2018

How Federal Work-Study Affects the College Student Experience

Cole William Kallio-Crotteau

Eastern Illinois University

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How Federal Work-Study Affects the

College Student Experience

(TITLE)

BY

Cole William Kallio-Crotteau

THESIS

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE DEGREE OF

Masters of Sciences in College Student Affairs

IN THE GRADUATE SCHOOL, EASTERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY
CHARLESTON, ILLINOIS

2018

YEAR

I HEREBY RECOMMEND THAT THIS THESIS BE ACCEPTED AS FULFILLING
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Eastern Illinois University

Cole Kallio-Crotteau

ABSTRACT

By creating a quantitative assessment and using one on one interviews, participants were asked to describe their collegiate experience as it has changed and evolved while enrolled in the Federal Work-Study (FWS) program. To achieve the greatest amount of data, four participants were individually interviewed who currently held FWS-funded positions and determined the affects the program had on their time at the Midwestern institution. All participants perceived college experiences were impacted in some way positively, citing multiple examples of growth and development throughout their time involved.

Key words: Financial aid, student involvement, work

DEDICATION

I want to take this time to dedicate my thesis to those individuals that have given me the guidance and determination to successfully accomplish something that I did not think was possible. Without my mother, father, my siblings, my dear wife Shelby, and the memory of my grandfather, I would not be competing this tremendous milestone today.

To my mother Heidi, thank you for all of your love and compassion throughout my time here at Eastern. Without your support and always checking in on me, I probably would have gone crazy. Thank you for everything and being there for me always.

To my father Daren, your guidance and ability to push to me to do better has made this process so rewarding. Calling you a lot with random questions, asking random questions about master's degrees, and letting you know how I am doing are just a few of the things that I am grateful for.

To my siblings; Clayton, Caden, Caylee, and Cooper, thank you for your support and comedic relief. You guys are the best and you all have given me the motivation to succeed and overcome greater obstacles.

To Shelby, my wife, thank you for putting up with my late nights and early mornings on the job and in school. I know moving down to Charleston was a shock, but I could not have completed this achievement without your love, support, and always making sure that I am not procrastinating.

And to the memory of my grandfather Bill, this is to you. While you are not here with us physically, I know your spirit is with us and I wish you could be here to see this.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Chapter I

Introduction

The average cost of tuition across all institutions in the United States is now resting at

$20,090 per academic year, and students are turning to other means of financing their

education (Trends, 2016). According to the Department of Education and National Center

for Education Statistics or NCES (2016), financial aid use has risen amongst college

students. In the academic year 2013-2014, 85% of students working towards a full time,

four-year degree, were receiving some form of financial aid, either from a public or

private lender (NCES, 2016). With so many students now utilizing some type of financial

assistance, programs like federal work study (FWS) have become more necessary.

The working college student is facing a significant challenge. The idea of working

while enrolled in classes has been decreasing (Luckerson, 2014). Over the last 13 years, a

decrease in the total percentage of students holding down a part-time job while in college

has gone from 56% - 44% (Luckerson, 2014). This drop in full-time students working

part-time jobs has caused researchers to begin looking at reasons why this may be

occurring. Metcalf (2003) identified an outcome in a mixed-method case study done of

third-year students across four universities on consumption and rationale for employment

during term time. Metcalf (2003) found that students who identified a consistent use of

money in their daily lives or needed money while in college immediately turned to higher

education institutions, and sometimes their financial aid packages, as a source of funding

and entitlement to student loans. With over half of today's college students receiving

some sort of financial aid (NCES, 2016), it is vital to further look at students receiving

this type of aid. One of those aid packages may include work-study, the federal subsidized wage program that allows students to work while retaining some financial aid or other monetary assistance (Soliz & Long, 2016). According to College Board (2011), the federal government had spent over $1 billion dollars in 2010-2011 on funding of students in higher education. According to Robert Kelchen (2015), two of the largest campus-based federal aid programs, Federal Supplemental Education Opportunity Grant (FSEOG) and Federal Work Study (FWS) provide nearly $2 Billion in student financial aid. This is important to note because while FWS is one of the largest federal aid programs, it is seemingly under a microscope and being tested by political climate changes. Referring to President Donald Trump's 2018 budget proposal, a possible 49% cut in the FWS program looms, which could cause financial uncertainty for low-income students searching for on-campus jobs

(https://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/whitehouse.gov/files/omb/budget/fy2018/2018_bluepr int.pdf, 2017).

As students enter college, they face many challenges and need support to overcome their issues with more support than just financial aid. According to Scott-Clayton (2011), in regards to students staying enrolled in college while working, FWS (federal work study), when combined with other support, may encourage college access, and the discussion of its benefits generally emphasizes its potential role in promoting student's persistence" (pg. 507). What Scott-Clayton was referring to was the idea that students who receive more than just support financially in these positions; this support comes from coworkers and supervisors. This assistance in their work-study positions may lead to higher retention rates of the students.

One way to understand the undergraduate students' experience is through Astin's (1984) Theory of Involvement, which utilizes three elements that cause students to get and remain involved in college: Inputs, Environments, and Outputs. Astin's first element is the inputs, that is what they come to college with, such as financial assistance and a work ethic. Astin's second element is the environment; for a work-study student, the environment can include the work environment, supervisor and co-worker interaction, and the academic culture and expectations placed on them. It can be the sense of belonging in the workplace and the flexibility of a student's work to ensure they are getting balance with work and studying. Astin's theory ends with outputs which are about what the student gets out of their involvement. In the case of students on work-study, it is not only about their academics but also work ethic and sense of belonging in more than one location on campus.

Students on FWS could have positive or negative experiences related to a variety of factors. Soliz & Long (2016) stated that freshman on FWS could come into college, be employed in the environment they live in, and still see their grades be negatively affected. Returning to Scott-Clayton's (2011) findings, the students using FWS identified with greater persistence in their academic careers because of their employment and support from those who worked with them. These two cases deal with the same subject matter but have different results. Thus, further research is needed to understand students experience who are utilizing the FWS benefits.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to understand and explore the relationship between students perceived college experience while utilizing federal work study (FWS) as a form

of financial aid and living on campus. Over two billion dollars are spent in student financial aid every year (Kelchen, 2015), however a lack of empirical evidence or research can be found about the relationship between student's perceived college experiences and the impact of utilizing FWS as part of their financial aid package on said experiences.

Research Questions

With many two and four-year colleges and universities providing FWS to students who meet the eligibility requirements, students with FWS will take on some increased responsibilities and requirements while they live on-campus. This study investigated the students perceived college experience while being a part of the FWS program.

RQ 1. In what ways does the work-study position impact the student's academic experience?

RQ 2. In what ways does the work-study position impact the student's sense of responsibility?

RQ 3. In what ways does the work-study position impact the student's sense of belonging in college?

Significance of the Study

College students have the inevitable aspect of stress in their lives as it stems from numerous, diverse sources (Baghurst & Kelley, 2014). These stressors can have effects on a student's perceived college experience. Baghurst and Kelley (2014) identified that this might be largely due to societies tendency to consider entering and assimilation into college as a declaration of becoming an adult. The result of this present study provides university faculty and staff insight into how a student's college experience is shaped

while utilizing FWS as a form of financial aid. Astin (1984) identified student involvement as a key component to college success and the outcomes that the student achieves. In this study, holding a FWS position is considered one form of involvement, and was looked at in relation to other areas where they were actively involved.

Students will be impacted by this study due to its insight into the effects that FWS has on the perceived college experience. Students involved in activities that are supplemental to their school work are sometimes secondary and overlooked due to the time constraints and class load. This study is significant to the students because it may help define certain parameters or characteristics that students have when interacting in their place of work and how it shapes their experience. By identifying these characteristics, professionals can assist students in learning to adapt and grow from areas that are in need of improvement while they balance working and learning. This may also translate to a greater understanding for the FWS positions supervisor.

Why this study may be significant to supervisors of FWS positions is to help maintain and stimulate growth in students taking these positions and as well as retaining students for the following semester or year. Student employment attrition is something that needs to be combatted, as cited by Luckerson (2014) students holding part-time jobs have dropped dramatically. A study into the students' experiences in these FWS positions could provide insight as to the actual experiences they have in these positions.

Financial Aid will find this study useful as it can assist with understanding students' academic desires and pressures, as well as, help students become more knowledgeable about the FWS process. Students leaving employment opportunities after a short period of time may be caused by unhappiness or inability to fit into their working

environment. Understanding the students' need and desires of what they look forward to getting out of the FWS program, will assist Financial Aid in being able to tailor their placement of employees based on characteristics and interests. While making sure the position is relatable, making the process more convenient and understanding for students to grasp will also help.

Limitations of the Study

One limitation that this qualitative study faced was the limited number of interviews with students who are in a FWS program position. This study was limited to 4 participants who all had a range of different insights into their own positions. This study only looked at students holding FWS positions on campus, and not normal paid positions on or off campus. These different perceptions, along with different jobs, makes this study seemingly more difficult to conclude because there is no ability to generalize. With only four student participants, their experiences differed based on multiple extraneous variables that could not be accounted for, including past experiences prior to attending college. As a qualitative study, the purpose was to provide the students' perspectives only, in an attempt to provide insight in to their individual experiences and not provide generalized insight. The information gained through this study will also assist in providing better training, information, and resources to improve students' experiences.

A second limitation is that we may not gain full insight into how students are being engaged in their FWS position (Huie, Winsler, & Kitsantas, 2014). Students go through a lot of change in their college career, and there may be some areas of concern when they are a part of a FWS position that does not align with their major or interests. Trying to utilize a student's major/career aspirations for job placement could provide a

greater emphasis on the student's working outcome. Students may also feel the need to lie about their experience as they feel as though they would not want to be seen as a success in school and cannot balance their academics and working with the other facets of the college experience. I will work to remove this challenge by selecting students who are in at least their second year of college and in their FWS role along with building trust through the interview process and telling them that everything we speak of is confidential.

A third limitation of the study is myself, the researcher. At my undergraduate institution located in the rural Midwest, I was given the opportunity to receive FWS and work a position within a residence hall as a Desk Assistant. For two years I received the FWS and continued to work for the same supervisors in the same residence hall. In my final year of school, I lost my FWS status and was left with decisions to make about affording college. I did not understand why I had lost it and no one was able to give me a specific reason as to what caused it. This caused quite a bit of frustration and tension between myself and the university as I found this to be unfair. Having worked in a FWS position and experienced frustration in my experiences, I will try and keep my bias out of the research and ensure that I take a neutral stance when individuals disseminate their experiences. I will look to limit my input to students and make sure that I analyze the data as is presented by the participants.

A final limitation of this study was the student willingness to participate in the study in a truthful manner. Students may have been apprehensive to participate in this study due to a lack of understanding of the purpose of the research. It was imperative that they were allowed to ask questions before and during the study. However, with that

apprehension and questioning, students may have feared to participate in the study as they may have thought their answers could have had a negative effect on their job status in the FWS program. This was combated by informing them of the process of confidentiality that I went through with the data. I told them that the only people that would be allowed to see this information was myself and the faculty assisting me with this study in the College of Student Affairs program.

Definition of Terms

Federal Work-Study. Provides part-time jobs for undergraduate and graduate students with financial need, allowing them to earn money to help pay education expenses. The program encourages community service work and work related to the student's course of study. (Federal Student Aid, 2017)

Financial Aid. Any grant or scholarship, loan, or paid employment offered to help a student meet his/her college expenses. (NYSFAAA, 2017)

Involve. To engage as a participant; to oblige to take part of in terms of acting upon an extracurricular activity. Involvement can be both active and passive, with all individuals choosing to participate. (Webster, 2018).

Merit-based Aid. Aid derived and distributed more on a student's talents and abilities that can be brought to help the college compete in areas like academics, athletics, or artistic abilities. (Princeton Review, 2017)

Need-based Aid. aid that is based solely on the assets and income of the prospective student, including: family size, income, assets, taxes, savings, etc. (Princeton Review, 2017)

Student-Worker. Student employment means having a full or part-time job while going to college as a full-time student. A full-time student usually carries at least 12 credit hours per semester. (Webster, 2016)

Summary

With student employment as a whole dropping over the last 13 years (Luckerson, 2014), it is imperative to understand the relationship between academics and how they play a role within the working student's college experience. With a lack of empirical evidence available on the topic of Federal Work Study and its relationship to perceived experiences, this study would help understand the factors interactions. Utilizing the student's experiences in a FWS program, this study would be able to help benefit all those who play a direct role in a student's experience within the program. The student, the supervisor, and even Financial Aid personnel will be able to utilize the data and outcomes from the study to create greater initiatives and program to benefit their student employees. In Chapter II, the literature will provide insight into Federal Work Study and its effects on academics, involvement, sense of belonging, and college affordability.

Chapter II

Literature Review

Prior research on work study has been somewhat limited to its effects on student academics and affordability of college. Other factors that are seemingly limited in information when it comes to this limited research is the effects that work study has on student retention, social and cognitive growth, and student perceived college experience. The following literature review will examine the Federal Work Study (FWS) program impacts the affordability of college, as well as the impact it has on their overall collegiate experience. This chapter will also review student involvement, academic achievement, and a sense of belonging as it's used as a stepping stone into understanding its overall effect on the perceived college experience.

College Affordability and Financial Assistance

College tuition is on the rise according to the Trends in Higher Education 2016-2017 report. On average published undergraduate charges by different sectors of higher education costs are still growing. It was reported that in 2016-2017 academic year, 4-year public institutions costs in tuition, fees, and room and board rose by almost 3% (Trends, 2016). Respectively, public four-year institutions saw their total costs for in state students rise from $19,570 in the previous academic year (2015-2016) to $20,090 in the current academic year (2016-2017); a rise of $520 or 2.7% (Trends, 2016). For out-of-state students attending the same institution, they saw an increase in overall cost from $34,220 to $35,370; an increase of $1,150 or 3.4% (Trends, 2016). The same could be said for Private Nonprofit 4-year institutions, see a rise from $43,870 to $45,370; that is $1,500 or

3.4% (Trends, 2016). Of the 20 million students enrolled in college, 71% or 14,200,000 of those students are receiving some form of financial aid (NSAFAA, 2016).

