

RESIDENTIAL LEARNING COMMUNITY
PARTNERSHIPS: FACULTY PERCEPTIONS OF HALL
DIRECTORS' ROLES IN STUDENT LEARNING

By

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Submitted to the Faculty of the
Graduate College of the
Oklahoma State University
in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for
the Degree of
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY
May, 2020

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

When I thought about this moment – finally writing the acknowledgements section – I always thought I would have something poetic to say. Something that captured the relief I felt and that conveyed the thanks I owe to so many people in my life who have helped me get here. As it turns out, I don't think I have it in me. I'm plumb tired. So I'll just stick to the basics and hope that eventually I'll have the words to express just how grateful I am and that I truly could not have done this without the support of some wonderful humans.

Kyle: Bless you. Thank you for putting up with me and for honoring and respecting the Scarf Rule. I love you.

My family: You never doubted me, and your moral support never wavered, and at times I desperately needed that. Grandma Jones, thank you for your prayers. I wish I could write you to tell you about this moment.

My supervisors and colleagues, both past and present: I have been so, so very lucky to be surrounded by folks who have granted me grace on the days I was distracted by schoolwork. Melissa, I couldn't have finished Chapter 5 without your help. For real.

My committee: Thank you for your time and your candid feedback. My defense felt as though I was having a conversation among peers and I truly value your thoughts and guidance. Dr. Kearney, thank you for your encouragement and your willingness to talk me off the ledge – both early in the program and throughout my writing process. You're brilliant and amazing and I couldn't have done this without you.

The OSU-OKC Cohort: Your support, encouragement, and commiseration got both me and Pam through some pretty rough semesters. Pam and I appreciate you.

Name: SAMANTHA KRAMER

Date of Degree: MAY, 2020

Title of Study: RESIDENTIAL LEARNING COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS:
FACULTY PERCEPTIONS OF HALL DIRECTORS' ROLES IN
STUDENT LEARNING

Major Field: EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP AND POLICY STUDIES: HIGHER
EDUCATION

Abstract: There is evidence to suggest that collaborations between academic affairs and student affairs can be meaningful to students' learning experiences both in and out of the classroom. Residential learning communities (RLCs) are popular avenues by which faculty members and residence life professionals can work together to provide opportunities for students to integrate their curricular and cocurricular experiences. Although these environments can be effective, many RLC programs face challenges, including professional cultures and organizational structures, that may hinder collaborations between faculty members and residence life professional staff members. The purpose of this study was to explore RLC-associated, full-time faculty members' perceptions of the roles of hall directors with whom they partner in residential learning communities. This case study was conducted at a private, medium-sized university with a reputation for its engaged faculty and residential learning community program. Through interviews, RLC-associated faculty members from the institution shared their experiences with and perceptions of residence life professional staff members with whom they worked. Results from the study indicate that faculty members described the hall directors as subject matter experts, as providing continuity within their communities, and as close partners in student learning. Implications for research, theory, and practice are discussed, including ways in which residence life professionals may be empowered to view themselves as experts in the student development field and how they may help faculty members learn more about holistic student engagement.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Contemporary higher education institutions are facing increased accountability pressures, including from non-education sectors such as legal courts and public policy (Dougherty & Reddy, 2013; Kaplin & Lee, 2014). While various factors are at work, such as the rising cost of tuition and student debt, a primary driver of this accountability environment is focused on the value of a college degree or, at its foundation, what students are learning that matters in their lives after college (Arum & Rosksa, 2011; Newman, Couturier, & Scurry, 2004)

The public perception of higher education deeply impacts both academic and student affairs units and, in the current budget environment, these departments struggle to do more with fewer resources (Schroeder, 1999). Both academic and student affairs divisions at most universities have attempted to improve learning environments by introducing opportunities for seamless learning in and out of the classroom, particularly for undergraduate students.

Many times, though, these tactics are implemented only within the individual departments and along specific chains of authority, rather than campus wide. This lack of coordination makes some campus initiatives redundant, inefficient, and a drain on valuable resources (Kezar, 2009).

It is imperative that academic affairs, a term that is intended in this study to include faculty members, and student affairs divisions consider how they can influence undergraduate student learning as individual units *and* as collaborators with one another. One approach is for divisions to work together to provide learning environments that promote more opportunities for students to reach their educational goals, both inside and outside the classroom. A genuine academic and student affairs collaboration requires participants to set aside their deep-seated beliefs and personal agendas for the good of the larger initiative (Golde & Pribbenow, 2000), which is often at odds with the organizational history and the deeply entrenched political systems.

Despite the challenges, residential learning communities (RLCs) can be ideal models for purposeful and effective academic and student affairs collaborations that promote undergraduate student learning (Inkelas & Weisman, 2003; Mayhew, Dahl, Youngerman, & Duran, 2016; Zhao & Kuh, 2004), and institutions across the country have implemented RLCs with this goal. Research shows that, in general, collaborative RLCs have a positive effect (e.g. Brower & Inkelas, 2010; Tinto, 2003), but there is still much to be learned about collaborations of this nature. In this chapter, I first provide background for the study by examining the context in which academic and student affairs collaborations exist and providing a brief historical overview of traditional responsibilities within the divisions. In addition, I consider practices that blend curricular and cocurricular undergraduate learning

experiences, promote holistic student development, and encourage collaborations between academic and student affairs units. These concepts provide the impetus for the problem statement, purpose statement, research questions, and the study's significance. Next, I provide an overview of the study design and methodology. Finally, this chapter ends with a list of general terms and a road map that outlines topics addressed in subsequent chapters.

