity at a higher percentage than those from four-year institutions; 41% and 21% respectively. Student affairs professionals in the two-year institutions in the North Dakota University System, which tend to be smaller schools, may prefer professional journals at a higher preference than those at four-year schools because they tend to wear more hats and have less people with similar roles. This study suggests they rely on professional journals as a main source of professional development as compared to student affairs professionals working at four-year institutions. This type of activity may also be a cost effective means for individuals from two-year institutions to gain knowledge, expertise, and competency who sometimes are not financially able to attend regional and national conferences or have the support or infrastructure to take advantage of sabbaticals, internships or even take part in preparatory programs.

Significant differences where shown by highest academic degree obtained on five types of professional development activities: books; professional journals; sabbaticals; workshops; and on-line courses. These results suggest that staff development programs do not adhere to the "one-size fits all". These findings of this study confirm that staff

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development programs should utilize a variety of strategies and techniques because of the broad preferences in development activities by student affairs professionals.

Recommendations

The results of this study have lead to several recommendations for practice and for future research.

Recommendations for Practice

Preparation programs in the field of student affairs provide common knowledge and understanding of a body of theory and practice across a diverse population (Bryan & Schwartz, 1998). However, some in the field (Evers et al., 1998; Amey & Reesor, 2001) propose that the success or failure as a new professional may be dependent on the size of the gap between what they have learned through their preparatory program and the expectation in their new position. Professional preparation programs can use the results from this study to narrow the gap by revising curricula to better reflect the mastery of skills and competencies expected for professionals entering the field of student affairs. The competencies identified for mid-level managers and senior student affairs officers can also be of value as preparation programs help graduates recognize competencies identified as being important in their future careers. Highlighting the importance of continuous development while discussing the various methods of learning that can be used to develop competencies throughout their careers could assist new student affairs professionals in being successful.

Professional associations such the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA) and the American College Personnel Association (ACPA) have expectations of professional responsibility and competence from practitioners in the field

(NASPA, 2001; ACPA, 2001). In return, these associations are leaders in providing professional development opportunities for student affairs professionals and need to continue to be cognizant of development needs of those in the profession. When planning conferences, workshops, and other types of opportunities for professional development, professional associations should be responsive to the various administrative levels in student affairs and the needed areas of competencies as reported in this study. The specific competencies indicating need for continuing development as identified in this study were: Fiscal Management; Human Resources Management; Legal Issues; and Research, Evaluation, and Assessment.

Student affairs professionals use a variety of methods to improve their knowledge and skills. Ways to share student affairs expertise across campuses should be explored, as "discussions with colleagues" was a high preference in methods of learning with all administrative levels of student affairs. Networking among student affairs professionals should be established at all levels and in different functional areas so they can share and communicate ideas and concerns with each other. Student affairs professionals should develop computer networks that link different levels, institution type, functional area, and other special populations providing them with list serves and chat rooms for sharing professional information.

A starting point for many individuals, departments or divisions in student affairs in planning for professional development is performing a needs assessment. Individual professionals, senior student affairs officers or staff development committees can use the instrument from this study as a self-assessment to develop a professional development

plans focusing on individual needs or the specific needs of a functional area, department or division.

<div align="center">Recommendations for Future Research</div>

Recommendation One

This study investigated perceptions of new professionals, mid-managers, and senior student affairs officers in the North Dakota University System. A replication of this study should be conducted with different populations in other regions of the United States which would offer data for comparison.

Recommendation Two

A replication of this study should be conducted specifically in functional areas within student affairs with new supervisors and mid-managers to gain a better understanding of the continuing development needs of specialized areas.

Recommendation Three

Entry into the field of student affairs usually requires a master's degree. Research comparing those professionals with a preparatory program background in student affairs with those without (other master's background) on mastery in the ten competency categories should be conducted. The study would allow for planning for training and professional development to bring those without background in student affairs to needed levels of proficiency. The study could also confirm or reject the importance of appropriate majors in master's and well as doctorates.

Recommendation Four

Research should be conducted on the effectiveness of professional development strategies for student affairs professionals. The different type of professional

development activities (workshops, conferences, books, journals, internships, etc) should be studied with the outcomes regarding the improvement of competencies of each of the 10 skill categories identified. This would help determine the most effective techniques for the various competency areas.