Misconception of Financial Aid. In an article written by Northern, O'Brien, and Goetz (2010) about the validation of financial stress on undergraduate students, they identified this as a significant source of stress for many college students. One of the major reasons for financial stress in college is because the primary purpose of financial aid is misconstrued. Park, Denson, and Johnson (2014) wrote that this omission comes from what financial aid was primarily created for, which is to help with the contributions to existing enrollment and retention (Park et al., 2014). That idea brings the notion that Financial Aid Awards are merely in place to help parents and students alike make up for some of the costs that they may incur outside of their own expected contribution, which is somewhat contradictory to what awards like FWS were created for in 1965 (Government Publishing Office, 1965).

Students facing this dilemma of making a lower than expected financial contribution for college may feel stigmatized in a way. According to research on student's stress and pressure from financial complications completed by Case (2013), students who were facing these financial strains tended to feel as though they are not as worthy as other college students because of the stereotypes students from lower socioeconomic statuses face. Here the idea brought forward by Senator Pell and the inclusive verbiage of his amendment in 1992 seems to be left aside, even with the amendment stating that financial aid award like FWS can go towards supporting qualified students (All Bill Information for H.R.4471, 1992). The purpose of his research was to identify how these thoughts and implications which stemmed from financial instability

impacted the students and what counselors in the collegiate environment could do to help ease these stressors (Case, 2013). With more than 80% of the nation believing that attending college has too big of a price tag, these feelings of stigmatization may become greater due to students needing more support from their financial aid package but not attempting to ask for more assistance due to the preconceived feelings (Hornak, Farrell, & Jackson, 2010).

Wexler (2016), a contributor to Insidehighered.com, made a preliminary attempt at answering the question of why the cost of attending college was increasing. She stated that, "colleges increase tuition even more, because they know financial aid can cover the difference. Student aid may cover more of students' tuition -- but if the aid wasn't available, tuition might not have gone up in the first place" (https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2016/02/09/study-increased-student-aid-not-faculty-salaries-drives-tuition, 2016). Dynarski & Scott-Clayton (2013) provided other means of explanation into how financial aid was being perceived and how it may be convoluted in today's collegiate landscape. What Dynarski & Scott-Clayton found in their research on college costs and the impact on attendance from financial aid is that the amount of aid rising is not a problem but achieving that aid has become complex.

In certain aid programs like federal loans or merit-based aid from the institution itself, there are simple guidelines to follow to receive financial assistance (Dynarski & Scott-Clayton, 2013). However, when the Pell Grant process is completed, it operates under very complex protocol as it is tied in with the FAFSA application. In a study done by McKinney & Novak (2015), that looked at the filing behaviors of students towards the FAFSA application, a pre-existing survey was analyzed from the National Center for

Educational Statistics (NCES) on beginning postsecondary students across public and

private, four-year and two-year institution's, and community colleges. The resulting

analysis of the data concluded that the complexity and timing of the FAFSA application

caused many students who would have applied for financial aid to decide against it citing

that they believed they would not receive any aid. What was determined by Dynarski &

Scott-Clayton (2013) and renewed by McKinney & Novak (2015), was that financial aid

works; however, due to complex processes and procedures some types of aid are viewed

as more helpful than others and that the application process for others may not be

worthwhile. With the FAFSA application being so long at 128 questions, students could

face increasing issues with its questions and requests for personal information (Castleman

& Page, 2016).

State and Federal Funding of Institution. The funding of higher education and

its longstanding institutions has received more and more attention due to increased cuts

and lagging budget problems. Zumeta (2008), author of *Higher Education Funding: On*

The Way Up, But for How Long? recognized a key statistic that brought new thought to

the cost of higher education. He stated that tuition revenues actually replaced state

funding at institutions within the U.S. by 15%, creating a growth of nearly 73% in tuition

costs since 1980 (Zumeta, 2008). Which means institutions are raising their tuition rates

to cover the dwindling funds from the state. With tuition increases made to cover

decreasing state funding, what is to happen to federal funding of these financial aid

programs that are designed to be used on specific initiatives and not the institution as a

whole? Federal funding is generally awarded through student aid and research grants

which are tied in with student's merit and need-based aid at the institution (Woodhouse,

2015). Zumeta (2008) brings forward the idea that higher education institutions are facing a deficit in funding from their respective states, which may have a negative dissenting effect on the students who are looking to receive federal support.

In a follow-up article, *Are States Coming Back to Aid Higher Education* by Zumeta (2016) he asserted that based on the level in per-student term's, with adjustment to inflation, that higher education support has been on a negative level that has not been seen since the 2008-2009 Great Recession. College Board (2016), a not-for-profit organization that helps to connect students to college success and opportunities, provided insight into the amount of state financial aid coming to individual students attending public institutions. What was found by College Board was that from the academic years 2002-2003 to 2012-2013 the amount of state and local appropriation for college revenue per full time student has dropped at a significant rate (from $7,090 per FTE or Full-Time Equivalent in 2007-2008 to $5,010 in 2012-2013 respectively). When this drop occurred over the course of five years, the amount of net tuition revenue per FTE increased (College Board, 2015) therefore providing evidence that net tuition revenues are becoming a more common source of funding possibly at a student expense.

A contributor to Wexler's (2016) article, John Bradshaw of the American Association of University Professors, researched and validated Ehrenberg's statement through his own research, stating that, "As states increased their funding, the net price dropped" (p. 1). The result of this drop remains to be determined as so many facets may affect the net cost of college. However, institutionally speaking, financial aid is an area that does not flux as much with a change in state funding. According to Robert Shireman (2009), most institutions take "living expenses" into consideration when determining

financial aid, however this is not a standard operation. In McKinney and Novak's article (2015), the complexity faced in receiving financial aid does not just stem from the student's perspective, but also from the institution's guidance and disclaimer of what is covered in their financial aid packages. Institutions have the ability to pick and choose certain areas of aid to provide for, and this variance can be seen across different types of educational institutions like a public four-year to two-year school (Shireman, 2009).

Forms of Financial Aid and Accessibility. National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators (2016) states that 71% of the 20 million students enrolled in degree granting colleges and universities receive some form of financial aid. This means that almost three-fourths of college students all over the U.S. are facing affordability problems that are complex and stressful. An area of misunderstanding for students who may be accepting financial aid is the multiple types of aid available and the needs of future repayment or no repayment at all. These financial aid awards come in four forms: grants, scholarships, loans, and work-study (Collegequest, 2014). The first three will be covered below with work-study receiving its own section later in this chapter.

Grants. Grants, which are often called "gift aid" because they are free money, is financial aid that doesn't have to be repaid. However, specific grants such as the TEACH grant have service agreements that require a specific amount of time that the individual must teach in the state. Grants are often *need-based* aid that can come from any governing body for financial aid (Grants, 2016). Grants are the toughest form of financial aid to receive as they range in three forms: need-based, merit based, and student-specific. Need-based grants and aid is based solely on the assets and income of the prospective student, thus creating an atmosphere where students who are in need of the aid can

receive it without competing like the other two forms (Princeton Review, 2017). Merit-based grants is derived and distributed more on a student's talents and abilities that can be brought to help the college compete in areas like academics, athletics, or artistic abilities (Princeton Review, 2017). While grants can be found in merit-based aid, it is worth noting that scholarships are the more common type of aid given here. Finally, there is student-specific grants which are held and given to students who meet a certain criterion or description like being a minority, a woman, or an individual with disabilities (Collegequest, 2014). This form of grant money is the fiercest as there is typically smaller amount of money available and more people who apply and compete to receive that money. Grants can be found at all levels of financial aid as they are distributed at the institution, state, and federal level.

Scholarships. A previously mentioned form of financial aid that is given to students is scholarships, which like grants, are free monies that do not need to be repaid back (Collegequest, 2014). Scholarships can be classified under merit-based aid and are typically offered by an individual's institutions and private organizations that allocate funds to be given to students looking to complete a certain degree or meet a certain criterion (Collegequest, 2014). Unlike the state funding issues that were brought up by Zumeta (2008) and Woodhouse (2015), scholarships can be independently funded through private donors and accounts. The reason that scholarships are more merit-based is because most scholarships are awarded based on academic performance, athletic abilities, race, etc. without taking into account a student's financial need (Collegequest, 2014). While there is free money to be given to prospective students, there are also forms of the aid that have a price tag.

Loans. Loans are the most well-known type of financial aid as they are normally offered as a part of an institutions aid package (Federal Student Aid, 2017). The U.S. Department of Education has two federal student loan programs that can be given out. The first federal student loan program is the Federal Perkins Loans, which ended in September of 2017, is a school-based loan program which allocates funds to the school to disburse and act as the official lender of the aid (Federal Student Aid, 2017) The second is Direct Loans, which are comprised of four sub-types; (Federal Student Aid, 2017). The four sub-types of the Direct Loan offered are: Subsidized loans which are offered to eligible undergraduate students who demonstrate the need for the additional aid to cover the costs of the institution (Federal Student Aid, 2017) The next loan is the Unsubsidized loan which is made eligible to students ranging from undergraduate to professional level that do not demonstrate the need for the assistance but are eligible through the FAFSA application (Federal Student Aid, 2017). The remaining two sub-types of federal loans are the Direct PLUS and the Direct Consolidation loans. Direct Plus loans are given to individuals of graduate or professional levels, or students who are dependent of a parent or guardian, that need help to pay for any costs not covered by other financial aid (Federal Student Aid, 2017). The last loan sub-type is the Direct Consolidation loan which, by definition, is a way that allows the borrower to consolidate down all other federal education loans into one payment instead of multiple different one's (Federal Student Aid, 2017). All of the given loans above are subject to information received through the FAFSA application process and distributed through the institutions specific Financial Aid department.

Federal Work-Study

Federal Work Study (FWS) in the United States is a type of financial assistance program that helps approximately 3,400 post-secondary institutions with retaining current students and generating more affordable opportunities for students who qualify (Dept. of Education, 2014). With approximately 4,726 degree granting institutions located in the U.S. (NCES, 2016), the $2 billion dollars in aid that it provides allows students to attend an institution and makes it that much more affordable (Kelchen, 2015). Federal Work-Study provides part-time jobs to undergraduate and graduate students alike with financial needs that allows them to receive an income while also helping to pay college expenses (Federal Student Aid, 2017). This program was created to help encourage student exploration into their field of choice and create community service opportunities (Federal Student Aid, 2017). This form of aid comes directly from the federal government and must be distributed by the institution which must follow strict guidelines. Of the forms of financial aid available to students, Federal Work-Study is the only form available that allows the students to make a monetary income while simultaneously allowing them to succeed in their knowledge and experience throughout college (Federal Student Aid, 2017).

History of Federal Work-Study as a Proponent to Financial Aid. The premise of the FWS program and its effect on students' affordability in college is a very recent addition to the long history of financial aid. In 1964, the Economic Opportunity Act was passed which formalized a new goal to help mobilize the financial and human resources of the United States, while maximizing the potential of the students utilizing it (Campus Compact, 2016). The initiating organization of the new act was the U.S. Congress and

was signed as a bill under Lyndon B. Johnson. The Act created new ideas and proposed

for students to attend college and prepare them for the responsibility of citizenship and

prepare men and women in their late teens to enter into a profession with valuable work

experience (Campus Compact, 2016). This legislation would provide a framework to help

students gain access to job experience that was usable in multiple areas.

After the Economic Opportunity Act was passed, it was later revised under the

Higher Education Act of 1965 to help "stimulate and promote the part-time employment

of students, particularly students from low-income families, that are in need of the

earning to pursue courses of study" (https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/STATUTE-

79/pdf/STATUTE-79-Pg1219.pdf). What the law was enacted to do was to help students

who may be unable to meet the affordability requirements of the institutions they are

interested in and are therefore given the opportunity to work as a representative of the

institution while procuring a stipend income. By doing this, the initial enactment of the

program would create opportunities of inequity right away because of the preference

given to socio-economic status without consideration of other factors. However, Senator

Clairborne Pell would break ground with this revised act in 1992 (All Bill Information for

H.R.4471, 1992).

This provision of preference was later challenged and amended in 1992 under the

Higher Education Amendment by Senator Pell (All Bill Information for H.R.4471, 1992).

The wording was amended and changed to, "Supporting qualified students' educational

costs through self-help payments or credits provided under the institution's work-learning

program within the limits of student aid program provisions"

(https://www.congress.gov/bill/102nd-congress/house-bill/4471/all-info). Those

qualifications would be identified through a new initiative started at the same time in 1992, the Free Application for Federal Student Aid or FAFSA application (Fuller, 2014).

The FAFSA application worked to simplify the information that students and their families needed to provide to receive any amount of federal student aid to attend college, including FWS. This total amount of contribution from the student/student's family is known as the "Expected Family Contribution (EFC)" (Baldwin, 2013). So, if a student is to attend Harvard, which has a total cost of $63,025 (Harvard, 2017) and their family's EFC is expected to be $30,000, then the students would be entitled to $33,025 in various forms of financial aid. What has O'Sullivan and Setzer (2014) identified is that the formula used in the FAFSA is in need of revitalization. The formula has been used for so long that it is now outdated, and they recommended replacing it with an updated version to allow for more uniformity and consistency of the disbursed aid (O'Sullivan & Setzer, 2014).

With a possibly of an updated formula and more guidance, individuals entering into higher education may be more suited for the financial choices if available. Students entering into post-secondary education can be swayed to enroll into a specific college or university by what they can receive in federal or private aid (Scott-Clayton, 2016). However, this situation does not imply that all aid programs are equally effective (Scott-Clayton, 2016). The possibility of creating a clear understanding of how students assess their financial aid packages and which parts of the aid are most coveted could occur. While it may be understood as to why subsidized loans are taken out, just 4% of college students receive support from the Federal Work-Study program, which was established to

help provide job opportunities to lower income students (Broton, Goldrick-Rab, &

Benson, 2014).