Background of the Problem

A variety of types of collaborations between academic affairs, including faculty, and student affairs are well represented in higher education literature (e.g. ACPA, 1994; Frost, Strom, Downe, Schultz, & Holland, 2010; Kezar, 2001; Schuh, 1999). The goal of many of these collaborations is to integrate students' curricular and cocurricular worlds. In other words, these collaborations attempt to integrate students' academic, experiential, and practical experiences to help them achieve their educational goals (Frost et al., 2010).

Evidence indicates that faculty and student affairs collaborations can strengthen undergraduate students' development and achievable learning outcomes (ACPA, 1994; Browne, Headworth, & Saum, 2009; Frazier & Eighmy, 2012; Kuh, 1996; Love & Love, 1995; Schuh, 1999). Collaborations between academic affairs and student affairs divisions can enhance student learning by improving the overall learning environment of the institution, creating better campus relationships, and improving retention and academic performance (Nesheim et al., 2007). This suggests that collaborations between the two units can be meaningful to students' learning experiences both in and out of the classroom. By collaborating in the educational process, faculty and student affairs professionals can help undergraduate students develop a community of support on campus and adjust to the rigorous demands in their social and academic environments (Frost et al., 2010; Nesheim et al., 2007).

Throughout the last twenty years, residence halls have been venues for potential collaborations between faculty and student affairs professionals, specifically residence life professionals. Residential learning communities (RLCs) in particular have become popular attempts to promote the development of the whole student with the help of curricular and cocurricular experiences. RLCs encourage innovative academic and peer influences, as learning that starts in the classroom continues into a student's residence hall and creates intellectual experiences in the cocurricular environment (Ellett & Schmidt, 2011; Wawrzynski, Jessup-Anger, Stolz, Helman, & Beaulieu, 2009). Some reports indicate that students can have very meaningful experiences outside the classroom, suggesting more evidence of the importance of faculty and residence life collaborations (Sriram, Shushok, Perkins, & Scales, 2011). Herein lies the problem: Although collaborations can be influential to undergraduate students' learning, the road to successful collaborations, particularly between two traditionally separate units, is often riddled with obstacles and misunderstandings.

Understanding the Term *Collaboration*

One source of misunderstanding that can occur is about the meaning of the word *collaboration*, a challenge that also occurs in designing a research study on collaborations. Thus, it is imperative to carefully define what is meant by the term *collaboration*.

There are many different understood meanings and definitions of *collaboration*, even when specifically considering residential learning communities (RLCs) on college campuses. This was particularly highlighted for me when I was accepted as a participant in a national research seminar and began working with a multi-institution research team to explore the influence of RLC collaborations on student learning. After recognizing the wide variety of

meanings individuals and organizations assign to the term, and the act of, *collaboration*, our team invested considerable time in writing a clear definition for our work. With the permission of my team members, I chose to use this definition, titled *Collaboration between Academic and Student Affairs Professionals in Residential Learning Communities* (Leary et al., 2018) for this study:

The following is a definition of collaboration between academic and student affairs professionals. For the purpose of this definition, student affairs professionals include anyone working toward the support of student development and/or providing services to students. Academic affairs professionals is assumed to include faculty, academic administrators, and/or anyone else working toward the support of student academic support and/or growth. This definition is intended to be used with and is reliant on the contextualization shared in the further description of each element within the definition.

Collaboration between academic and student affairs is the continuous process of cultivating an interdependent relationship where each stakeholder is mutually committed to working toward the shared purpose of holistic student learning.

Continuous process.

Collaboration between academic and student affairs in Residential Learning Communities (RLCs) is an ongoing process that takes time and effort to develop and sustain. Collaboration is not an end state, but rather a fluid process that evolves and can devolve as challenges arise and/or various features change (e.g., stakeholders, institutional priorities, organizational structures, and resources).

Interdependent relationship.

Collaboration between academic and student affairs in RLCs is interdependent and characterized by trust and shared decision-making. Collaboration is based on an understanding and valuing of curricular and cocurricular experiences, one another's unique contributions toward the shared purpose, and one another's professional norms. This interdependent relationship reflects integrated rather than parallel efforts among stakeholders toward holistic student learning.

Commitment to shared purpose.

The shared purpose of RLCs is holistic student learning which is broadly defined as learning derived in curricular and co-curricular settings in the context of student development. Collaboration requires the RLC to have a clearly defined shared

purpose which may vary by institution yet is understood, embraced, and practiced by all stakeholders. A commitment to the shared purpose of the RLC is demonstrated by mutual engagement and a mutual, not necessarily equal, commitment of resources (e.g., human, financial, space).

Campus Culture.

Institutional and divisional cultures can support or interfere with collaboration between academic and student affairs in RLCs. For example, support from institutional leadership regarding collaboration, resources to support the RLC, and an understanding that collaboration supports the institutional mission are cultural elements that vary by institution. It is important for stakeholders to acknowledge and discuss how campus culture influences collaboration in RLCs. (Leary et al., 2018)

With a common understanding of collaboration for RLCs now in place, I now continue to discuss the design elements of my study.

Problem Statement

Using residential learning communities (RLCs) as a vehicle, faculty and residence life professionals can collaborate toward providing opportunities for undergraduate students to integrate their curricular and cocurricular experiences. Strong collaborations between academic affairs (including faculty) and residence life, some of which have been documented in the literature in the past two decades (e.g. Browne et al., 2009; Golde & Pribbenow, 2000; Philpott & Strange, 2003), have been shown to be the most effective design for successful RLCs (Brower & Inkelas, 2010).