Recommendation Five

A qualitative study would add a different perspective, as more in-depth information would be gained from student affairs professionals about their perceived mastery in the competency areas and the types of activities they prefer and why.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

STUDENT AFFAIRS SKILL DEVELOPMENT SURVEY

Dear Student Affairs Professional,

Thank you for participating in this survey about skill development among student affairs professionals, which is part of a research project. It should take only 15-20 minutes of your time.

The purpose of the study is to identify the need for continuing skill development at the different levels of management within student affairs.

Please hit the "next" button to move to the informed consent.

<div align="center">

<u>Next >></u>

</div>

Informed Consent for Research

You are invited to participate in a research study conducted by Donna Fishbeck, Ed.M., under the supervision of Angela Koppang, Ph.D., Department of Educational Leadership at the University of North Dakota. You have been selected as a potential participant because you are employed in Student Affairs within the North Dakota University System. The purpose of the study is to identify the need for continuing skill development at the different levels of management within student affairs.

Approximately 20 minutes will be needed to complete the survey, which will be provided on a separate screen. Once you have finished the survey, please click on the "done" button.

Your participation in this survey is voluntary and you can withdraw at any time. Further, you have the right to refuse to answer any item in the survey at any time. Finally, your name is never asked and the only identifying information is demographic in nature.

Only the researcher, the adviser, and the people who audit IRB procedures will have access to the data. Once the information is downloaded to this researcher's records, it will be erased completely from the on-line database within one week. Since your name will in no way be associated with the information you give, your anonymity will be fully protected. Research records will be kept confidential consistent with state and federal regulations.

If you have questions about the research, please call Donna Fishbeck at (701) 663-0864 (dfishbeck@bis.midco.net.) or Dr. Angela Koppang at (701) 777-3249 (Angela.Koppang@und.nodak.edu). If you have any other questions or concerns, please call Research Development and Compliance at (701) 777-4297. If you would like to receive information on the findings of this study, you may contact Donna Fishbeck at the above phone number or e-mail address.

Thank you for your time. If you consent to particpate in this study, please print this page for your record. By selecting the "next" button below, you indicate that you have read and understand the above information.

Your particpation is greatly appreciated!

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Section I asks for demographic information.

Section II consists of statements outlining various skills in 10 categories.

Section III asks about preferred methods of learning for enhancing skills and competencies.

Section I - Demographics

For purposes of this study, administrative levels are defined as follows:

New professional: Person who is in their first full-time position and does not supervise other professional staff.

Mid-manager: An individual who reports directly to a Senior Student Affairs Officer or who occupies a position which reports to the person who reports directly to a Senior Student Affairs Officer; and who is responsible for the direction, control, or supervison of one or more student affairs functions or one or more professional staff members.

Senior Student Affairs Officer: The lead position in student affairs in the college or university, usually reporting to the president or executive vice president. He/she supervises departmental directors or coordinators and has policy making authority. He/she often possess a terminal degree in higher education, student personnel, or related field.

1. Based on the description above, which administrative level best describes your current position?

New professional	Mid-manager	Senior Student Affairs Officer
■	■	■

2. What is the major (time spent is 50% or more) functional area of responsibility of your currrent position?

- ■ Academic Advising
- ■ Admissions
- ■ Career Services
- ■ Counseling
- ■ Dean's Office
- ■ Disability Support Services
- ■ Financial Aid
- ■ Health Service/Wellness
- ■ Housing & Residential Life
- ■ Judicial Programs
- ■ Learning Assistance Programs
- ■ Minority Student Programs
- ■ Orientation
- ■ Recreation/Athletics

Registrar's Office
Special Populations Programs
Student Activities/Student Union
Other

3. What is your job title?

4. How many full-time professionals do you directly supervise?

None	1 - 5	5-10	10-20	20 +

5. How many years have you been employed in your present position?

Less than 1 year	1-3 years	4-6 years	7-9 years	10 or more years

6. How many years have you been employed in full-time student affairs positions?

Less than 1 year	1 -3 years	4-6 years	7-9 years	10 or more years

7. In what type of institution are you currently employed?

Two-year	Four-year

8. Institutional Enrollment:

1,500 or fewer	1,501-3,000	3,001-5,000	5,001-10,000	10,000 plus

9. What is the highest academic degree you have completed?

Bachelor Degree	Master Degree	Doctoral Degree

10. In what area did you receive your degree in? (i.e., Counseling, Psychology, Student Personnel Work, Educational Leadership)

11. Are you currently pursuing a degree?

Yes   No

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Skills that are important to student affairs professionals are listed below. There are 72 questions relating to 10 skill categories. You are requested to identify the level of skill development you are presently at in your current position for each question.