Disbursement of Federal Work Study and other Financial Aid Awards. For

an institution to receive any type of funding from Federal Student Aid (FSA) programs,

certain criteria must be met as well as specific procedures that need to be followed.

According to Informational for Financial Aid Professionals (IFAP), which is directly

associated with the Department of Education and Federal Student Aid program, there are

three types of eligible institutions: institutions of higher education, proprietary

institutions of higher education, and postsecondary vocational institutions (IFAP, 2016).

Each institution operates with specific purposes that are to be outlined and approved by

the Department of Education and any other governing bodies that are affiliated with the

institution (IFAP, 2016). Below are the outlined institutional types and their criterion they

must meet, as well as some examples of that type of institution.

Institute of higher education. The first type of institution that is eligible is an

Institute of Higher Education, which is defined as "A public or private nonprofit

educational institution located in a state" (IFAP, 2016, p. 6). Of the approximately 20

million students enrolled in degree-granting institutions in the U.S. (NASFAA, 2016),

roughly 18 million students are attending a nonprofit educational institution (Goldstein,

2017). To be considered a part of this type of institution, it must also admit students that

have a certificate of graduation, diploma or other form of alternative graduate degree like

G.E.D., for the purpose of educating those students to receive at minimum a two-year

degree (Cornell Law, 2017). These institutions must: offer associate, bachelor, graduate,

or professional degree-programs in multiple areas, two years of acceptable credit towards

any bachelor's degrees, and other non-degree recognized certifications and credentials to help with gainful employment opportunities (IFAP, 2016).

   Proprietary institution of higher education. The second eligible institution is called a *Proprietary Institution of Higher Education* or a private, for-profit educational institution located in a state (IFAP, 2016). Approximately two million individuals are enrolled in for-profit institutions, which is a dramatic increase from 400,000 in 2000 (Goldstein, 2017). These institutions have the same admission standards as a public or private non-profit institution; that is individuals needing to have a high school diploma or recognized equivalence (IFAP, 2016). These institutions have come under speculation recently as ninety-four percent of the students in attendance pay their tuition fees with Federal Student Loans, and the vast majority of these students are not completing their degree programs (Goldstein, 2017). These institutions offer specific programs, with the majority in online forms, like those of a nonprofit institution. Many are offering similar degrees as their nonprofit counterparts such as Business, Criminal Justice, or even Nursing (Kaplan, 2017). These forms of institutions must provide training for gainful employment in a recognized occupation, provide a program leading to a baccalaureate degree in liberal arts, and meet one of three other specific criteria based upon the degree being pursued (IFAP, 2016). It must also continuously meet for a period of at least: 15 weeks (accumulating 600 clock hours) for counting as classwork towards a degree of at least baccalaureate status, 10 weeks and 300 clock hours for graduate degrees, and a similar timeframe to the master's degree track for an associate degree (IFAP, 2016).

   Postsecondary vocational institution. The final eligible institution that can receive any form of FSA is *Postsecondary Vocational Institution*, which is defined

exactly the same as an *Institution of Higher Education* (IFAP, 2016). This type of

institution is geared towards training and gainful employment experience that is directed

towards a recognized occupation, much like a trade-school (IFAP, 2016). With equal

admission standards like the two other eligible institution types, *Postsecondary*

Vocational Institution's has the ability to bring a new vision to the education system and

insight into workforce development (Grubb, 2001). This area was a significant source of

interest to W. Norton Grubb (2001) who became interested in how the perceptions and

outcomes of the previously listed eligible institutions interacted with the vocational

programs that were offered at other postsecondary opportunities. One area that he became

concerned with was "the continuing division between education and workforce

development" that was offered in differing areas and institutions because it lacked a

coherent system (Grubb, 2001, p. 36). Like that of the *Proprietary Institution of Higher*

Education, *Postsecondary Vocational Institutions* must also continuously meet for a

period of at least: 15 weeks (accumulating 600 clock hours) for counting as classwork

towards a degree of at least equal baccalaureate status, 10 weeks and 300 clock hours for

equal graduate degrees, and a similar timeframe to the master's degree track for an

associate degree level of education (IFAP, 2016).

Accreditation and Regulations. Once a new or existing institution that is

deemed eligible by the Department of Education, they must enter into a process in

achieving a Program Participation Agreement (PPA) which is covered under the Title IV

of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (IFAP, 2016). This agreement, which must be

signed and approved by a school's president, CEO, or chancellor and then authorized by

the Secretary of Education, is the term-based standing contract that binds the school to

receiving FSA under certain regulations (IFAP, 2016). Agencies like the Accrediting Commission of Career Schools and Colleges or the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools, The Higher Learning Commission, are just some of the many agencies that schools can apply for accreditation under to recognize them as a true institution of higher education (Accreditation, 2017). These agencies are placed in positions of authority that deal directly with concerns of the quality of higher education programs or trainings that are offered; it is important to note that this process of accreditation did arise before the Higher Education Act of 1965, therefore streamlining the accreditation mandate passed under Title IV (Accreditation, 2017).

Once the accreditation of the institution has been recognized and approved, the criterion is than reviewed. Certain criteria that must be met to ensure that there is no loss of eligibility are: admission standards, limitations on student population previously held education, and any formal background in crime-related activities (IFAP, 2016). In regards to admission standards, schools must be utilizing a non-biased formula of accepting students in while still ensuring that the prospective students are withholding a high school diploma or similar form of graduation documentation as previous stated. With that admission standard, student may enter into college while still enrolled into a secondary school. However, criteria regarding this standard also states that no more than 50% of the student population can be without a diploma or another related form of documentation that provides a certificate of completion (IFAP, 2016). The school must also have a limit of no greater than 25% of the student population being previously incarcerated, leading to the final factor for loss of eligibility in committing crimes while having an active FSA Program (IFAP, 2016). If a school is found to be involved in any sort of criminal activity

while possessing FSA program-based funds, there PPA can be immediately revoked and a loss of federal aid will ensue (IFAP, 2016).

Once a PPA for the specific college or university has been submitted, it will be reviewed based-on its merit and background of information in support of the institution and its program that is offers (IFAP, 2016). Within this information listed is also the requested forms) of FSA being inquired about, from direct loans, to Pell grants, and even FWS. (IFAP, 2016). Once all the information has been reviewed, the PPA can be notarized and approved to move forward. It is from here forth that any approved FSA funds can be given to the institution for its specific purpose in assisting the college or universities students with certain financial considerations. This process is then turned over to the institution whom uses forms like the FAFSA application and other need-based aid to help with the distribution.

Distribution to the Student Population. Once the institution has received their federal and state appropriated funding from the Department of Education and state budget respectively, they then turn to merit-based aid applications and the Free Application of Federal Student Aid, or FAFSA. While the governing body has the ability to sort through and select essays, scholarship awards, and other merit-based applications, it must operate under different measures when reviewing students FAFSA applications. The FAFSA has become widely recognized as a crucial part for students in accessing college, especially those coming from low to moderate-income households (Kofoed, 2013). This application, which is now found online, serves as a gateway for students to have their information reviewed by their attending institution. The FAFSA application can be found online and

is a five page, 128 question survey that is to be completed during a specifically

designated time (Castleman & Page, 2016).

When filing the FAFSA, having it completed with a short frame of time can pose

as an advantage for those students. Once a student has completed their application, their

expected family contribution (EFC) is taken into consideration against the cost of

attendance (COA) of the school in question (Baldwin, 2013). This gives the direct

amount of need-based aid that is to be awarded to the student. This amount cannot be

received in excess of the need-based aid that was given, so if a student is awarded $4,000

in need-based aid, it cannot receive any excess aid in the form of Pell Grants, loans,

Federal Work Study (FWS), or Federal Supplemental Education Opportunity Grants

(FSEOG) (How Aid is Calculated, 2017). In certain circumstances, students who file

earlier may receive more aid than those who file their application later even with an equal

need for aid due to fewer funds available to those applicants for need-based aid

(LaManque, 2009). After the awards have been created, they are then disbursed to the

students to accept part or all the award that is suitable to them. The students must then

complete their Masters Promissory Note, which is a legal and binding contract that states

the terms and conditions of the loans received, to ensure the loans are to paid back

(American Education Services, 2014).

Affordability and Success Through Federal Work Study. It is not far off to say

that having an unmet financial need could possibly stunt a student's success in college

(Welbeck, Diamond, Mayer, and Richburg-Hayes, 2014). According to Welbeck,

Diamond, Mayer, and Richburg-Hayes (2014), "work-study could be expanded to more

low-income students to reduce their need to work full-time job disconnected from their

educational pursuits" (pg. 19). Federal Work-Study has the ability to help student pursue

their educational interests both in and out of the college environment with civic

opportunities. While this statement by Welbeck at al. is specific to low-income students,

their perception could help with making progress within the FWS program in creating

new guidelines for disbursement by the federal government to help decrease any

affordability problems and increase support to qualified students

(https://www.congress.gov/bill/102nd-congress/house-bill/4471/all-info, 2017).

O'Sullivan and Setzer (2014) also helped to shed light on the affordability aspect

of college through a greater and possibly more improved FWS program with a new

disbursement formula. This formula could be created and used by all institutions,

regardless of what is covered under their financial aid awards (Shireman 2009).

According to Sullivan and Setzer (2014), "the FWS formula is outdated, and we

recommend replacing it with a new one" (pg. 8). Their point in trying to revitalize and

rework the formula for proper FWS disbursement is one that will allow for greater

student affordability in college, much like what was found by Dynarski & Scott-Clayton

(2013) in that aid is beneficial to all enrolled with the right guidance.

Bridging that gap of affordability also brings to question the ability to pay back

that financial assistance once a students' collegiate career has been completed. According

to Paul Fain's (2015) review of a study conducted by two researchers at the Community

College Research Center (CCRC) at Columbia University's Teacher College, "students in

FWS are 21 percentage points more likely to borrow during their first year of college"

(pg. 1). This correlated out to an approximate increase of cumulative undergraduate debt

load by about $6,263 greater than non-FWS participants (Fain, 2015). Within the same

study conducted by the CCRC, it was identified that roughly 700,000 students in the U.S. who were first-year, full-time undergraduate students receive FWS subsidies every year (Fain, 2015). Shireman (2009) discussed this issue of increased need for financial support to students, even those not receiving FWS, due to the fluidity of institutional definitions of what aid is to cover and not cover when awarded (Shireman, 2009).

Impact of Involvement

Student involvement was defined by Alexander Astin in 1984 as "the amount of physical and psychological energy that a student devotes to the academic experience" (p. 297). The Student Involvement Theory fostered by Astin (1984) helps to provide better insight into the aspects of student involvement that are prevalent in the approach, attempt, and successful assimilation into involvement. Astin's theory on involvement assists faculty and staff in working with students who are involved on campus, including those who work in FWS positions. Understanding these factors and stages of change allows for more insight into the investment, engagement, and degree of involvement that students have at the university and how those around them can provide support. Astin increased insight into the involvement experiences of the students which are laid out in greater detail below.

Alexander Astin (1999) created 5 postulates to help expand on his definition of involvement in college: referring to the investment of physical and psychological energy, that it occurs along a continuum or to different degrees, it has both quantitative and qualitative features, the quality and quantity of involvement within the program or event, and the effectiveness of the education policies for the encouragement of involvement. Physical and psychological energy investment is related to the overall objects that the

students may interact with (Astin, 1999). These "objects" can be both specific or general, academic or activity focused. An example would be the investment into the student experience as highly generalized as it can encompass a variety of objects, while studying to get an A on a midterm exam can be more specific. Students working in a FWS position may see their work as academic focused if they are working in an office for an academic department. A student may not enjoy their position and thus may not put as much energy into the position.

With the first postulate setting the tone for the description and specification of the object, the second postulate creates the idea that the involvement of the students is always persisting and continuing while the student is in college. A study was completed by Milem & Berger (1997) with a sample of 1,547 first-time freshmen to understand first year undergraduate student persistence at a private Southeastern university. The results of this study, which utilized Astin's Theory of Involvement and Tinto's Theory of Student Departure as its theoretical framework, brought about a significant finding amongst the students; stating that involvement that occurs consistently throughout a student's college career is key to their overall persistence at the private university and that promoting continuous and early opportunities for involvement is more beneficial to their college experience (Berger & Milem, 1997). Some FWS students may see their position as a way of becoming involved and may invest in the position, however after one year students may not be allowed to return to the position interfering with their continuous involvement.

The third and fourth postulate, which details the specific amount and quality of the involvement opportunities and its qualitative and quantitative features, is a

cornerstone of overall student growth (Astin, 1999). Astin (1999) provided these postulates in a direct way, that it is the "quality and quantity" of the involvement experience and its distinguishable features that effects the students. This idea is also provided responsibility and accountability to the students: how much time and energy are they willing to put in to the position and whether that they are internally or externally motivated. Hernandez, Hogan, Hathaway, and Lovell (1999) provided an analysis of Astin's 5 postulates and gave quite a bit of insight into his third postulate. They stated, "part of the responsibility for the impact of the college depends on the degree to which students take advantage of the institutions resources" (Hernandez et al., 1999, p. 185). What they meant here was that the third postulate is not only applicable to the opportunities the university has for students to get involved in and their repetition of the opportunity, but it also falls upon the students to take advantage and hold themselves accountable to participate in the opportunities that university provides. A student may be awarded a FWS position but may not be satisfied with the location, thus not showing up or investing in the work place. However, another student may really enjoy the position, the work, and the environment they are working in and invest a great deal of time and energy and seek new opportunities within that area, gaining new skills and experiences. Involvement is a continuum that only changes and never stops, and this postulate helps to spread the responsibility of the investment into these opportunities onto the students and the institution alike.

The fifth and final postulate is actually cited by Astin (1999) as not an actual postulate because it is subject to empirical proof, however it is considered a key educational portion of the group because of its resourcefulness. What Astin's was saying

about his fifth and final postulate was that it is the culmination of the previous four and is the final proof to his theoretical ideology. By students not incorporating or functioning with the above four postulates during their involvement they are not being developed holistically, or at least effectively developed, through their activities. This overall culmination in the understanding of involvement and its effects on the student are predominately placed upon themselves by engaging within their environment and those who share it with them.