Despite the success of some RLCs that rely on strong collaborations between faculty and residence life, most of these efforts are fraught with challenges that threaten their effectiveness. This includes organizational structures, professional cultures, and traditional campus roles (Browne et al., 2009; Golde & Pribbenow, 2000; Kezar, 2001). These challenges can intervene in collaborative attempts and result in a lack of shared vision or failure to share responsibilities for student learning. Even with good intentions,

collaborations that lead to success for RLCs regularly fail in a higher education culture that simultaneously encourages collaboration and breeds competition among divisional silos (Kezar, 2009; Morgan, 2006). As a result, higher education professionals often implement redundant and/or ineffective RLC efforts on their campuses. Evidence indicates little progress has been made concerning these types of collaborations (Arcelus, 2011; Pearson & Bowman, 2000; Philpott & Strange, 2003) and suggests that faculty members and residence life professionals who desire true collaborations toward RLCs face the same challenges now as they did a decade ago.

Given that higher education has long privileged faculty as the leaders of student learning (Blimling & Whitt, 1998; Browne et al., 2009), one step toward untangling the RLC collaborative challenge is to better understand the perceptions that faculty members active in RLC efforts have about the value of their relationships with residence life professionals (ACPA, 1994; Arcelus, 2011; Magolda, 2005; Philpott & Strange, 2003). It may be that a better understanding of faculty members' perceptions about the roles of residence life professionals as collaborative partners in RLCs will contribute to problem-solving strategies that lead to strengthening these efforts.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to explore RLC-associated, full-time faculty members' perceptions of the roles of residence life professionals with whom they are in residential learning community collaborations. For this study, RLCs had a particular focus on undergraduate student learning and were situated at a medium-sized university.

Research Questions

This qualitative study was designed with thought-provoking questions that allowed study participants to describe their experiences from their perspectives. The following central research question guided this case study investigation:

- How do RLC-associated faculty members describe the roles of residence life professionals within the context of shared RLCs?

Additional sub-questions include:

1. How do faculty members describe their *relationships* with residence life professionals within the context of shared RLCs?
2. How do faculty members describe the *processes of working with* residence life professionals in shared RLCs?
3. What do RLC faculty members report as *best practices* of residence life professionals working with them in RLCs?

Significance of the Study

Colleges and universities have an imperative to influence students' learning both inside and outside the classroom (ACPA, 1994). Bridging the gap between students' curricular and cocurricular experiences, however, is not simple and requires collaborations between academic and student affairs (Schuh, 1999). Evidence suggests that both students and institutions can benefit from purposeful collaborations between the two divisions (e.g. ACPA, 1994; Browne et al., 2009). The potential power of such collaborations can shift students' experiences from fragmented activities to integrative learning opportunities intermingled into nearly every aspect of their collegiate experiences. This study's findings

enhance our understanding of faculty's and residence life professionals' involvement in residential learning communities in terms of research, theory, and practice.

Research

Little research exists on the perceptions that faculty have of residence life professionals working with them in RLCs. There are also significant gaps regarding the nature of faculty and residence life RLC collaborations in the context of RLCs and how they might influence RLC programs. The study provides insights into the faculty experiences of working with residence life professionals in residential learning communities.

Theory

The results of this study deepen theoretical understandings of how the nature of faculty members' perceptions of their work with residence life professionals in RLCs may influence an RLC program. Theories that may lend some insight into the causes or implications of these perceptions include those in organizational culture or leadership.

Practice

By exploring how faculty members perceive residence life professionals, professionals associated with RLCs may be able to transcend barriers caused by misunderstandings and conflicting philosophies. This study aimed to enhance the understanding of relationships between faculty members and residence life professionals and, in doing so, strengthen opportunities for collaboration that benefit student learning and development.

Study Design

Gaps in the research process and misguided methodological decisions can occur when the study's purpose and philosophical underpinnings are not aligned (Koro-Ljungberg,

Yendol-Hoppey, Smith, & Hayes, 2009). In light of this, I now turn to a brief overview of the study's design and methodology.

Epistemology and Theoretical Perspective

My approach to this research reflects one of a constructivist paradigm, which explores participants' contextual and multiple realities (Crotty, 1998; Patton, 2015). This study was guided by an interpretivism theoretical perspective and as such, the goal of this study was to understand and interpret the meanings of participants' realities rather than generalize and predict (Guba & Lincoln, 1994).

Design

This study was designed as a single-site case study, guided by the work of Sharan Merriam (2009). As an intensive analysis of a particular phenomenon, program, or situation, this case study provides practical insights into the perceptions of faculty working with residence life professionals within the context of an RLC program.

Case studies require that clear boundaries are established. This case was contextually and geographically bounded by a particular higher education site that offered a vibrant, robust program of residential learning communities. A critical characteristic of this site is that it prioritized faculty involvement at the undergraduate student level, thus providing potential opportunities for faculty members and residence life professionals to collaborate in learning-centered practices specifically for undergraduate students. A single-site approach allowed me to intensely analyze participants' experiences and perceptions within the context of the site. This study was also bounded by time. Data was collected throughout three weeks of one spring semester – a limited snapshot into faculty members' experiences working with

residence life professionals. Finally, due to the topic itself, the study is bounded within the higher education industry.

Participants

The participants were full-time faculty who were associated with RLCs and who were best positioned to provide an information-rich presentation of their perceptions about working with residence life professionals also associated with the RLCs.

Methods

This project relied on documents, a key informant, individual interviews, informal observations/field notes, and a visual exercise. General institutional materials, such as the site's website, also provided a glimpse into the public context of the institution. Internal documents related to RLC strategic planning provided additional insight into the nature of the working relationships between faculty members and residence life professionals. A key informant provided specialized knowledge of the setting and context. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with faculty members who served in roles within the RLC program. Informal observations/field notes in the form of analytic memos provided opportunities to record my observations, thoughts, and reflexive reactions during data collection and analysis. During interviews, participants were asked to utilize a "rules of the road" visual that served as a metaphor for what participants perceive to be the responsibilities of faculty and residence life professionals in students' educational processes.