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Student Affairs Skill Development Survey

Leadership

Please use the following scale to respond to the questions:
1. I have not begun working on this yet.
2. I have begun working on this.
3. I am actively working on and concerned with this.
4. I am still working on this, but I am less concerned with it than I once was.
5. I believe that I have essentially mastered or accomplished this.
6. This is non-applicable to my current position.

1. Promoting the academic mission of the institution.

	1	2	3	4	5	6
Leadership	▪	▪	▪	▪	▪	▪

2. Working in the institution's political environment.

	1	2	3	4	5	6
Leadership	▪	▪	▪	▪	▪	▪

3. Developing the mission and vision of the department/division.

	1	2	3	4	5	6
Leadership	▪	▪	▪	▪	▪	▪

4. Communicating the mission and vision of the department/division.

	1	2	3	4	5	6
Leadership	▪	▪	▪	▪	▪	▪

5. Developing a strategic plan with realistic goals.

	1	2	3	4	5	6
Leadership	▪	▪	▪	▪	▪	▪

6. Following the profession's ethical principles.

	1	2	3	4	5	6
Leadership	▪	▪	▪	▪	▪	▪

7. Role modeling behavior to other professionals.

	1	2	3	4	5	6
Leadership	■	■	■	■	■	■

8. Implementing appropriate decisions under uncertain conditions.

	1	2	3	4	5	6
Leadership	■	■	■	■	■	■

9. Utilizing the expertise of others.

	1	2	3	4	5	6
Leadership	■	■	■	■	■	■

10. Gaining commitment from top leadership.

	1	2	3	4	5	6
Leadership	■	■	■	■	■	■

11. Utilizing effective techniques to motivate staff.

	1	2	3	4	5	6
Leadership	■	■	■	■	■	■

12. Delegating when appropriate.

	1	2	3	4	5	6
Leadership	■	■	■	■	■	■

13. Developing collaborative relationships with another division.

	1	2	3	4	5	6
Leadership	■	▨	■	■	■	■

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Student Contact

Please use the following scale to respond to the questions:
1. I have not begun working on this yet.
2. I have begun working on this.
3. I am actively working on and concerned with this.
4. I am still working on this, but I am less concerned with it than I once was.
5. I believe that I have essentially mastered or accomplished this.
6. This in non-applicable to my current position.

1. Applying student development theories in decision making.

	1	2	3	4	5	6
Student Contact	■	■	■	■	■	■

2. Assessing student needs.

	1	2	3	4	5	6
Student Contact	■	■	■	■	■	■

3. Including students in policy-making decisions.

	1	2	3	4	5	6
Student Contact	■	■	■	■	■	■

4. Advising student groups.

	1	2	3	4	5	6
Student Contact	■	■	■	■	■	■

5. Providing assistance and services to students.

	1	2	3	4	5	6
Student Contact	■	■	■	■	■	■

6. Responding to student crises.

	1	2	3	4	5	6
Student Contact	■	■	■	■	■	■

7. Training students to perform paraprofessional duties.

	1	2	3	4	5	6
Student Contact	▓	▓	▓	▓	▓	▓

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Student Affairs Skill Development Survey

Communication

Please use the following scale to respond to the questions:
1. I have not begun working on this yet.
2. I have begun working on this.
3. I am actively working on and concerned with this.
4. I am still working on this, but I am less concerned with it than I once was.
5. I believe that I have essentially mastered or accomplished this.
6. This is non-applicable to my current position.