Chi et al. (2016) cited faculty interaction and support revolving around students provided a personal growth in their identity and placement on campus. This involvement with the faculty is a cornerstone to the fifth and final postulate because it derives all of the previous postulates into one and incorporates Astin's (1984) definition of involvement in regards to academic investment. The fifth postulate which details the effectiveness of education policies or practices that are directly related to the practices that influence student involvement is a culmination of all aspects of the postulates into a formula for peak student success and collegiate investment.

These postulates revolved around student involvement and development on college campuses, with the majority of those postulates relating back to the effectiveness, investment, and personal development that students will encounter (as cited by Patton, Renn, Guido, & Quaye, 2016). Astin's placed much responsibility on those working at the institution, "College and university educators play a significant role in creating opportunities for students to be involved in meaningful and transformational education experiences" (as cited by Patton et al., 2016, p. 35). Faculty and staff play a significant role in developing an environment where students have opportunities to engage and

become involved on campus. Patton et al. (2016), along with the above postulates by Astin (1999), and Tinto's (1987) insight into student persistence through active involvement, stated that interaction with faculty and staff, along with involvement leads to a more holistic and well-rounded student. Additionally, the student can incorporate all of their individual experiences into their overall college experience. While these opportunities are important to the student, they are also important to the perception and understanding of student development, whether it be through co-curricular involvement or employment, as the college student is always able to be impacted through their activities and environment and student affairs professionals help to facilitate that.

These opportunities for involvement, both inside and outside of the classroom is the setting of the foundation for students to make development strides throughout their college career. Individuals enrolled in college, especially those at a four-year institution with an on-campus residential population, have the ability to become assimilated into a new culture like none they have experienced before. This culture, which includes peer, faculty, and institution interaction, is pivotal is student development and persistence as cited in a study by Berger & Milem (1999) who surveyed 1,061 first year students about their perceptions and experiences within their first year at a private, Southeastern institution over three periods throughout the 1995 academic year. The findings from this study identified that involvement, faculty involvement, and peer interaction that occurs early on in the student's collegiate career provides a greater sense of self, greater sense of placement in their environment, and a greater persistence of involvement in the given opportunities at the university as a whole (Berger & Milem, 1999). Higher education scholars and faculty are continuously researching and improving their ability to help

foster the student's whole development in these environments, creating new ideas and coming to new conclusions about the sum of the student development instead of looking at specific developmental areas (Patton et al., 2016). According to Elling & Elling (2000), students who do not become involved in campus activities will not receive the benefits of an enhanced learning experience through involvement which can also help with the retention of the student and assist them with greater personal development opportunities.

A student's collegiate journey is defined by the acquisition of knowledge through observed or personal experiences that cause them to adapt to their new surroundings (Webster, 2016). Hawkins (2010) completed a study at Purdue University on the effects of participation in student organizations and the perceived outcome it had on academic performance. The study including 28,148 participants found the mean GPA's measured from students who were involved on campus and who became over involved on campus had a harder time devoting attention to their academics (Hawkins, 2010). This over-involvement can mean that the student is spending more time with student organizations, job settings, or in social groups with a lack of attention to their class work. This was true when the number of organizations they associated with grew beyond one organization and reached a maximum amount of participation in six organizations (Hawkins, 2010). They also identified that this balancing act can discourage students from becoming more active in campus activities, which can include FWS positions (Hawkins, 2010). This possible discouragement through the balancing act is relatable to the ideas of Wolf-Wendel, Ward, & Kinzie (2009) which refined the understanding of involvement as a direct choice by the student therefore acknowledging that they are in control of their own

experiences. Colleges and universities can provide the opportunities and support for the students in many of their endeavors, but in the end all decisions and outcomes are placed directly upon the student.

From these findings and previously conflicting ideas, it is now debatable that involvement itself is the responsibility of the individual student and that their environment can only be a supporting factor in their overall growth as it is one part of their holistic college experience (Wolf-Wendel et al., 2009). While not partaking in different involvement opportunities on campus, students can also experience a stunt in their overall social interaction growth, creating a possibility of lower self-efficacy if they are unable to make connections with students who share the same interests (Hawkins, 2010). According to Astin (1984), "the greater the student's involvement in college, the greater will be the amount of student learning and personal development" (p. 529). Involvement in college is a term used very fluidly, which encompasses a variety of opportunities, including employment.

In research done by Kilgo, Mollet, & Pascarella (2016) on the effects of college student involvement on psychological well-being, 4,402 students from three different cohorts across 46 institutions were studied as part of the Wabash National Study of Liberal Arts Education. Their outcomes identified that for students who were significantly more involved in meaningful and interesting organizations and activities indicated a greater well-being when graduating (Kilgo et al., 2016). They also found that, "student involvement has a significant, positive link with end-of-fourth year psychological well-being, which can translate to greater persistence" (Kilgo et al., 2016, p. 1047). Incorporating employment into these diverse activities can allow for employees

to grow in areas that may not be changeable in the classroom setting. Students can develop increased emotional regulation, teamwork, social skills, and interpersonal involvement (Hansen & Larson, 2007) when they are able to participate in extracurricular activities or part-time employment.

Pascarella, Edison, Nora, Hagedorn, & Terenzini (1998) conducted a longitudinal study on part-time work being completed by undergraduate students, and their results identified that working in excess of 15 hours per week on-campus or 20 hours per week off-campus had negative effects on their academic work. These findings provided insight into the role of higher education and involvement in regards to employment as the fostering of positive interactions between faculty, staff members, and peers. These positive interactions can be very beneficial to students holistically because they are better able to interact and engage with the staff members and increase a sense of commitment to the university with faculty support (Pike, 2008). Lundberg (2004), also conducted a study on the overall effects of employment on students' interaction with peers and faculty and its impact on their overall learning, and found similar outcomes. With a sample of 3,744 undergraduates responding to a questionnaire, the results indicated that students who worked more than 20 hours per week off campus reported less overall engagement with faculty and peers (Lundberg, 2004). While professors and supervisors can battle over what the student really needs, it comes down to the student's personal preferences of how they wish to define their college experience.

Students have to prioritize many things such as employment, academics, and their social life and this requires a great deal of balance and support. Greene & Maggs (2014) talk in depth about their Time Trade-Off Hypothesis and how it helps to identify the

tradeoff between certain aspects of a student's life. What they discovered was that,

"students who spend an hour per day at their employment, spend approximately ten

minutes less on academics per day" (Greene & Maggs, 2014, pg. 1627). This tool could

be utilized when dealing with the academic portion of measuring the college experience

as it helps to dictate a straightforward explanation of what is occurring. Utilizing this

tool, along with cooperation from students of various academic credit standing, could be

beneficial in solving the puzzle that has become the college experience. Student

involvement is a forever changing definition and entity in and of itself, encompassing the

opportunities and challenges students face to achieve their own personal level of

excellence.

Academic Achievement

Student's entering into higher education today may face a variety of challenges

that impact the overall idea of academic success. Many of these challenges to academic

success are perceived solely by the students who are incorporating themselves into their

new environment. Some of the challenges faced by students, including those of first

generation status, include academic rigor or lack thereof, the ability to approach faculty

and staff when in need of assistance, and lack of knowledge of the university

environment pertaining to their classification. (Meyer, Spencer, & French, 2009). Many

researchers have explored these challenges and provided insight into what can be done to

combat these issues. With the understanding that the transition to college is trying on first

year students, it is the unknowingness of their new environment and its effects on their

personal and academic success that is difficult to comprehend. Woosley (2003) identified

this challenge to students' academic success in a review of data collected from a

graduating class of students in 1996. Woosley surveyed a sample of 2,554 individuals as they graduated, where participants were asked about their experiences on campus. What was found in these responses was that those graduating students identified that their first weeks spent on campus were influential in their growth and combating their adjustment to college (Woosley, 2003). The study identified that becoming a first-year college student meant entering into an unknown atmosphere has a direct effect on their success at the institution. While environmental factors contribute to student's overall experience during their time in college, a significant factor that is sometimes overlooked and placed together with environmental challenges is an awareness of academic rigor.

Academic rigor in college is often misunderstood by students as they enter. In a qualitative study completed by Meyer, Spencer, & French (2009) on college students assimilating into their new environment, students shared that they came in to college feeling stressed about doing well academically because of what they have heard prior to entering. Most of these students were first generation, and shared that at the end of the first semester/year they identified that their stress was unwarranted because the rigor was not as extremely difficult as they had anticipated. This misunderstood idea academic rigor and thusly creating an unneeded heightened sense of pressure in their collegiate environment distinguished Meyer et al. (2009) findings, in that more than 60% of students felt were not appropriately informed about what the level of academics would be like and how this could negatively affect them. Knowing that students coming in to college are there primarily for the education, it is not surprising to learn that students feel overwhelmed by the academic culture and identify this as a major source of stress as they enter (Woosley, 2003; Meyer et al., 2009).

Faculty-student interaction has been cited by many as important to the overall student college experience (Chi et al. 2016; Akbarov & Hadžimehmedagić, 2015; Lundberg, 2004). Students coming in to college are coming from an environment that has been nurturing their development throughout their primary and secondary education and their relationships with teachers, administrators, and others in these environments has developed over time. When the student comes to college this environment is new and different and the student may struggle to develop these new relationships with faculty and staff. Institutions who are aware of how students transition in to their environment can design educational and supportive environments and when necessary intervention strategies to assist students in succeeding in their collegiate experience (Akbarov & Hadžimehmedagić, 2015). Students are in need of a stronger support system of influential individuals who have direct relation to the university they are attending, these supporting characters may be in a variety of different roles from instructor, to Resident Assistant, to Academic Advisor. However, students can benefit from those relationships outside of the classroom with the faculty, and it has been proven that informal interactions with faculty members have a positive relationship on academic achievement overall (Halawah, 2006).

A final challenge to the academic success that students face in coming to college is the ability to assimilate into their new environment being regardless if they are a new student, a new transfer student, or first-generation student. Wilbur & Roscigno (2016) reviewed past studies and literature on first generation students. What they identified was that first-generation college students face and those students who may be of a lower socioeconomic status likely face: A sense of abandonment instead of belonging with their families; adjusting to the social pressures of college; and wrestling with their own

identities as they attempt to understand their role in their new environment while balancing their academics (Wilbur & Roscigno, 2016). All of these pertain to the student's academic success because when they do not have this support, or understand this environment they will feel lonely and out of place and not know who to turn to for support (Chen & Carroll, 2005).

Challenges to success must be met with influences that can look to turn certain foreseen roadblocks in a student's college career into benchmarks of growth. While personal variables may play a large part in a college student's success and the overall growth of their personal identity and intellectual development, Wolf-Wendel et al. (2009) reminded us that we must not forget how our environment can positively and negatively impact individuals and that the students are the key decision makers in their experiences. Faculty lead guidance and support has been identified as an environmental factor that may play the biggest role of the growth of a student's intellectual and personal identity (Chi et al., 2016). With respect to GPA, it was found that students' interactions with instructional faculty outside of class had a small but significant positive impact on GPA (Tovar, 2015). Providing students with a conducive and flexible learning environment, whether it be through office hours, study tables, or meeting outside of class may result in a student's prolonged success.

The Impact of Employment on Academics. The majority of today's students, across all institutions, are employed while enrolled. The term *working college students* has become the working definition for undergraduate life as students entering into post-secondary education are now becoming employed while studying (Kinzie, 2011). Students can develop increased emotional regulation, teamwork, social skills, and

interpersonal involvement when they are able to participate in extracurricular activities or part-time employment that may involve interaction with faculty (Hansen & Larson, 2007). One of the most important people in their academic pursuits they may interact with will be their supervisor in their FWS position. Pike (2008) completed a study on the relationship between first-year student employment, engagement, and academic achievement using the 2004 National Survey of Student Engagement. In Pike's findings, he identified that students who worked less than 20 hours a week in total, including on or off-campus employment had little to no impact on their academics; however, those working more than 20 hours were negatively affected in relation to their work in school.

Mourshed, Farrell, and Barton (2012) stated that student employment is a part of a tiered process that is initiated and sustained by post-secondary education. The three tiers include: enrollment, skill building, and locating a job (Mourshed et al., 2012). Enrollment could pertain to the student attending the university and becoming assimilated into the environment they live in. Skill building can be attributable to the involvement opportunities, including employment, that help to build and transform transferrable skills that the students can utilize. Locating a job is sometimes rigorous on campus, and with a FWS position which can be included in the student's financial aid package, it is readily available to them to utilize and develop themselves under it. While such employment opportunities provide a non-negligible source of income with which to finance, at least partially, their higher education, it is also thought to be one of the leading causes of academic failure (Body et. al, 2014). Pike (2008) reinforces this notion as the more positive the interactions between faculty and staff, the possibility of a more beneficial outcome for the student can incur.

Even with faculty support and interactions of a positive note, students have a fixed amount of time available; time spent working may take over time spent on academic, social, leisure, or extracurricular activities (Darolia, 2014). With FWS being based solely on the FAFSA application and institutional ability to disseminate it to prospective students, these effects of term-time employment on the students fixed amount of availability could mean that students have a greater amount of success in certain areas and lesser amounts of success in others. In an article posed by Wenz & Yu (2010) on the effects of on and off-campus work on academic achievement for undergraduate students at Winona State University, students who identified that they worked more during term-time employment or employment for an elongated period of time during the academic year, stated that they had a negative perception of their academics and actually performed worse than their classmates. With Body et al. (2014) stating that students who work more in both on and off-campus settings tend to have an increased chance of academic failure, and Wenz & Yu (2010) finding that students perceive they do worse, perhaps the implementation of a process to assist the growth and mentoring students to greater success while employed could be beneficial.