Data Analysis

A priori theoretical frameworks assist researchers in defining the purpose, research questions, methods, and other elements of their study's design. Such a theoretical framework also serves as a lens through which a researcher views and analyzes data. However, for this

study, I did not wish to limit design or data analysis to a prescribed framework; rather, I wished to remain flexible to the emergent nature of qualitative inquiry. This study utilized an *a posteriori* theoretical framework, which means I chose a theoretical framework, or frameworks, after data collection. My choice of framework(s) was driven by observations and patterns within my collected data. In this way, the data guided identification of the lens(es) through which I interpreted meaning within a specific context.

The process of my data analysis was to make sense of the data inductively, in which the data build relevant concepts. I engaged in continuous analysis and recorded and coded patterns that emerged throughout the course of data collection. Chapter III contains further details of data analysis. Further details relevant to the study's design are also included in Chapter III.

Explanation of Terms

In addition to the detailed explanation of the term collaboration, provided previously in this chapter, the following definitions were used within this study.

Learning Community

Learning community refers to an intentional group of students who share common academic goals and meet regularly to collaborate on classwork. Some exist solely within the parameters of the group's shared coursework, such as academic major, and activities outside the classroom related to course assignments. Others include a residential component, in which the group lives together on campus. These are *residential learning communities*.

Residential Learning Community

There is no widely agreed-upon definition of residential learning communities. To provide clarity and consistency throughout this study, I use the Brower and Inkelas' (2010)

definition of *residential learning community* as a campus housing program “that incorporate[s] academically-based themes and build[s] community through common learning” (p. 36). This is a conceptual extension of *learning community*, which is broader in nature and does not necessarily incorporate a residential component.

Academic Affairs

For the purposes of this study, the term *academic affairs* is intended to include faculty members and administrators. It is essential to include academic affairs as a division that encompasses faculty because although faculty are most commonly the academic affairs representatives in RLC collaborations, it is important to consider academic affairs as a unit. This approach is necessary because often collaborations require the support of both faculty and academic affairs administrators.

Student Affairs Professionals

Staff in student affairs must view themselves as educators and as partners in student learning (Sandeen, 2004). By approaching their work with a commitment to student learning and with educational goals in mind, they can contribute to their institutions’ missions. In light of this, the use of the term student affairs *professional* is intentional. To be partners in student learning, student affairs staff must see their efforts as more than administering services to students (Reger & Hyman, 1988; Whitt, 2006), so I have avoided utilizing *administrator* in reference to the work that student affairs professionals perform.

Although student affairs professionals work across diverse divisions that offer a wide range of programs, activities, and services for students, for the context of this study the term *student affairs professional* also applies to residence life professionals associated with RLCs. Even though many RLC programs are linked to residence life departments, this may not be

the case for all. It is important to acknowledge that any manner of staff in student affairs divisions may be associated with these programs.

Collaboration

Collaboration between faculty and residence life professionals in RLCs is the continuous process of cultivating an interdependent relationship where each stakeholder is mutually committed to working toward the shared purpose of holistic student learning (Leary et al., 2018).

Conclusion

Collaborations between academic and student affairs divisions serve as mechanisms to prioritize learning-centered practices that make efficient use of campus resources, enhance students' development, and create links between the curricular and cocurricular environments (Kezar, 2001). As a popular approach to such collaborations, residential learning communities can serve as a catalyst to create a learning-centered environment that encourages seamless learning. Although both RLCs and divisional collaborations are well documented throughout higher education literature, the interpersonal nature of collaborations between faculty and residential life professionals, within the context of RLCs, is not. By exploring collaborations at this depth, this study was designed to contribute to research, theory, and practice.

The Road Map

This chapter provides an overview of the study, including a broad context within which this study is placed. In the next chapter, I consider literature relevant to residential learning communities, academic and student affairs collaborations, and faculty and student benefits of cocurricular engagement. Chapter III outlines the details of the study design,

including how a single-site case study design allowed me to explore faculty perceptions about working with residence life professionals in residential learning communities. In Chapter IV, I present a thematic analysis of the data according to my research questions. Finally, in Chapter V, I present the findings of the study and address implications and limitations. Because of the complex nature of human relationships and the many layers of the RLC environment, I found that using my research questions to organize the chapter oversimplified and limited my findings. Therefore, I organized the final chapter according to my findings and situate them within the relevant literature.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

To provide a deeper understanding of RLCs, the opportunities they provide for collaboration, and the potential roles of faculty and residential life professionals, this chapter reviews the pertinent literature. First, I consider the history of learning communities, models of RLC practices, and student outcomes and faculty experiences associated with these efforts. I then examine the history of student affairs and briefly address faculty institutional governance to provide broad illustrations of the traditional higher education environment. Finally, an exploration of academic and student affairs collaborations provides insight into the barriers to and benefits of collaborations between the two units and concludes with the gaps that remain in RLC-related research and literature.

History of Learning Communities

Although residential learning community programs are not new, they have become much more prevalent over the past decade, and the growth of such programs is placing increasing pressure on the traditional structure and functions of higher education institutions. RLC programs evolved from the Cambridge and Oxford residential college models, where there was little separation between students' living and learning environments.

Later, the social clubs of Harvard, Yale, and Princeton imitated this approach of seamless learning. Under John Dewey's educational philosophy of student-centered learning, Alexander Meiklejohn implemented the experimental college at the University of Wisconsin in the 1920s (Tinto, 2003).

This short-lived experiment was organized around specific learning objectives, seminars, and active learning. Meiklejohn envisioned the experimental college as a solution to the newly research-focused academic departments and fragmented elective system of that era, which he viewed as paradoxical to preparing students for democratic citizenship (Meiklejohn, 1932). The experimental college introduced an interdisciplinary curriculum designed to build community and create a seamless living and learning environment. For as idealistic as the notion, however, the experiment was abandoned, mostly because of political and structural barriers within the institution (Smith, 2001). Nevertheless, the experiment had a strong influence on the students involved and, ultimately, on the trajectory of higher education institutions.