1. Writing effective correspondence and reports.

	1	2	3	4	5	6
Communication	▪	▪	▪	▪	▪	▪

2. Making oral presentations/public speaking.

	1	2	3	4	5	6
Communication	▪	▪	▪	▪	▪	▪

3. Accurately interpreting attitudes and needs of others.

	1	2	3	4	5	6
Communication	▪	▪	▪	▪	▪	▪

4. Effectively communicating with the media.

	1	2	3	4	5	6
Communication	▪	▪	▪	▪	▪	▪

5. Maintaining appropriate levels of confidentiality.

	1	2	3	4	5	6
Communication	▪	▪	▪	▪	▪	▪

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Human Resources Management

Please use the following scale to respond to the questions:
1. I have not begun working on this yet.
2. I have begun working on this.
3. I am actively working on and concerned with this.
4. I am still working on this, but I am less concerned with it than I once was.
5. I believe that I have essentially mastered or accomplished this.
6. This is non-applicable to my current position.

1. Applying successful professional staff recruiting techniques.

	1	2	3	4	5	6
Human Resources Management	■	■	■	■	■	■

2. Using appropriate staff selection techniques.

	1	2	3	4	5	6
Human Resources Management	■	■	■	■	■	■

3. Training staff using appropriate instructional techniques.

	1	2	3	4	5	6
Human Resources Management	■	■	■	■	■	■

4. Developing staff through continuing education programs.

	1	2	3	4	5	6
Human Resources Management	■	■	■	■	■	■

5. Supervising professional staff.

	1	2	3	4	5	6
Human Resources Management	■	■	■	■	■	■

6. Evaluating professional staff.

	1	2	3	4	5	6
Human Resources	■	■	■	■	■	■

Management

7. Terminating professional staff after following due process.

	1	2	3	4	5	6
Human Resources Management	■	■	■	■	■	■

8. Mediating conflict among staff.

	1	2	3	4	5	6
Human Resources Management	■	■	■	■	■	■

9. Recognizing accomplishments of others.

	1	2	3	4	5	6
Human Resources Management	■	■	■	■	■	■

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Fiscal Management

Please use the following scale to respond to the questions:
1. I have not begun working on this.
2. I have begun working on this.
3. I am actively working on and concerned with this.
4. I am still working on this, but I am less concerned with it than I once was.
5. I believe that I have essentially mastered or accomplished this.
6. This is non-applicable to my current position.

1. Analyzing financial reports.

	1	2	3	4	5	6
Fiscal Management	■	■	■	■	■	■

2. Utilizing available resources.

	1	2	3	4	5	6
Fiscal Management	■	■	■	■	■	■

3. Applying budget development techniques.

	1	2	3	4	5	6
Fiscal Management	■	■	■	■	■	■

4. Projecting future priorities and needs.

	1	2	3	4	5	6
Fiscal Management	■	■	■	■	■	■

5. Writing grants and contracts to garner additional resources.

	1	2	3	4	5	6
Fiscal Management	■	■	■	■	■	■

6. Understanding the financing of higher education.

	1	2	3	4	5	6
Fiscal Management	■	■	■	■	■	■

7. Responding to budget cuts.

	1	2	3	4	5	6
Fiscal Management	▓	▓	▓	▓	▓	▓

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Professional Development

Please use the following scale to respond to the questions:
1. I have not begun working on this.
2. I have begun working on this.
3. I am actively working on and concerned with this.
4. I am still working on this, but I am less concerned with it than I once was.
5. I believe that I have essentially mastered or accomplished this.
6. This is non-applicable to my current position.

1. Assessing your own professional development needs.

	1	2	3	4	5	6
Professional Development	■	■	■	■	■	■

2. Maintaining a scholarly background in your discipline.

	1	2	3	4	5	6
Professional Development	■	■	■	■	■	■

3. Attending professional development activities.

	1	2	3	4	5	6
Professional Development	■	■	■	■	■	■

4. Keeping abreast of current issues in the profession.

	1	2	3	4	5	6
Professional Development	■	■	■	■	■	■

5. Writing an article for professional publication.

	1	2	3	4	5	6
Professional Development	■	■	■	■	■	■

6. Being involved in professional association leadership.

	1	2	3	4	5	6
Professional	■	■	■	■	■	■

Research, Evaluation, and Assessment

Please use the following scale to respond to the questions:
1. I have not begun working on this yet.
2. I have begun working on this.
3. I am actively working on and concerned with this.
4. I am still working on this, but I am less concerned with it than I once was.
5. I believe that I have essentially mastered or accomplished this.
6. This is non-applicable to my current position.