Federal Work Study not only impacts a student's perception of affordability, but can also impact the completion of their degree. Scott-Clayton and Minaya (2016) conducted a study on a sample 30,545 U.S. college entrants who began their post-secondary education in the academic years of 1995-1996 or 2003-2004 (Scott-Clayton & Minaya, 2016). The purpose of this study was to measure what impact FWS had on participants in regards to their achievement of receiving a Bachelors of Arts degree and being employed after completing their time at their respective institution. What was

found was that the participants who operated under FWS had a 3.2% better chance of receiving their BA and 2.4% better chance of being employed once graduated (Scott-Clayton & Minaya, 2016). With on-campus employment, including FWS, positions promoting student success in academic and social areas, this effect can be seen in the perceived college experience.

Regardless of the mixed results and continuous struggle between academics and activity, receiving that hard-earned college degree is a symbol of success that is known across the world. Earning this degree is linked to long-term cognitive, social, and economic benefits for the individual and gives a promising insight for the benefit of future generations (Akbarov & Hadžimehmedagić, 2015). Personal factors and choices play a great deal of importance in psychological growth of a college student, something that even the best professors, supervisors, and student organizations will never be able to emulate. What the students do in response to these choices can and should be studied more in the future to help create the more inclusive living and learning environment across college campuses.

Sense of Belonging

A student's sense of belonging is a pivotal piece of their collegiate identity that has many working parts to it. Terrell Strayhorn (2012) stated that a sense of belonging or belongingness to a group or university comes in many forms. Relatedness, membership, community, and so on are just a few of the various terms that are associated with a student's view of their belongingness on college campuses (Strayhorn, 2012). While these terms are relatable to the idea of students finding their niche in the collegiate environment they operate in, the concept of belonging comes to a point where it is under

the perception of the individual who is reflecting upon their sense of self (Kim & Irwin, 2013). If the idea of a true sense of belonging is operational under student's perception, then it would be viable to say that as educators, faculty and staff must work to influence a student's ideas of their place on campus. Developing a sense of belonging is a critical trait to the success of college students when it comes to retention and completion of their programs (O'Keeffe, 2013).

Heisserer & Parette (2002) stated that students tend to feel that they don't belong, are sometimes rejected, and may struggle to adjust to the normal challenges, both socially and academically, within college life. Sense of belonging is not just a one-track mindset that students incur, but more of a two-dimensional being consisting of a person's valued involvement or feeling of value in their environment, and their fit or the person's perception of their characteristics as it complements the environment (Haggerty, Sauer, Patusky, Bouwsema, & Collier, 1992). Sense of belonging has been drawn upon from researchers like Anderman & Anderman (1999), Hagborg (1994), & Pittman & Richmond (2008) in hopes of discovering more about this phenomenon and its early stages that influence students in college.

Hagborg (1994) researched the early idea of school membership formation in the transition of middle school students to high school and the factors that influenced their retention or drop-out. In his study, which utilized information received from personal records of 50 eighth grade students, compared against a Psychological Sense of School Membership (PSSM) questionnaire (Hagborg, 1994). Hagborg (1994) found that early on perceptions of self-concept, or their sense of attributes and how those attributes compliment and interact with others, and greater school climate were positively related to

student's sense of membership within their school environment. L.H. Anderman &

Anderman (1999) researched more of these early predictors in earlier childhood

education as it may pertain to sense of belonging in their educational setting. Pittman and

Richmond (2008) went on to cite L.H. Anderman & Anderman (1999) in describing that

a greater sense of institutional belonging goes beyond the self-concept of the student

alone and more of the student's perception of fitting into the environment and their sense

of belonging within specific institutions, making the understanding of sense of belonging

more complex.

In congruence with this sense of school climate and self-concept by Hagborg

(1994), interactions amongst peers has the ability to play a pivotal role in a student's

development toward sense of belonging. In an earlier study completed by Pittman &

Richmond (2007) on the importance of academics and psychological functioning in late-

adolescent students, peer interaction was significant. In their study, conducted with a

sample of 266 18-19-year-old students who were in their second semester of their

freshman year, the students were issued the same PSSM as Hagborg (1994) used to

measure their sense of belonging and acclimation. What was found in the results of the

study was that friendship and the quality of the relationships were strongly associated

with a greater sense of belonging at the institution (Pittman & Richmond, 2007).

Friendships and peers can vary dependent upon the students' perceptions and

interactions, leaving room for the open interaction with diverse groups of individuals.

AAC&U is one of the leading associations, recognized nationally, that prides itself on

advocating for quality, vitality, and public standing for a greater liberal education for all.

The AAC&U defines *Inclusive Excellence*, as inclusionary feelings student's may

perceive when interacting with peers and other students in their campus setting who identify in a similar way, (AAC&U, 2007). This definition of Inclusive Excellence includes a section on peer and student interaction, stating that it comes from a welcoming community that engages all of its diversity in their service to students (AAC&U, 2007).

In the current state of understanding and comprehension of diversity, students who are coming from first-generation households or students of non-traditional status face an uphill battle (Pascarella, Pierson, Wolniak, & Terenzini, 2004). Transitioning, socioeconomic status, and other factors have the ability to play a significant role in students of underrepresented populations assimilation on campus (Pascarella et al., 2004). Ostrove & Long (2007) provided insight into the effects a student's social class has on their overall sense of belonging. In her sample of 324 college students, a survey was sent out to understand and measure participant's social identity and college experiences from their own perspective. The participants were assessed on the measures of: social class, sense of belonging to college, adjustment to college, and other unspecified outcomes. What they found was that a student's social class background played an important role in the student's sense of belonging at the institution and while adjusting to college (Ostrove & Long, 2007). Hagerty, Williams, & Oe (2002) cited that a financial problem, both by the student or the family, has the ability to hinder their sense of belonging on campus. However, Kuh, Kinzie, Schuh, Whitt, and Associates (2005) found that student involvement can contribute to a student's sense of belonging in college and can assist with any negative effects socioeconomic standing may have as it can include employment.

When the idea of a person's valued involvement comes to mind, certain areas like involvement in student organizations, hall government, or on-campus employment comes to mind. In a study conducted by the Enrollment Management Advisory Council at a Washington State institution, the council surveyed students to measure their perception of the relationship between their time worked in on-campus employment and other aspects of the student's overall experience including academics (Lowell, Beyer, & Elworth, 2015). The study had 7,097 responses regarding the student's overall satisfaction with the institution and their perceived sense of belonging. Lowell et al. (2015) found that "student satisfaction and sense of belonging" in both categories of "How satisfied with the overall social experience" and "I feel that I belong at the UW" were high (p. 4). On-campus employment participants had a greater level of satisfaction with the institution and sense of belonging then those who did not have on-campus employment (Lowell, Beyer, & Elworth, 2015).

It would be safe to say that, at least at certain institutional levels, that the ability to work, interact, and invest one's self into their collegiate environment is beneficial. Further studies have been completed on the measurement and overall effects of student's interactions with faculty, supervisors, and other students on campus. One such study conducted by Kuh & Hu (2001) looked at the effects on sense of belonging in regard to student-faculty interaction on college campuses. Of the 5,409 students who were surveyed, it was found that there was an indirect positive influence between a student's interaction with faculty both in and out of class, and this effected their college experience, views of their environment, and their overall satisfaction at the university which may lead a lower level of attrition (Kuh & Hu, 2001). While done before the

research and literature of Wolf-Wendel et al. (2009) on the study of differentiating terms regarding student engagement and Pike's (2008) relationship between first-year student employment, engagement, and academic achievement, this idea helps to reinforce the notion that faculty interaction has positive implications on a student forming a sense of belonging. Thus, the idea that students are in control of their own college experience as found in the Wolf-Wendel et al. (2009) study is validated in that students must control and impact their environment, but that is only one area that can help to form a student's sense of belonging. Like that of Pike (2008) faculty interaction is important, and much like Kuh & Hu's (2001) study, it does stand.

Sense of belonging does not just stop at the faculty interaction though, as it also includes student's overall interaction and formation of acquaintances and relationships with their peers. Pittman & Richmond (2008) provided an analysis of literature and identified an interesting point relating sense of university belonging with self-perceptions regarding interactions with friends and the quality of friendships. The ideas of Wolf-Wendel et al. (2009) are present in this previously completed research as the authors conclude that the student must impact their environment individually for a more positive outcome. In a longitudinal study including 365 students completed by Hausman, Schofield, and Woods (2007) on whether sense of belonging was correlated with students' intentions to persist during their first year of school and if the sense of belonging also provided a greater level of motivation for the students. What Hausman et al. found was that of the 365 students who were consistently engaged in the research, the students had more positive patterns showing belongingness at the university. Hausman et al. began separating the students by specific demographic information and found that,

between White and African American students studying at the large mid-Atlantic university, White first-year students reported higher peer support than their African American peers. However, peer support was negatively correlated to sense of belonging for white students and positively correlated for African American students, meaning that African American students felt a greater amount of social support and sense of belonging amongst their peers on-campus. What this means is that Pittman & Richmond (2008), Wolf-Wendel et al. (2009) and Hausman et al. (2007) all provided insight into the sense of belonging in the university setting identifying that it needs to be diverse and occurring amongst the students, the faculty, and the ability to interact with peers.

Sense of belonging at the university level is related to FWS or on-campus employment in that the true growth of it derives from the students, their environment, and their investment into the environment. Relating back to the study completed by Lowell, et al. (2015), in Washington state students sought out work-study aid as it "may both integrate the student more closely to the college and provide a convenient income source" (Lowell et al., 2015, p. 2) With this finding, and that related to higher sense of belonging in on-campus work, it is safe to say that the opportunities FWS provides for students can help with finding their niche on campus. Like O'Keeffe (2013) and Haggerty et al. (1992), a person's environment and sense of fit within it are major precursors to the student's persistence in continuing their degree completion. The development of a sense of belonging could be found to be attainable while students participate in FWS work, and interaction with faculty and staff can reinforce this notion to presumably secure a student's idea of characteristic compliment with the environment (Haggerty et al., 1992).

Summary

Progressing into the future, college affordability will continue to be a major topic for educators and student affairs professionals alike. An increase in reputable data and research can provide professionals and students alike with a plan of rethinking or reworking financial aid and FWS programs for the betterment of all students Alexander and Arceneaux (2015) made it a point to propose a new federal-state partnership that incentivizes states to maintain affordability for their public colleges and universities. It is with research, publishing, and education like this on financial aid and federal work study that provides a great point of growth and expansion. Through understanding the impact FWS positions have on the student experience, especially on how they become involved and define their sense of belonging, we can create a stronger sense of connection to the institution for the student.

Chapter III

Methodology

This chapter describes the methodological framework that helped to provide clarity and structure for this study. The purpose of this study was to understand and explore the relationship between students perceived college experience while utilizing federal work study (FWS) job on campus. The conduction of this study was completed with basic qualitative methods.

Design of the Study

This study used a qualitative approach to attain the perceptions and influences of federal work-study positions on a student's collegiate experience. Qualitative research is identified as research that does not arrive from a statistical procedure, but stemming from a person's life, lived experiences, behaviors, and perceptions of the topic (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Qualitative research also focuses on the quality of the information received from participants, instead of the quantity of information (Fraenkel, Wallen, & Hyun, 2011). The research was conducted using semi-structured interviews with students who have either previously worked or currently work in positions that are funded through Federal Work Study appropriations.

Participants

Four participants were used in this study. These students were at least in their second year at the midsized Midwestern institution used in this study. Students on a nontraditional path at the institution had accommodations met to participate in this study. These students were still currently working in a position funded by the Federal Work Study program. Multiple offices on campus were contacted to distribute an IRB approved

email (Appendix A) that was sent to all qualifying individuals with information about this study and inviting them to participate. From the distribution of that email by those office supervisors, participants responded with their interest to the study and follow-up emails were made to set-up a preliminary meeting with them. Once the participants had their preliminary meeting to discuss some basic information, as well as got to know the researcher, we discussed the procedure moving forward, as well as the informed consent information. After the initial meeting, a formal interview time was set. Participants were assigned a pseudonym to protect their identity. This was randomly assigned by the researcher.

Participant descriptions. Ally is a Junior with an Elementary Education major and has worked in her FWS position for a little bit over a year now. Ally sought out the FWS position as a means of strict employment on campus. Ally ventured into her perspective position via a request for work-placement transfer and ended up not knowing if she had her FWS aid transfer between her positions at the library and in her residence hall on campus. She still never received any information from Financial Aid about her eligibility for FWS in her current position.

Timothy, a Communication's major, is a nontraditional senior standing student working in a FWS position in the new student and orientation office. Timothy was drawn to his respective position at Veteran Support Services (VSS) because the work was simple and the pay was tax-exempt. Timothy's experience in his position has been made up through his autonomy with assisting Veterans and serving in an advisory role. Timothy cites that being on-campus more than he needs to be is something he chooses to stray away from because of his feelings towards large groups of students. This provided a

unique insight into his overall collegiate experience and how he believes he impacts others.

Hailey is a senior, Business major, who has worked out of the Counseling department office for her FWS position for the past three years. Hailey attributes her love for education and new experiences to her FWS position. Hailey is very involved with her major, even serving in prominent leadership roles for Business organizations of which she is an actively involved member. Hailey interacts daily with her supervisor. Hailey uses her resources and skills learned in her position to assist her moving forward.

Jaime is a Biological Sciences major and is a Junior who holds a FWS position in an academic department. In addition to being active in her major, Jaime also participates in varsity athletics. Jaime's position is the only position directly tied to the major of her choosing and cherishes the experience. Jaime transferred into this role, much like Ally, after working in another position that was not as good of a fit for her. Jaime has been the most vocal about the balance and autonomy that comes with the position and how it benefits her holistically.

Research Site

The research site utilized was a midsized public institution located in the rural Midwest with approximately 8,000 students. In the 2017-2018 academic year, this institution's Financial Aid office offered 516 FWS positions to students, and of those 516 prospective students, 211 have accepted as of Spring 2017.

Interviews were conducted in private spaces where students could not be identified as participants in this study. The spaces used allowed for private conversations

in spaces students were familiar with, such as the library, student union, and residential common spaces.