This idea of common learning communities for undergraduate students increased in popularity among higher education institutions in the 1950s and 1960s. In response to growing enrollment numbers, one reform effort that aimed to alter the organizational structure of institutions was the development of cluster colleges. Cluster colleges attempted to divide large institutions into smaller units to promote a small, collegial, and community atmosphere (Smith, 2001). Acting as university affiliates, cluster colleges operated independently and specialized in fields of study. Some of these efforts materialized into residential colleges, some of which are still in existence today. Many of these programs incorporated an interdisciplinary approach to student learning, but they were also

incompatible with their campuses' established structures (Smith, 2001). Few cluster colleges survived into the next decade and those that did survive functioned on the margins of their institutions' operations. It was not until the 1980s that other campuses noticed the success of early programs like the University of Illinois' Unit One and the University of Michigan's residential college, both of which are still in existence today (Brower & Inkelas, 2010; Zhao & Kuh, 2004).

Learning communities as an institutional practice gained momentum in the mid-1980s after The Evergreen State College established the Washington Center for Undergraduate Education, which served as a state- and nationwide resource database for learning community practices. The Washington Center developed a learning community language that was easily translated to institutions across the country and provided a variety of models that could be adapted at local sites. Although the Washington Center primarily focused on the non-residential aspect of learning communities, its innovative efforts to move the practice forward have been instrumental in the development of RLCs across the nation.

The field of higher education witnessed a surge in undergraduate learning community development in the 1990s, thanks to Vincent Tinto, a prominent researcher and theorist in student retention. His work aided the growth of learning community practices when he published the first in-depth study of the impact of learning communities and collaborative learning on undergraduate students (Tinto & Goodsell-Love, 1994; Tinto & Russo, 1994). The results of his study demonstrated the effectiveness of learning communities and presented factors that contributed to effective learning environments (Matthews, Smith, & MacGregor, 2012; Smith, 2001). Tinto's timely work was significant to the growth of the learning community movement because it emphasized the strengths of the practice in relation

to a student learning paradigm shift introduced around this time. Learning communities were shown to not only contribute to learning, but they also reflected a new *approach* to student learning in which students constructed knowledge together rather than as an attempt to find a foundational reality (Cross, 1998). More importantly, these communities also *worked* and were practical for institutions to implement at the undergraduate level.

Since Tinto's contributions, learning community research has expanded in the higher education literature. In recent years, scholars and practitioners have used the abundance of learning community research to justify implementing these programs on their own campuses. Today, more than 300 non-residential learning community programs exist at two- and four-year institutions across the country; each varies in size, student populations served, programmatic structure, resources, and other variables. This wide range of variation in models is significant. The Evergreen State College serves as a gatekeeper to the historical and philosophical foundations of learning community practices and has defined the parameters of what is considered a learning community (Inkelas & Soldner, 2011).

Residential learning communities, on the other hand, have no such gatekeeper, which has created a scenario in which institutions have rushed to apply such practices with little consensus upon the definition of what an RLC should be and how these programs should be implemented (Inkelas & Soldner, 2011). Although this absence of agreement has not prevented institutions from implementing RLC programs, their initiatives may fall short in their attempts to enhance student learning. The lack of standardization also makes it difficult to study RLCs across institutions and to identify a framework with which to consider the structural and programmatic elements that can influence student learning outcomes. In recent years, several research teams have developed different typologies in an effort to create

consistency yet, as comprehensive as they attempt to be, some still fall short because of the differences among RLC programs.

Common Residential Learning Community Typologies

The practice of implementing residential learning community models for undergraduate students is unique to each campus. Each college or university creates its strategy according to its vision, student population needs, campus relationships, and other elements of its campus culture. It is this diversity of approach and resulting learning communities that make it difficult to research and compare outcomes across institutions. The literature acknowledges this range, and some researchers have made attempts to conceptualize different RLC models (e.g., Inkelas, Soldner, Longerbeam, & Leonard, 2008; Lenning & Ebbers, 1999; Love & Tokuno, 1999; MacGregor, Smith, Matthews, & Gebelnick, 1990; Shapiro & Levine, 1999). Because of the varying frameworks for RLC designs, more research is needed on the different models, the degrees of success, and the nature of collaborations within the context of these attempts. For example, do more elaborate RLC models produce different learning outcomes than those that are less elaborate? Does the depth or frequency of interactions with faculty predict the degree to which students integrate their learning? These and similar questions are beyond the scope of this study but highlight some of the gaps in RLC research.

Despite the diversity of RLC program designs and implementations, there are some common RLC models. Schoem (2004) introduced a three-prong typology of learning communities within an undergraduate residential setting: residential colleges, residential learning communities, and residential education programs. Zeller, James, and Klippenstein (2002) identify six different types, some of which overlap with Schoem's. Although these

models provide a conceptual framework with which to consider RLC structures, these were developed from a practitioner-based lens. As a response, Inkelas and Associates (2004, 2007) presented the first collection of typologies derived from empirical evidence. The authors conducted a nationwide study of undergraduate living-learning programs, an umbrella term they used to categorize any manner of learning community within a residential setting. Using responses collected from over 600 living-learning programs across the nation, the research team analyzed the data in terms of the programs' names, their stated goals and objectives, and their ratings of the relative importance of 17 pre-selected learning outcomes (Inkelas & Associates, 2007).

Seventeen primary categories emerged, providing a further illustration that the breadth of what is considered a residential learning community – or, as Inkelas and Associates identified, a living-learning program – is difficult to contain in a pre-determined, clear-cut box. The commonality of these typologies – and others not discussed here – is that they attempted to help students make connections between their formal classroom environments and out-of-class experiences that took place in their living environments.