1. Interpret research as reported in professional literature.

	1	2	3	4	5	6
Research, Evaluation, and Assessment	■	■	■	■	■	■

2. Initiating or developing surveys or studies.

	1	2	3	4	5	6
Research, Evaluation, and Assessment	■	■	■	■	■	■

3. Interpreting/analyzing statistical methods and results.

	1	2	3	4	5	6
Research, Evaluation, and Assessment	■	■	■	■	■	■

4. Utilizing results of studies.

	1	2	3	4	5	6
Research, Evaluation, and Assessment	■	■	■	■	■	■

5. Evaluating programs for effectiveness.

	1	2	3	4	5	6
Research, Evaluation, and Assessment	■	■	■	■	■	■

6. Describing students at the institution to external constituents.

	1	2	3	4	5	6
Research, Evaluation,	■	■	■	■	■	■

and Assessment

7. Performing self-studies for accreditation reviews.

	1	2	3	4	5	6
Research, Evaluation, and Assessment	■	■	■	■	■	■

8. Developing a comprehensive assessment plan.

	1	2	3	4	5	6
Research, Evaluation, and Assessment	■	■	■	■	■	■

Legal Issues

Please use the following scale to respond to the questions:
1. I have not begun working on this yet.
2. I have begun working on this.
3. I am actively working on and concerned with this.
4. I am still working on this, but I am less concerned with it than I once was.
5. I believe that I have essentially mastered or accomplished this.
6. This is non-applicable to my current position.

1. Keeping abreast of current legislative issues.

	1	2	3	4	5	6
Legal Issues	■	■	■	■	■	■

2. Keeping abreast of current court cases.

	1	2	3	4	5	6
Legal Issues	■	■	■	■	■	■

3. Using proactive risk management techniques.

	1	2	3	4	5	6
Legal Issues	■	■	■	■	■	■

4. Implementing due process concepts.

	1	2	3	4	5	6
Legal, Issues	■	■	■	■	■	■

5. Understanding personal and professional liability issues.

	1	2	3	4	5	6
Legal Issues	■	■	■	■	■	■

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Student Affairs Skill Development Survey

Technology

Please use the following scale to respond to the questions:
1. I have not begun working on this yet.
2. I have begun working on this.
3. I am actively working on and concerned with this.
4. I am still working on this, but I am less concerned with it than I once was.
5. I believe that I have essentially mastered or accomplished this.
6. This is non-applicable to my current position.

1. Using technology to find information.

	1	2	3	4	5	6
Technology	■	■	■	■	■	■

2. Using technology to develop a professional presentation.

	1	2	3	4	5	6
Technology	■	■	■	■	■	■

3. Understanding the use of technology in marketing and delivery of services.

	1	2	3	4	5	6
Technology	■	■	■	■	■	■

4. Using technology to communicate with staff.

	1	2	3	4	5	6
Technology	■	■	■	■	■	■

5. Utilizing computer software programs to perform job functions.

	1	2	3	4	5	6
Technology	■	■	■	■	■	■

6. Developing services for distant learners.

	1	2	3	4	5	6
Technology	■	■	■	■	■	■

<< Prev   Next >>

Please use the following scale to respond to the questions:
1. I have not begun working on this yet.
2. I have begun working on this.
3. I am actively working on and concerned with this.
4. I am still working on this, but I am less concerned with it than I once was.
5. I believe that I have essentially mastered or accomplished this.
6. This is non-applicable to my current position.

1. Providing services for underrepresented students.

	1	2	3	4	5	6
Diversity	■	■	■	■	■	■

2. Understanding needs of underrepresented students.

	1	2	3	4	5	6
Diversity	■	■	■	■	■	■

3. Applying minority development theories to understand underrepresented students.

	1	2	3	4	5	6
Diversity	■	■	■	■	■	■

4. Considering needs of diverse students when making decisions.

	1	2	3	4	5	6
Diversity	■	■	■	■	■	■

5. Participating in educational events to understand people different than you.

	1	2	3	4	5
Diversity	■	■	■	■	■

6. Working effectively with someone with a different background than you.

	1	2	3	4	5	6
Diversity	■	■	■	■	■	■

<< Prev   Next >>

Student Affairs Skill Development Survey

Section III - Methods of Learning

1. Please indicate the three activities in which you prefer to participate if you had the opportunity to improve your professional skills (Please select your top three).