Instrument

Semi-structured interviews. The researcher conducted one-on-one interviews with four participants who attend the institution currently (Appendix B). All interviews took place at a mutually agreed upon location that is secure, private, and comfortable to the participants. Semi-structured interviews were the best for these interviews because it utilized standardized questions that helped provide an opportunity to ask follow-up questions if the information was found to be useful or intriguing. The protocol for the interviews was developed with the research questions on the topics of: academic experience, sense of responsibility, and sense of belonging. These questions were utilized when pertinent information came up throughout the interview as a way of continuing the dialogue or venturing to different ideas about the topic.

Consent Forms. All participants were given prior notices and official forms that required their consent to participate in the study. During the study, the participants were able to review any of the consent forms that were notarized by them. Participants were not forced or mandated to participate in the study and at any point had the right to withhold any answers to the interview questions or remove themselves from the study as a whole.

Researcher. The researcher in this study was an instrument. The researcher had a previous history of working in the Federal Work-Study program and held a position funded by Federal Work-Study aid. The researcher was removed from the Federal Work-Study program at another institution after a limited amount of time, without prior

knowledge as to why. There was potential for incurrences of biasness due to the ideas and prior knowledge held by the researcher that could have come about in the interviews. By utilizing ideal bracketing, which is characterized as the near total exclusion of all internal and external suppositions, the researcher was able to remove any beliefs, experiences, or understandings that are reminiscent of the information received during the interview (Gearing, 2004). The researcher was the director of a residence hall at a midsize Midwestern university and supervised about 15 student employees and one full-time adult employee. During the time that the researcher was in this position, the researcher had not interacted with many students on the campus that held positions funded by Federal Work-Study. To ensure that the researcher did not interview anyone that they had a pre-existing relationship with, they removed those individuals from the participant pool once the email was sent out by the respective offices.

Data Collection

For the data collection process, the researcher interviewed four participants. Participants were identified by a code developed by the researcher, one that does not connect the participant to their original identity. Interviews lasted between 45 and 55 minutes and were recorded via audio recording, transcribed, and coded. The transcriptions were used to find commonalities in students perceived college experiences while working in a Federal Work Study position.

Data Analysis

The researcher was the sole person to record and create a transcription for each interview. After the researcher completed the review of the transcriptions, the researcher coded each of them and the data was separated accordingly. Transcribing of all

interviews were done using Nuance Dragon Transcribing software to assist in the comprehension of the data. This was done to create a better outcome and understanding of the participant's experiences. Also, with using the Dragon software, an app was downloaded, AnyTune, to slow down the voice recordings on the recording device. To complete this coding process, the researcher underlined specific phrases or keywords that were stated by the participants that showed support for the research questions. These phrases and words were taken apart and arranged by the theme or content that was developed. These short words or phrases were used to connect information from the different interviews (Saldaña, 2013).

Treatment of Data

Identities of participants remained confidential and pseudonyms were assigned from the moment of meeting, and only the primary researcher had access to their real names. All data that was collected during the course of the research was kept confidential and secured according to the policies and procedures listed by the Institutional Review Board (IRB). All information collected was stored and kept in a secure, password-protected file on the researcher's personal computer. The password was only known by the researcher, the transcription of the data from these interviews was only reviewed by the researcher, the thesis chair, and the participants of the specific interview to ensure clarity.

Summary

The researcher used a qualitative approach for this study to help better understand how students working FWS funded positions have perceived their college experiences related to their employment. A qualitative approach would allow for more in-depth and

elaborated answers during the interviews, better understanding of the student's employment status, how they perceived their employment opportunity, and openly state or infer any effects that the job may have had on their perceived college experience. By working with the population of students who are involved in FWS, a greater sense of understanding about how the job affects their experiences at school was utilized by other institutions with similar programs. This study would inevitably provide findings that may be transferable to other institutions operating with FWS aid and help them gauge how the job affects the students involved.

Chapter IV

Analysis

This chapter looks to highlight the experiences of the participants interviewed and the findings that were created. All participants brought unique perspectives and insights into their experience in college, with many of them having their Federal Work-Study for longer than one year. Some of the overarching findings connect the trends and experiences. Specific research questions were used to help lead the interviews and analyses of the data received. The questions studied were:

RQ 1. In what ways does the work study position impact the student's academic experience?

RQ 2. In what ways does the work study position impact the student's sense of responsibility?

RQ 3. In what ways does the work study position impact the student's sense of belonging in college?

This study encompassed the interviews of four college students attending the Midwestern institution and their overall perceptions of how their Federal Work-Study (FWS) position influenced experiences. Two of the participants worked in academic offices, with one whom worked in her own academic department. Two students changed their FWS position to find a better fit. All of the participants had different experiences within their FWS position, having spoken about their supervisor and co-worker relationships. The participants also described their overall balance of work and studying, and transferrable skills they were gaining through their experience.

Impact on the Academic Experience by Federal Work Study

Participants were asked questions about their academic experiences during their time at the institution, with emphasis placed on the ability to foster relationships, structure, and overall progression to degree attainment. Participants across all interviews talked of their experiences working towards their own academic achievement goals. They spoke of their experiences as having a positive academic impact stemming from the incorporation of academics into Federal Work-Study. All of the students spoke about the ability to mix their academic work into their positions.

The participants provided different experiences when it came to academic achievement and the overall impact that FWS instilled. The commonalities that were noted from the interviews were the overall structure and autonomy that was given to them when it came to academic achievement while working, the ability to foster relationships, transferrable skills, and academic success in regard to progression towards their degree attainment.

Structure. Many areas of an institution take a student with FWS with the understanding that they are balancing their coursework with administrative tasks in the position. Jaime, whose FWS position is in the Biology office, shared how she learned to balance all parts of her life because of the structure created in her internship.

The person that I was paired with, my boss, she was very understanding of grades. So, if I told her I couldn't come into work today because I had to study for an exam, or I didn't do a certain assignment, she was very understanding about it, and she said that I can make up the hours some other time. And, just to let her know in advance whenever I needed something like that.

Ally, an Education major, works as a Desk Assistant in a residence hall on campus, and spoke about her structure of balancing work and studying. She stated that her idea of academic success is meeting her full potential as a student. She clarified that her success was measured more by making the Dean's List. When asked how she maintains her studying habits, she cited that "the [academic] work in general, quite a few hours. However, normally I can slip it in during my work shift."

Timothy talked at length about his ability to provide structure and incorporate his studies into his work at Veteran Support Services (VSS).

> You know, it's Wednesday, it's due Friday, I can do it tomorrow night… Or, to incorporate my work, I sometimes will read for one of my classes. I have to read for Monday; I gotta read Sunday for class on Monday, and take a test…But, typically what I'll do. When I'm in my office, down there, I can crack open a book, read it right before class but that's about how I balance that out.

Transferable skills. Federal Work-Study, while seen as a mode of financial aid for prospective students, is still an employment opportunity. The participants in this study talked about gaining new skills that would benefit them in their careers after college. Hailey spoke about the downtime in her position and what she decided to do with it.

> I started off making quite a few mistakes. And then, those mistakes started to be less and less. I began volunteering in other ways when I kind of found out that I wasn't really doing anything…because there is some down time with the position. I started to kind of build relationships and got connected with them.

Jaime talked about her experience being an athlete, a student, and a FWS employee. Jaime was recently promoted to Captain of her athletic team at the university

and spoke about her organization capabilities when it comes to all of the aspects of her life.

> Well, I would say [I study] a definite three hours after classes. Probably, an hour or two for those classes in between, or for that time in between classes I mean. And, probably closer to two hours after classes, yeah. Probably two hours of just straight doing homework, but then there is time that I have to spend working and such. Other responsibilities that take up time, like being a captain, I have weekly meetings with my coach and make sure that I still have other things to look at. So probably a solid four or five hours.

After describing this balance, Jaime was asked about her FWS position and what it entailed. She shared that she had changed positions from the Benefit's office on campus to another area that was more focused around her major, Biological Sciences.

> I have access to enter the building at any time that I need. So, if there's ever work that needs to be done, I can go in at like 11 PM and just work on my own if I have time. Where as compared to last year, it was a lot stricter. A lot more timeslots to go in, do the work, and leave. And this time it's more like, whenever I have free time or, it's just work given to me that I can do on my own. I don't necessarily have to be in the office itself.

Ally spoke about the incorporation of the customer service in her position and how it benefited her outlook on Federal Work-Study and its ability to educate her.

> I think, just like, that type of work environment is certainty beneficial for the occupational health of the people who are working in there. and just like, good character traits and skills to know, were not, like the freedom, like, if we make a

mistake, it's not the end of the world. It's like, her being really, just willing to, just like help us with anything and just always being quick to serve.

Academic persistence. As the participants talked about their progress at the institution they identified that they put a greater emphasis on doing well academically and putting an emphasis on studying and getting involved. They also identified that the offices they were working in and the people in those offices influenced their persistence at the institution. Hailey's determination to stick with the position was shown when she stated that her relationship with her work study area was family-like.

> Oh, it's great. I love them, they are my family (chuckling). I think I almost cried last semester because I didn't think I was going to be getting work-study and I ended up getting it really late. And, it was like, I would have cried happy tears, but, they are great, it's a family feel over there for sure.

Hailey also cited that she had worked in the same position for two and a half years in the same department with the same faculty. Jaime, dissatisfied with her original position, sought out other opportunities. When she asked to be placed in a position more aligned with her major, there were results.

> I had told her that if I could get anywhere that was closely related to my major, like that would be fantastic! So, she did sign me up for the biology department, that's how I went there. But, yeah there's just definitely a lot more freedom in it.

Timothy's path to degree completion is slightly different. Being a nontraditional, veteran student, Timothy was very direct about his time on campus. Timothy stated, "I come to school, I go to class, I go to work, I go home." As a member of the Student Veteran organization, Timothy talked about how he does not like large crowds of people,

so being with the veterans group is a much smaller group where they can be to

themselves. This small group impacts Timothy in his position as well.

> I do enjoy helping veterans, sometimes, when they have a legitimate question that
>
> needs to be answered. Typically, I hate my job when people start asking questions
>
> that, you know, is a two-second Google search and they could have got the correct
>
> answer. That is when I hate my job, but when a veteran has a legitimate question
>
> about services here on campus, "okay, I can help you with that."

Each of the participants identifies in different ways how the support they receive in their

position, along with finding more meaningful ways to engage at the institution, impacts

their success and determination to stay.

Sense of Responsibility Through Federal Work-Study

When asked about their sense of responsibility in their FWS position, the

respondents gave varying perspectives. Some of them spoke about experiences with

programs and events that take place outside of their own office, while others received on-

the-job training that assisted in their understanding of the position. Participants were

asked questions about tasks, trainings successes, and areas of improvement they

encountered while participating in FWS. They spoke about areas of training, their

outlook on their position when it comes to responsibility and its impact on them, their

ability to prioritize and be flexible when meeting the needs of themselves and their

position, and their choice of retaining their position for more than a year time period.

Training. When participants were asked about the impact of FWS on their

academic experience they talked about learning as they went. Three out of the four

participants stated that they never received a formal training process, and that most of the

time their training was done while on the job instead of before the job began. Timothy's training for his position in the VSS was described as "drinking through a fire hose," as it was a lot of hands on work and very little being showed how or what to do. He described his training process below:

> When I first showed up, they were looking for work-study. My coworker got hired first because she knew how to do Excel and Microsoft and those programs. Well, we found out that was complete horse shit. So, since they had one guy leave because he couldn't stand the former coordinator, he came to me, "hey I got a spot open. You want it?" And I was like, "yeah sure." I jumped into it, and then I realized why he had left. And I was like, "oh, if I wasn't getting paid so well I would hit you."

Both Hailey and Ally spoke about learning while on the job through doing the work and getting support in the position. Hailey's experience with learning her responsibilities was taught to her by coworkers rather than her supervisor because of the circumstances in her FWS placement.

> I wasn't used to the office environment, and at the time, the current office manager was out due to illness for the majority of the semester, year I think. There were two other FWS students in that department when I started, and the one that had been there the longest was kind of just training us. I worked with him [Department Chair] a lot because he was kind of my direct boss at that time and he just kind of showed us how the department ran.

Ally spoke about her training being more hands on and educational when she was on the job.

It was learning mostly by doing. We went through training in a big lecture hall.

But for me, it was easier for me to be in the environment and actually doing the

work for the first time to learn it. It was a slow learning process for the little thing,

like selling a stamp, but it was really smooth.

Each of the participants learned how to do the work in the office a bit differently but took

on the responsibility of learning for themselves and then doing the job as needed.

Development in the position. Each of the participants spoke about the ways in

which they learned the skills and how to do their work and over time they have developed

new skills and areas of responsibility. Three of the four participants talked about their

responsibility in their respective position as areas that they enjoy because they are given

the ability to make choices and assist others without being restricted. Ally talked about

her responsibilities at the front desk with parents as unique,

When parents approached the front desk, whether that be parent's weekend or

move-in weekend, the would come up with a ton of questions. Just being able to

be quick and answer those questions like, "Oh, I think I know the answer to this"

and get them that right answer and being resourceful was a success.

Hailey described the complexity of her environment and how she persisted

through it.

So, as a freshman, I was just trying to understand everything that was there like,

"What are these degrees?" and "what are all of these forms they are turning in?"

"What do we do with them?" So just kind of getting used to that office feel and

really working directly under those professors and taking on the responsibility for

all of that.

Later on, when Hailey was asked about her biggest accomplishment with her FWS position, she stated that she was just happy with sticking with the position for so long and growing with that responsibility. Jaime talked about her transition of responsibilities from her sophomore year to her junior year.

So, a lot of it [responsibilities] at first was file organization, getting little things done around the building, taping up posters, taking some down, and just a lot of work like that. That was my sophomore year, but now we have more student workers to do that. I am more kind of the marketing side of the biology department, like making promotional videos.

Timothy spoke about how as he has learned about his responsibilities and become more competent and has learned that his position is not entirely necessary because most of what he provides to students who come to the office can be easily found on the website.