A portion of the following typologies suggested by Inkelas and Associates (2007), specifically those that appear to parallel Schoem's (2004), and Zeller et al.'s (2002) are briefly presented in the following sections to provide context to residential learning community practices. As previously noted RLC programs are unique to individual campuses, there is no narrow definition of what an RLC is, and there are many approaches to conduct such programs.

Residential colleges (Inkelas & Associates, 2007; Schoem, 2004; Zeller et al., 2002). These programs date back to the Oxford and Cambridge models in which students

and faculty lived and worked together. These are immersive experiences that place a strong emphasis on academic, cultural, and social pursuits, particularly within the liberal arts. They are often colleges-within-colleges and attempt to make larger institutions feel more intimate. Classrooms, library facilities, faculty offices and residences, and students' rooms are all in the same building. In some cases, they are also degree-granting programs in which students live in residential colleges for several years, if not for their entire college experience.

Living-learning centers (Zeller et al., 2002) or disciplinary programs (Inkelas & Associates, 2007). Living-learning centers are programs with specific academic collaborations, such as pre-med, foreign language, and math, science, and engineering. Typically, academic and residence life professionals form very strong collaborations. Inkelas and Associates (2007) differentiate living-learning centers as “umbrella programs” that may house several communities with potentially distinct foci without narrowing them by theme. Disciplinary programs, on the other hand, are those that cluster students by similar majors or disciplinary interests, such as journalism, education, or criminal justice.

Theme housing (Inkelas & Associates, 2007; Schoem, 2004; Zeller et al., 2002). Theme housing models house students with similar interests or hobbies in the same residential unit. Themes include wellness, leadership, substance-free, and environmental sustainability. These may receive support from academic affairs programs; however, residential life staff members are often the sponsors of the communities. Typically, these programs provide little to no connection to students' academic or disciplinary endeavors. Some, however, encourage faculty involvement opportunities in various ways that do not usually involve coursework.

Academic residential programs (Inkelas & Associates, 2007; Zeller et al., 2002).

Academic residential programs provide academic support services to students in a residential setting. Various academic constituents collaborate to provide services like academic advising, tutoring, and career planning and programming on topics such as time management and study skills. These programs do not necessarily have a particular disciplinary focus but rather attempt to connect students to academic resources.

Residential learning communities (Schoem, 2004; Zeller et al., 2002). This model creates opportunities for students who live together to also attend the same classes. Usually, this requires that residential staff develop strong relationships with faculty to enhance the benefits of these programs, such as specialized course assignments, study groups, and faculty involvement opportunities. These programs can serve students for one year or several years and often include a cocurricular component, like a service learning project, but do not necessarily have a tie to a particular discipline. The RLC collaborations that are the focus of this study reflect this model.

Transition programs (Inkelas & Associates, 2007; Zeller et al., 2002). These special communities attempt to facilitate successful transitions to college through coordinated opportunities between academic affairs and student affairs. These programs emphasize needs specific to unique student populations and deliver services in the residence hall environment. Populations served in these types of programs include first-year, transfer, first generation, and underrepresented communities.

Moving Beyond the Model

Depending on the institution, the previous models could be considered residential learning communities regardless of faculty involvement, common learning opportunities, and

academic ties. However difficult it remains to compare RLCs from campus to campus, there is a clear and strong connection between the purposes of most RLCs and student success. Most residential learning communities encourage commitments from all areas of the university, including RLC residents, faculty, and residence life professionals, and promote campus-wide responsibility for student success. These commitments, such as adequate resources, shared goals, collaborations between faculty members and student affairs professionals, and supportive institutional climates are necessary to foster successful RLC programs. The unique element of residential learning communities is that unlike some learning innovations, RLCs can provide a broad platform for implementing effective pedagogies across institutional structures. They cannot solely exist as an innovation, however. At some point, the practice should challenge institutions to critically consider structural and organizational barriers (Matthews et al., 2012). RLCs challenge traditional academic and student affairs responsibilities and, therefore, insist that professionals in both divisions reflect on how they can combine efforts to improve student learning.

Strong collaborations in learning communities have a powerful potential to impact more than just student learning. Effective programs can also influence other areas of students' collegiate experiences, including those in students' academic and social environments. The strength of RLCs is that with strong collaborations, residence halls can become natural environments to blend the curricular and the cocurricular and promote student achievement in measurable outcomes (Brower & Inkelas, 2010; Cox & Orehovec, 2007; Inkelas et al., 2008).

Student Outcomes of Learning Communities

Learning community research serves as an important backdrop for understanding the effects of residential learning communities on the experiences of their participants. Because the literature does not keep the types of learning communities distinct, the literature presented in the following sections is a blend of undergraduate learning community and RLC research. Except where specifically identified as an RLC, the term *learning community* encompasses, but is not limited to, models that include a residential component. It is also important to caution that, particularly in the case of RLC outcomes, it is inappropriate to claim that undergraduate students experience these outcomes *as a result of* their program participation (e.g. causality). This is caused in part by a lack of knowledge about the lasting effects of RLC participation, as there are very few longitudinal studies involving RLC participants. Additionally, RLC scholars cannot yet account for selection bias, as many institutions allow students to select into their own RLC programs.

In addition, although learning community research has produced evidence that can be translated to similar outcomes in RLCs, other data suggest that outcomes may vary by learning community model, such as programs designed by an academic department, learning communities with a residential component (RLCs), or thematic communities (Inkelas & Weisman, 2003; Mayhew, Dahl et al., 2016; Stassen, 2003).

Student Learning and Academic Gains

Residential learning communities (RLC), in many ways, enhance the educational value of living on campus and seek to develop the whole student through curricular and cocurricular experiences. The benefits of undergraduate students' RLC participation include gains in learning outcomes related to academic performance and persistence, critical thinking

and problem solving, learning outside the classroom, and interactions with faculty (Andrade, 2007; Pike, 1999; Schein, 2005; Stassen, 2003). The communities help students increase their confidence in academic pursuits (Wawrzynski et al., 2009).