- ☐ Books
- ☐ Professional Journals
- ☐ Sabbaticals
- ☐ Discussions with Colleagues
- ☐ Staff Meetings
- ☐ Workshops
- ☐ Conferences
- ☐ Internships
- ☐ Mentor Relationships
- ☐ On-line course
- ☐ Academic course in preparation program
- ☐ Academic course outside of preparation program
- ☐ Other

2. How do you remain professionally viable (i.e, Retain your motivation and enthusiasm for your position over the course of time?) Please use space below.

<< Prev   Next >>

Thank you for participating in this study.

If you have any questions at any time about the study or the procedures, you may contact the researcher, Donna Fishbeck, at dfishbeck@bis.midco.com or by calling (701) 663-0864.

<u>**<< Prev**</u>   <u>**Done >>**</u>

APPENDIX B

EMAIL LETTER REQUESTING PARTICIPATION

Donna Fishbeck

Dear NDUS Student Affairs Professional,

Your participation in a professional development survey of NDUS Student Affairs Practitioners' as part of my dissertation work is encouraged, and your response would be appreciated. The survey is supported by the NDUS Student Affairs Council and will compliment some of the work the Council is doing on the topic of professional development.
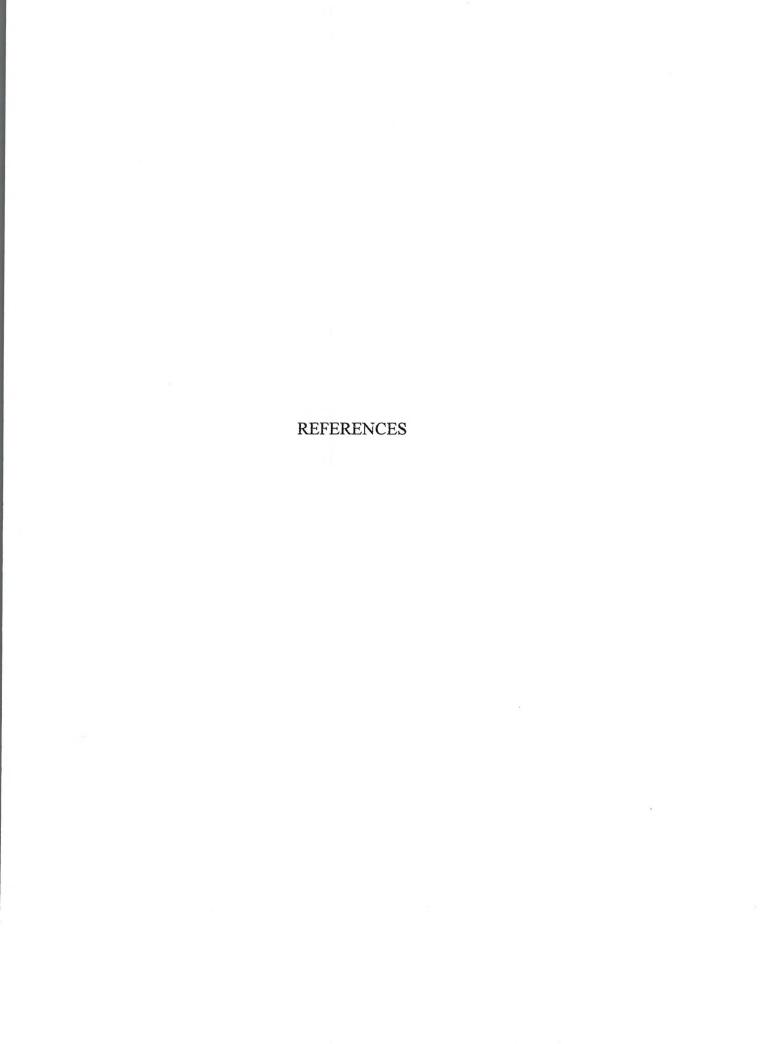
The survey will take approximately 20 minutes and will be open until May 1, 2006. To access the survey, please click on the following link: http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.asp?A=125762105E1902

Thank you in advance for your time and commitment to the student affairs profession.

Respectfully,

Donna Fishbeck
Doctoral Student, University of North Dakota

To remove your name from the NDUS Student Affairs Professionals' listserve, click on the following link: http://www.surveymonkey.com/r.asp?A=125762105E1902

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