I'm literally going to Google the information when somebody calls me, or email me, or something. I find it, send it to them via email, but because, and I say this over and over, veterans aren't stupid, they are just lazy. They don't want to do the research on their own, they just want to be handed the information. My job could be completely eradicated if the veterans weren't so lazy.

Timothy would go onto say later that it is not that veterans are lazy because they choose to be. He stated that the military does not do a good job, which promotes the veterans to not seek out the information they need on their own. Timothy does pride himself on assisting those veterans who are searching for legitimate answers that are hidden.

The participants described their development into their position as helping them learn to be persistent and retained in their position. The participants saw their position as something they needed to work through and develop their abilities when it came to achieving and gaining more responsibility.

Flexibility. As participants were asked about their responsibilities in the FWS position and how they managed the different tasks they spoke about becoming flexible and learning to balance everything. This also included the idea of autonomy and they were asked about their greatest accomplishments. Hailey was asked about her responsibilities in her office, and she talked about how her schedule revolves around either work or class. She was then asked about her typical day and where her other priorities stand.

> If I had classes in the morning, I would go [to work] right after, and sometimes, I would go right to class depending on what my schedule was like. Then, on the evenings, at least on weekdays, it's pretty much: any club meetings I have, any extracurriculars, a ton of homework and study time, a lot.

When asked to elaborate further about her priorities, Hailey responded as such.

> I guess that is pretty much how it is during the week. It just kind of changes though because there are different things going on, like today, there was a bunch of networking events, next week there is going to be another all-day networking thing, there is going to be the career fair.

Ally responded that her priorities revolved around working the desk, and her colleague's ability to assist her. Ally said that her boss has given her flexibility in her priorities, "She is always looking to help us, accommodate us, and make our job, which is

already pretty easy, easier." Later in the interview she described the flexibility regarding her co-workers, "If I ever have a shift that I need to trade or get covered, or questions that I have, there is always someone who is always there to help or come assist." Ally's priorities like school work and studying can be incorporated into her work, as she stated, "Normally, I can slip it in during my work shifts, which has been helpful."

Timothy's priorities were stated as structured throughout his day.

Wake up, feed the dogs, work out, shower, make coffee, come to work, go to

class if I have to, go back to work, go to class again, go home. Then, do

homework, or Netflix, nap, or whatever.

When asked a clarifying question about his responsibilities being more structured, Timothy responded, "Structured, yeah. I try to keep it as structured as I can." When asked about his priorities when it comes to being on campus, Timothy said, "If I come to school, I go to class, I go to work, I go home." Much of Timothy's work is handled in his office and stays there.

Extracurricular FWS responsibilities. Students gave in-depth responses about the programs and initiatives that they are responsible for, personally and professionally, in addition to their FWS position. Timothy talked about his responsibilities when it comes to the universities Veteran's Day Ceremony. "That is actually one of my, most favorite things to do. Every, pretty much, if you go to the Veterans Day ceremony, everything that has been done has been coordinated through me as some point." When asked about his processes in coordinating the ceremony, he responded, "It's playing the email tag game. However, I do actually enjoy doing because, well one; it's easy, and two; Veterans Day is actually a day that means a lot to me."

Jaime responded to the question by talking about her role as an Ambassador for the Biology department.

I'm a student ambassador of the Bio department. So, every Thursday we make calls to potential students, and other freshmen, just to let them know about the Biological Sciences department. We also have another program set up, called "Bio on The Road" where we have a faculty member and student drive out to high schools around the area and set up science experiments. Just things to put the Biology department and the university out there.

Hailey cited that she networked more with the faculty and staff in her FWS office.

I wanted to build relationships and with the people in that department because I see them a good majority of the time, so. You know, I guess just kind of making it more than just, "this is my college job." You know? Like, I got connected with them.

Hailey also stated that this networking was a part of the "family feel" the department has.

Sense of Belonging

When the participants were asked about their overall sense of belonging, they talked at length about three different levels of belonging. They began with feeling a sense of belonging at the institution, on-campus, and finally in their own FWS office. They all provided information about their position as a whole, including what has kept them there, what their supervisor relationship is like, what freedoms they enjoy in their position, and overall what makes their department so inclusive and welcoming.

Retention of position. The participants all cited that they have been a part of the FWS program for longer than one year. This retention of their position was stated throughout their answers as something they wanted to persist with, citing many benefits of what they do. Jaime cited that she started in her first position in the Benefit's office on-campus she did not feel that the work she did mattered or that it was a good fit.

I was at the Benefits office my freshman year. That was just a lot of file sorting, and just, it was pretty basic. I just went in and there was this whole stack of papers, and I just organized them, alphabetize them, and in the files, they go. So that was like, solid times every week, and then when I transferred over to the biological sciences department, it was a lot of really getting to know my boss, and she just kind of want to get to know me as well.

Jaime transferred her Sophomore year of college, and has been with the same position since then. When Jaime spoke about the autonomy and growth she received in her position and the relationship with her supervisor. She is able to work at her own pace and has good communication with her supervisor about what she needs to do and when.

When Hailey was asked about her biggest accomplishment while working in her FWS position, she stated that sticking with the work in the same area for three years was in fact her greatest feat, "sticking with that position throughout all of college and rolling with it." She clarified later on that, "You know, I guess I just kind of made it more than just, 'this is my college job.'" Hailey stated that the people in the area she worked in helped with her retention in the FWS program and in the Counseling Department as it connected her with a lot of great people.

Timothy has also encountered multiple supervisors in his position as he has been working in the VSS for his collegiate career. He was very open about his first encounter with his first supervisor, a Reserve Chaplain whom he called a "weirdo." He stated that he just did not act like a chaplain, and afterwards left his role as Timothy's supervisor. He stated that his next supervisors were two other women. While one woman continued as the Director of New Student Orientation, Timothy spoke about the relationship with her and how that helped him connect more at the institution.

Each participant identified different people in their FWS position that helped them connect to the institution. Hailey described her office colleagues as family. Jaime and Ally had to identify the right working environment to find a connection with the people there. And Timothy, over time connected with his supervisor in a personal way.

Environment of work place. The environment that the participants talked about in their FWS workplace, as well as their perception of the campus as a whole, was positive and neutral. While some of the participants spoke in high regards of where they work and the people they interact with, others spoke of their setting in a more neutral manner.

Ally stated that her working environment was great because she was able to work with individuals who were willing to help out when shifts needed to be traded or people needed to be updated. She spoke about how her boss, was willing to take the extra step to assist the DA's in learning their position and having an environment where mistakes could be made and that was ok.

Jaime talked of the positivity she feels in her current office and the interactions she has with not only her supervisor, but with the faculty as well.

Just through my work-study, because I am an office assistant in in the biological department. And, so I see all of the professors and I get to know them individually… I can have conversations with them in the office. I consider myself known amongst the faculty, or that they at least all recognize me. Walking to and from class, I'm pretty close with a lot of the professors. Close to even some of those I haven't really had for any classes. Yeah, it's pretty positive.

Timothy's warmed up to his workplace environment from initial feelings of resentment towards it, but the growth occurred over time.

We were down in a basement, and that was when we still had the other coordinator. After he left, they moved us to New Student Orientation and I did not like it there. Down there [in the basement] we were alone, we were fine. I get moved over here, New Student Orientation, and like I said I don't like being around people. Especially, if those people are friendly, and nice, and bubbly 24/7. I get a little agitated around that kind of thing, and so that took, that was a transition that took a little bit of time to get used to because everybody and there was just, you know: fun-loving, bubbly. Me and my coworker were like, "this place sucks. we prefer a basement." But, you know, our office didn't have windows, it was just an enlarged cubicle, pretty much. We were like, "we like it down there." But, yeah, it took me a while but eventually I warmed up to all of them.

Each participant talked about how a positive environment to learn and grow in is something that helped them and made for success on the job.

Freedom on the job. Like the sense of responsibility, the participants talked a lot about certain freedoms that they receive in their FWS positions when it comes to working. Many of them stated that this freedom translated to a greater sense of belonging in the position because their hard work was rewarded with new opportunities. Ally and Jaime spoke highly of their supervisors and their responsibilities they held. Ally was able to continue to work under current supervisor that instilled trust in her to complete her work and have the freedom to do what she pleased after it was complete. Jaime's work with her current supervisor was discussed and how the supervisor saw her potential as a reason for staying and a reason for being given more difficult tasks to complete.

Because acknowledging that I have a lot to offer when it comes to things like that. And, she really understands that too. So, I guess, just really establishing that understanding that there is a lot of work that I can do and I know how to do well.

Timothy spoke about the two different environments he has worked in for his position and how he built a rapport with his supervisor and staff in his new office. He spoke about how his supervisor gave him a lot of freedom to spend his time as he needed. When asked about the role of the environment he worked in, and what his expectations were, he gave specific insight.

You know, typically if I'm having kind of like a rough day, most of the people in the office know, I guess. I don't know. There have been times where I am just like, "eh, I got to get out of here" and they are like "Ok. Go ahead." They don't question it, they just let me go. I am probably one of the only students in that office that could get away with that.

Each of the participants talked about having certain freedoms while working and how that allows for them to grow and develop their sense of belongingness.

Supervisory relationship. Participants were asked to talk about their supervisor-supervisee relationship and they all had positive things to say about their supervisors and how they built those relationships. The participants stated that a sense of understanding and belonging came from their supervisor. Jaime spoke about her journey into the Biological Sciences department and how she created a bond with her supervisor.

She asked what I wanted, through the bio department? And, just kind of incorporated my interests with working and, she did eventually want me to transfer to work for a specific professor in the department. But, I think that her and I just got along, and I could do a lot for the office itself that I just stayed there and never truly transferred to the professor.

Ally described her relationship with her supervisor as very helpful on the job, and even included her fellow Desk Assistants in her overall relationship with her position.

It's a good relationship. I don't know her, well, I have two [supervisors], I don't know which one. I think Bailey would probably be my supervisor... So, it has been really good, she's nothing but helpful, and I have had nothing but great experiences with my bosses so far.

Ally went on to talk about her colleagues as well when she was asked about her experiences with them, much like her experiences with her supervisors.

My colleagues have been wonderful as well. I have been able to slowly get to know some more than others just because, when we work our shifts, we're never together. We're normally passing in and out of the desk. It's just been really nice,

and if I ever have a shift that I need to trade or get covered, or questions that I have, there is someone is always there to like help. I have a lot of coworkers who will go the extra step. They would finish what they are doing before they leave, even though they are not on their shift anymore and being very helpful. So, it has been great.

Timothy's relationship with his supervisor at the VSS was captured in one quote that he made. "She (supervisor) was actually the first person I told that my fiancé had left me. Yeah, I think I had a pretty good relationship with her." Timothy made this very clear when he detailed his experiences with other supervisors but made mention of this specific moment.

Hailey spoke in-depth about her time working in the Counseling Department and spoke of how the other office staff really stepped in when the Office Manager was out sick and it really impacted her. "They are great, it's definitely a family feel over there for sure." This statement mentioned above had great emphasis on her interaction and experience within the department.

Sense of belonging is a true mixture of multiple areas of a student college experience, and a major area that assists in a sense of belonging is the supervisory relationship.

Summary

Each student provided great detail into their FWS experience. This experience was shaped through their academic challenges and successes, sense of responsibility in their position, and their sense of belonging overall. While each participant is in a different department or office, their unique insights and experiences create some common trends

or themes throughout. From training on-the-job, to transferrable skills; understanding of prioritization in their position, and increasing their extracurricular responsibilities on the job, a lot has been spoken about. A student's success in their FWS position is influenced by so many factors, to have an understanding of how these factors interact with one another and affect the student is key.

Chapter V

Discussion

The qualitative nature of this study was utilized to understand the points of views of participants who are actively involved in the Federal Work-Study (FWS) program. The participants interviewed all had very diverse backgrounds and understandings of the program, but also produced similar sounding experiences. Some common themes were identified when reviewing the conversations that were had with the participants, as well as some ideas were compiled for areas of future research and those impacted by that research.

Discussion

Certain themes were found in Chapter IV related to the areas of research that shaped how a student's college experience was affected by FWS. The ideas of how a student's sense of belonging at the university and in the position, the level of responsibility they feel in those specific areas, and how their academics were impacted by their FWS position.

Sense of Belonging. A student's sense of belonging to a college or university is dependent on a multitude of factors that occur in a variety of areas, including understanding one's personal and social identity that comes from the collegiate subcultures (Strayhorn, 2012). All of the participants identified a feeling of belonging in their specific FWS office, and even though the relationships differed from one office to another, it was the relationship with the supervisor they spoke most about. The participants all identified a sense of belonging in terms of their relationship to their supervisor and how it has impacted them. Ally stated that her supervisor's understanding

that mistakes may be made and that they could be corrected without any repercussions continued her desire to work at the front desk. Jaime's sense of belonging was enhanced because she was allowed to work in the same area as she studied, allowing her to mesh her educational responsibilities with her work. These two participants felt welcomed in their position because they saw their positions as a good fit. Due to their sense of belonging in the position, they felt as though the work they did in their position really mattered and impacted the office in a positive manner.

Timothy and Hailey's sense of belonging went deeper than just a working relationship, as both participants were open about their relationships with their supervisors and how it made them feel. Hailey stated that her relationship with her office members was almost "family-like." Her expression of sadness when she thought she would not be able to return to the position was a prime example that she felt as though she was at home and that she felt like she truly belonged to her FWS location. Timothy's sense of belonging, while shallow, was very concrete when it came to his supervisor-supervisee relationship. His ability to confide in his supervisor about his collapsing relationship, and also being given the freedom to come and go as he pleased in his position, has kept him in his position for his collegiate career. With the pairing of his FWS position serving a similar student population in Student Veteran's, Timothy's sense of belonging became stronger. For these participants, it was more than just a position, it was a place they mattered and where they felt a strong sense of belonging.