The effects of learning community participation are also evident in undergraduate students' learning. Participants share responsibility in constructing knowledge (Tinto, Goodsell-Love, & Russo, 1994) and have more contact with peers concerning their academic work (Stassen, 2003). Residential learning community participants are also more likely to bridge the gap between their academic pursuits and their social environments by engaging in higher levels of academic effort, academic integration, and active and collaborative learning (Arendsorf & Tincknell, 2016; Inkelas, Daver, Vogt, & Leonard, 2007; Pike, 1999; Rocconi, 2010; Tinto & Goodsell-Love, 1994; Wawrzynski et al., 2009). This includes engaging in positive academic behaviors, like studying more hours and taking more challenging coursework that emphasizes the integration of coursework and cocurricular opportunities (Inkelas & Weisman, 2003; Love, 2012; Stassen, 2003; Zhao & Kuh, 2004). Additionally, students in RLCs experience higher retention rates and increases in academic performance (Buch & Spaulding, 2008; Hotchkiss, Moore, & Pitts, 2006) than those who do not live in RLCs. They exhibit more timely progress toward their degrees (Buch & Spaulding, 2008), are more challenged to improve basic skills (Love, 2012), and are more likely than non-RLC students to discuss academic topics and sociocultural issues with their peers (Inkelas & Weisman, 2003; Mayhew, Dahl et al., 2016).

Although participants report gains in general education and practical competence, some research demonstrates that they do not have significantly higher grades than non-RLC students (Andrade, 2007; Pike, 1999; Zhao & Kuh, 2004). Some data also suggest no

differences in intellectual gains between RLC participants and residential students who do not live in RLCs (Mach, Gordon, Tearney, & McClinton, 2018; Pike, 1999); however, conflicting evidence indicates that RLC participants have higher grade point averages (Buch & Spaulding, 2008; Hotchkiss et al., 2006; Johnson, 2001; Stassen, 2003). There is greater agreement among findings that indicate undergraduate students involved in a learning community have higher retention rates than their non-learning community peers (Baker & Pomerantz, 2000; Johnson, 2001; Logan, Salisbury-Glennon, & Spence, 2000; Pike, Schroeder, & Berry, 1997; Stassen, 2003, Tinto, 2000; Zhao & Kuh, 2004).

Social Benefits

Other universally-reported benefits include a greater sense of belonging, stronger peer support, and higher levels of involvement in college activities (Andrade, 2007; Inkelas & Weisman, 2003; Wawrzynski et al., 2009). Undergraduate students involved in learning communities are more likely to engage in diversity-related activities (Stassen, 2003; Zhao & Kuh, 2004) and experience more positive gains in personal and social development than their non-learning community peers (Pike, 1999; Stassen, 2003; Zhao & Kuh, 2004). Participants report stronger supportive networks among their peers and faculty and a stronger sense of belonging (Arendsorf & Tincknell, 2016; Pike et al., 1997; Tinto & Goodsell-Love, 1994; Wawrzynski et al., 2009). Students in learning communities are also more likely to have positive perceptions that their campus is supportive of academic and social needs (Inkelas et al., 2007; Stassen, 2003; Zhao & Kuh, 2004). Students experience higher satisfaction with their residential living experiences, particularly when they have frequent, intentional interactions with faculty and RLC staff (Baker & Pomerantz, 2000; Frazier & Eighmy, 2012). RLC students report a more supportive residence hall environment, are more likely to

experience a collaborative learning environment, and face a smoother transition to college than their non-RLC peers (Arensdorf & Tincknell, 2016; Inkelas & Weisman, 2003; Mayhew, Dahl et al., 2016; Tinto, 1987).

Although some reports show that RLC students feel a greater sense of belonging (for example, Mayhew, Dahl et al., 2016), others indicate that the environment in an RLC can feel isolating to some students. Tension among students when cliques or subgroups form can have a negative impact on the dynamics of the community, which may lead to a feeling of isolation, disconnection from the campus community, or even withdrawal from the RLC or university (Arensdorf & Tincknell, 2016; Smith, 2015). Little evidence supports other negative impacts of RLC participation; however, this may be a result of a gap in the literature regarding RLCs rather than a mere absence of adverse effects.

Student-Faculty Interactions

Perhaps some of the most important experiences undergraduate students have are interactions with faculty members outside of the classroom. A vast array of student learning outcomes has been positively linked with friendly, informal interactions with faculty, including more interest in pursuing a career, an increase in cognitive skills, and improvement in attitudes toward learning (Arensdorf & Tincknell, 2016; Browne et al., 2009; Cotten & Wilson, 2006; Cox & Orehovec, 2007; Mara & Mara, 2010). Additionally, students who frequently interact with their faculty members outside of class report gains in intellectual and personal development, autonomy, and independence (Ellet & Schmidt, 2011; Mayhew, Rockenbach et al., 2016).

Although some data indicate that RLC students have more frequent faculty interactions (Pike et al., 1997; Stassen, 2003; Zhao & Kuh, 2004), other research shows that

the frequency of these interactions does not occur significantly more than students who do not live in RLCs (Pike, 1999; Stassen, 2003). This conflicting evidence is notable, as much of the literature surrounding RLC practices identifies intensive faculty involvement as a critical element to the success of learning communities. Still, some research has demonstrated that even though they may not interact with faculty more often, students in RLCs are more likely to develop supportive, nurturing relationships with faculty (Arensdorf & Tincknell, 2016). This suggests that the *quality* of relationships that students develop with faculty could be more beneficial to encouraging deeper student learning than the *frequency* of student-faculty interactions.