All of the participants have been in their respective FWS positions for at least one academic year, and many of them plan on continuing with the position until they graduate. Timothy and Hailey have served in their FWS locations for almost the entire

time they have been enrolled at the university. Jaime and Ally both transferred to areas that made their time in school simpler, with those locations serving one's academic needs and the other allowing them to work where they live. This sense of belonging in their positions location led them to want to continue in that office. When students feel they belong somewhere at the institution it contributes to the overall sense of belonging.

A final contributor to a student's sense of belonging found in this study is their ability to connect and find purpose in their working environment. While the participants spoke about receiving little training when starting their position, they have stayed with that position continuously. Jaime's environment is in her field of study, allowing her to fully immerse herself in her work and studies. Ally and Hailey found that their environment was much more about the people and relationships, drawing them to become more involved within it. Timothy's experience is more neutral because of the transition he went through; however, the relationship with the supervisor through several transitions helped him stay connected and identify things that needed to happen in the position.

Sense of Responsibility. A student's sense of responsibility is developed over time at the institution. With increased class loads, job requirements, and extracurricular involvement, it is a part of the student's overall development to learn and take responsibility for their own actions. In terms of the participants' sense of responsibility in their FWS position, influencers like training, development into their position, prioritization, and making the job their own are key factors.

Training student employees is something that takes time, initiative, and effort. Ally identified a training period that was relatively short, however beneficial because it gave her a base to build off of while starting to work. Of all the participants, she was the

only one to receive any formal training as the other participants spoke about being trained in a more hands-on fashion. This process of learning on-the-job allowed them to be given more complicated tasks over time, which led to feelings of satisfaction and finding their position of purpose within the department. Although only one participant talked about being formally trained while others were trained as they went, it appears that being given increasingly more difficult tasks and responsibilities is viewed by the participants as contributing to their sense of purpose and connection to the people and position of their job site.

That impact and development of the participants is what the office hopes for. The participants all stated that they came in with little to no knowledge about the work that was to be done. They built up their knowledge as they immersed themselves into the daily routine of the office. Hailey stated she did not know much of anything about the department she was assigned to work in; however, as she began to learn from staff and faculty, she became more comfortable with the work and began to make less mistakes. Jaime spoke about how she is now producing actual work and outreach for the academic department and promoting the academic success of her area. All of this, and the ability for students to create their own schedules for work, allows for the students to develop their individual work styles while also developing transferrable skills they can use after graduation. Creating these increasingly challenging positions leads students to want to remain in the position beyond one academic year as they see the potential for greater learning and responsibility. In this study, this proved to be beneficial to the students who wanted to remain in their positions because they saw themselves gaining greater skills and contributing more to the office they worked in.

Flexibility in a position is an important part of any position. Whether that means working in-between classes, working after-hours, or working when needed, flexibility is something that is not taken lightly. All of the participants spoke about their schedule and how they were able to arrange it around their lives, instead of scheduling their lives around their work. All of the participants stated that they had outside commitments separate of their FWS position that required some flexibility in their work to meet. Thanks to the flexibility they were offered, the participants FWS position helped to balance their responsibilities in areas of their lives outside of work. Many of them saw this chance to make a difference in multiple areas of their lives to promote their ongoing growth and development.

Academic Experience Impacted. Academic achievement is a major part of the college experience we hope all students achieve. Calhoun (1996) stated that, "both students and institutional environments contribute to what students gain from college. Thus, the key to enhancing learning and personal development is not simply for faculty to teach more and better, but also to create conditions that motivate and inspire students to devote time and energy to educationally-purposeful activities" (pg. 1). Creating out-of-class experiences where students can apply what they are learning in the classroom enhances their overall academic experience. Although the work study position did not necessarily have a direct connection to academics for all participants, the skills and development they experienced enhanced their overall experience at the institution.

All of the participants were in their second year as a student or older and continued in the FWS program while getting their degree. While their academic experiences have varied, like Timothy regretting his degree or Hailey becoming more

involved in her major by joining student organizations on campus, they all proved that academics are a priority. The participants indicated that their FWS supervisors and co-workers also helped them make their education a priority, by showing interest and adapting around their course schedules.

Another major academic boost that students receive in the FWS program is that many of the skills they will learn are transferrable to any major area of study or work. Flexibility, structure of work, organization, and communication are some of the many skills the participants identified as they worked in their position. Structure and flexibility was found to be necessary for Ally as she started her position at the desk. Timothy began to enjoy the multiple communication channels and identified he was learning to effectively communicate with the students he served in his FWS position. Jaime was able to develop her own path to success and was given the opportunity to work at her own pace, creating her only structure and autonomy. The FWS position gave these participants a variety of skills and more to complement their academic experiences. Transferrable skills and a strong educational background are important outcomes when pairing schooling with a FWS position.

Implications

The implications from this study effects several key stakeholders in the FWS work setting. These implications will be able to assist others in understanding how the FWS Supervisors, Financial Aid Advisors, and Student Affairs professionals can impact a student's experience while enrolled at the university.

Federal Work-Study Supervisors. Federal Work-Study Supervisors play a pivotal role in their student employees retention, quality of work completed, and overall

development of personal and professional work-ethic. Federal Work-Study supervisors work in multiple ways to assist their students, including supporting them throughout their time in the FWS specific office (Scott-Clayton, 2011). Retention of students in FWS positions provides an avenue of growth and development and creating intentional training and increasingly challenging work assignments will help the student employee develop their skills and abilities. This increasing responsibility within a position can only be prolonged by the supervisor, with support and praise for a greater quality of work being accomplish over time will lead to greater retention of the student in the position and ultimately at the institution.

As was mentioned in the interview responses, students felt a greater sense of: autonomy, responsibility, and sense of belonging when they identified a significant relationship or feeling from their supervisor. The work of the supervisor in the FWS does not know any limits, as they are the ones who will help with educating students about the position, program, and outcomes that are applicable to the student in hope of providing clarity. They help in facilitating the reflection and processing of the work being completed in the position to create a stronger bond and impact as the students moves on either to a new position, or graduates.

The supervisor is also responsible for developing a relationship with the student employee that leads to a greater connection at the institution as well as the office in which they are working. What this means for the supervisor is taking time to personally get to know the student, learning about their experiences, goals, and challenges. It also requires the supervisor to create a space for the student in their office, introducing them to others in the office, making them a part of the office culture, and allowing the relationship to

develop over time. Finally, the supervisor is most influential in the students' academic experience and when they ask students questions about their courses it helps strengthen their identity as a student, as well as directing them to resources and opportunities they may not be aware of. This creates a sense of accountability the student may not have anywhere else.

Financial Aid Advisors. The National Center for Education Statistics reported in 2016 that the use of financial aid was rising amongst college students (NCES, 2016). This increased use of financial aid can be a huge step in the right direction when it comes to educating students on the who, what, where, why, and how of financial aid. Financial Aid Advisors need to have greater interactions with students whether it be through resource sharing or other communication channels, an easier and more effective interaction is possible. All the participants mentioned in their interviews that they had gone to the Financial Aid Office multiple times. This determination to understand their aid, receive updates on the aid process, and identify those individuals who have the answers to the questions they bring forward could prove very lucrative. If the student is assigned a Financial Aid Counselor that they can always turn to when they have questions, or can email to get a quick response, they will begin to build their own knowledge about their financial aid and develop a sense of responsibility for their own finances. It also helps them to know they have someone who knows their story and their financial aid information. While this may not always be possible, it would be beneficial to have a set of individuals designated for working with FWS students specifically.

Financial Aid professionals can play a huge role in the FWS job placement for students, as well as providing examples of how FWS is making a difference to those

students. Better placement for students will lead to greater development and overall outcomes for the students involved, which could also cut down on student displacement in a position and improve retention rates. They can also play a crucial role in training supervisors on a variety of topics including but not limited to: transitioning students to their position, providing training to students, understanding FWS packages, and so on.

Recommendations for Future Research

The future research that can be completed on this topic is outlined in the following information. Not much research has been done on FWS as it pertains to the effect it can have on a student's perceived college experience. While Kinzie (2011) stated that the *working college student* is now the definition for life as an undergraduate in college, more information is needed to create better outcomes and initiatives to support them.

- Conducting this study with a greater number of diverse students from multiple areas involved in the FWS program. While the size of the institution may play a role in the involvement opportunities for the students, still trying to reach other students who may identify with a marginalized or under-represented student population would be beneficial.

- All of the participants in the study were heavily involved in other activities outside of their FWS position, creating dialogue that blended their experiences. While it is very positive to see that students are able to become involved while they are still working and going to school, identifying participants who may not be as involved could provide different insights.

- Taking the time to interview the FWS position supervisors would be beneficial for the future research and direction of related studies. While we hope to see students using the FWS program to maximize their return on their hard work, we should also see what the supervisors are taking away from the experience.

- Replicating this study in several different universities: private, public, small-size, research one, and multiple others would help progress the research even further.

- An area that was not analyzed during this study, but should be considered in future research, is looking into a student's overall literacy of financial aid. While FWS is only one type of aid for eligible students, understanding where their literacy level is when it comes to financial aid would be beneficial to better assist students either as they enter into college, or pre-college decision.

Summary

This study used a qualitative approach to understand and explore the participants perceptions, experiences, and opinions of their FWS position and its impact on their college experience. This study provides insights in to how a FWS position can impact multiple facets of a student's collegiate experience, and especially how FWS supervisors can assist in expanding those experiences collaboratively. What was found as a result of this study was that a student perceived college experience can be significantly impacted by a multitude of factors relating to the FWS program. The participants felt as though through some interaction or portion of their job description, that they had a strong sense of belonging at their office. Whether it be through their relationship with their supervisor, flexibility on the job, or ability to tie in academics with their position, the participants were found to have great connections to the work that that they were doing. With all of

that, the participants had also retained their participation in the FWS program for a time of greater than one year, showing that a sense of belonging, responsibility, and academic success were all in some way impacted in a positive manner. From this study, a strong base of understanding has been built on how the FWS program can benefit students and through the sections above, it can be seen that the FWS program can positively benefits the perceived college experience and increase the retention at the university.

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Appendix A

Background Information
1. What was your family dynamic like growing up?
2. Tell me a little bit more about your family.
   a. Do you have any siblings?
      i. Did they attend a college or university? If so, what ones?
      ii. Did they work while in college?
   b. Are you the oldest; youngest?
3. Tell me about your parents.
   a. Did they attend a college or university?
   b. What is your mother's occupation; father's?
      i. How is your relationship with your mother; father?
4. What responsibilities did you have growing up?
   a. Did you have any chores and tasks that you had to complete?
   b. Where did academics fall in your responsibilities at home?
   c. Tell me a little bit about your support system before college.
5. How would you describe the friends you hung out with in high school?
   a. How did you meet your friends?
6. Tell me about how you interacted with them.
   a. What did you do with your friends?
7. Did you friend group change throughout high school?
8. What was your overall high school experience like?
9. Describe to me what a typical day was like for you in high school?
10. Tell me about any extra-curricular activities or jobs you had in high school.
    a. What got you interested?
    b. How long did you stay involved?
11. What made you choose to attend this institution over others like it?
    a. What attracted you this institution?

College Experience
1. Describe your overall transition to this institution.
   a. What was expected of you when you came to college?
2. When you entered into college, what did your friend group look like?
   a. Who comprised your friend group?
      i. Was the majority of your friend group friend from college?
3. Tell me about how your group bonded and came together.
4. Describe what your friend group looked like after your first couple weeks in college.
   a. How did your group come to this point?
5. Tell me about some of the activities you and your friend group participate in.
   a. Tell me about your involvement on campus.
   b. What got you interested in those activities?
      i. Who do you participate with?
6. How do you make decisions?
   a. Who influences those decisions?

7. Tell me about a difficult situation you went through in your first year of college.
   a. Who supported you?
   b. Who/what challenged you?
      i. What did you learn through this?
8. Tell me about a time when you had to work with a group of individuals in college.
      i. Who was involved?
      ii. What was the task?
      iii. How did you work together?
9. Tell me about a time when you had to work harder to meet certain expectations in colleges.

Academic Experience

10. What kind of student were you in high school - how does that differ from how you are now.
    a. On a scale of 1-10, what priority do you place on your academics every day? 1=not at all 10=strong; Why do you give it that number?
       i. How many hours a week do you spend reviewing material for classes?
       ii. How do you balance your academics with other areas of your life?
11. Can you tell me about your academic experience thus far?
    a. What would you say has made the biggest impact on your academics up until this point at this institution?
    b. What kind of student would you say you were in high school? What kind of student are you now?
       i. How did you think this change occurred?
    c. What was the biggest challenge to adapting to the academic expectations of college?
1. Do you use any resources on campus (i.e. tutors, support groups, etc)?
    a. Tell me about them.
       i. How did you find out about them?
       ii. What do you use them for?
2. Tell me about your interaction with the faculty on campus.
    a. Have you initiated these interactions?
    b. Do you interact outside the classroom?
3. Tell me about a typical day for you in college from the moment you wake up to the moment you go to sleep.
    a. How much time do you spend studying?
4. How would you describe academic success in high school?
    a. Describe it for me now that you are in college.

Federal Work Study Position

1. What is your federal work study position on campus?
    a. Tell me about your position and responsibilities.
2. What drew you to participate in the Federal Work Study program?
    a. Describe the three most important things to you in your current position?
3. How would you describe your first few weeks of working within the position?

4. How is your relationship with:
    a. Supervisor?
    b. Colleagues?
    c. Others in the office?
5. What has been your biggest accomplishment?
    a. Biggest struggle?
6. Tell me about the role of your supervisor in your FWS position.
    a. What have they provided to you in this position?
        i. Has it been positive?
        ii. Negative?
7. Tell me about who has helped you in being acclimated to your new position?
        iii. What qualities helped you in that acclimation?
8. What do you know about Federal Work Study?
    b. How did you get your position?
        i. Do you know about other positions available through the FWS program?
    c. Do you know how you received FWS?
9. Tell me about your understanding of Financial Aid.
    d. Do you know how to fill out your FAFSA Application?
    e. Have you ever visited Financial Aid on campus?
        i. Do you know where it is located?

Is there anything else you would like to share with me?