Faculty Experiences in RLCs

In addition to the benefits that students receive from informal faculty interactions, there are some indications that faculty members may also benefit from being involved in RLCs. Early insight of the faculty experience in RLCs is largely anecdotal (for example, Johnston, 2007; Rhoads, 2009), perhaps because institutions rushed to implement RLC practices without considering how faculty would be affected (Inkelas & Soldner, 2011). Nevertheless, these personal stories provide at least some awareness as to the positive experiences that faculty may have when associated with residential learning communities. As the field of higher education learns more about factors that influence RLCs and because faculty members seem able to significantly affect the success of these communities, scholars and practitioners, including me, are turning their attention to the faculty experience.

Motivations

Faculty who are involved in RLCs do so for a variety of reasons. Some are personally or professionally motivated, seeking to develop closer relationships with students

or to experiment with interdisciplinary and innovative pedagogy (Golde & Pribbenow, 2000; Haynes & Janosik, 2012; Kennedy & Townsend, 2005). Others seek to connect citizenship, interdisciplinary work, and other such values to their practices through civic engagement (Wawrzynski et al., 2009). Still others are driven by their desire to recreate their own educational experiences at liberal arts institutions, particularly if they served as faculty advisors for residential colleges (Kennedy & Townsend, 2005; Wawrzynski et al., 2009). The model of the RLC, too, may influence faculty involvement. Residential colleges are typically more immersive experiences than other models of RLCs and as such, faculty involvement is an expectation of the sponsoring academic department and is thus less likely to be self-selected (Jessup-Anger, Wawrzynski, & Yao, 2011). In less structured models, on the other hand, faculty members either stumble upon the opportunity or are invited by residence life professionals to serve a role.

The quality of relationships that faculty members build with students and other faculty, and the perception of support from the sponsoring academic department, affect faculty members' willingness to continue involvement in RLCs (Golde & Pribbenow, 2000; Kennedy, 2011). Support from the academic department is a critical factor, as faculty members who perceive positive or neutral support from their departments are more likely to continue their involvement (Kennedy, 2011; Kennedy & Townsend, 2005). A faculty member's department can demonstrate support in several ways, including incorporating participation in the tenure and promotion process and course load reduction. Faculty members are also more likely to stay involved if they feel as though they are positively influencing the students' community and if their participation inspires new teaching methods (Golde & Pribbenow, 2000; Kennedy & Townsend, 2005).

Faculty Benefits of RLC Involvement

Emerging empirical research suggests faculty can benefit professionally through involvement with students outside the classroom and, specifically, with RLCs. Faculty members who interact with undergraduate students through RLCs express that their involvement led to implementing different pedagogical methods in the classroom, including making course material more relevant by relating it to student culture (Klein, 2000; Sriram et al., 2011). Some have also reported that their RLC involvement provided them opportunities to know undergraduate students on a deeper level and to connect with them in more meaningful ways (Haynes & Janosik, 2012; Sriram et al., 2011). Others found that they developed a community among other faculty within their college as they worked together to provide learning opportunities for RLC participants (Jessup-Anger et al., 2011).

Barriers to RLC Involvement

There are many barriers that can impede faculty involvement, including time constraints and pressure to focus on research rather than student interactions (Jessup-Anger et al., 2011). Some faculty also struggle to balance research obligations with expectations to be involved in the cocurricular life of their campuses. Although they acknowledge the value of their involvement, some faculty members can feel overwhelmed by seemingly endless ideas to implement learning opportunities in their RLCs (Jessup-Anger et al., 2011).

Residential learning communities are opportunities for faculty to promote learning environments in and out of the classroom, a concept that is attractive to many who are involved in an RLC. However, collaborations with residence life professionals can be difficult to facilitate. The reasons for this struggle may be blamed on personnel or

personality (Kezar, 2001), but perhaps a deeper look at the historical underpinnings of the field of student affairs can provide expanded insight.

Student Affairs Professionals as Educators

Throughout its history, the student affairs field has been sculpted by forces both inside and outside higher education and, as a result, has experienced reform movements that shape how other campus constituents perceive student affairs professionals. It is critical to consider how these forces have influenced the field to contextualize the environments in which collaborations between academic affairs professionals, including faculty members, and student affairs professionals attempt to exist.

Historical Perspective of Student Affairs

Various reform movements have motivated the historical evolution of the student affairs field, beginning in the early colonial days of residential colleges. Faculty members, who served as the educators, disciplinarians, and parental figures of the young men who attended college, had a personal interest in the development of the whole student. Faculty rigidly monitored and controlled students' behavior both in and out of the classroom, which was common practice until the 1766 Harvard University food riot. As a response to poor living conditions and repressed behavior, students created an environment in which faculty were less willing to worship, live, and eat alongside their students (Rentz & Howard-Hamilton, 2011). For the next 275 years, faculty would continue to reconsider their roles in students' lives.

The 19th century was a period of growth in collegiate America as the higher education profile moved away from institutions intended for young, white men in search of a life dedicated to the clergy. As the needs of society shifted, state-supported, land grant,

historically black colleges and universities, coeducational, and women's institutions created competition for the male-dominated private colleges. As opportunities to serve different types of students emerged, however, higher education became impersonal, and a growing emphasis on intellectual growth and rational development led faculty and university leadership to ignore students' social, physical, spiritual, and psychosocial development (Rentz & Howard-Hamilton, 2011). The influence of German higher education systems was prevalent by the end of the 19th century as faculty became more involved with teaching and research, leaving a void when it came to student life issues. The seamless learning environments of the colonial college era began disappearing and were replaced by a bifurcated system of classroom and out-of-class pursuits (Bloland, Stamatakos, & Rogers, 1996). For the first time, students moved off campus, unhappy with their campus environments, and created what would eventually be considered *extracurricular* activities, including debate clubs, literary societies, and athletic groups (Rentz & Howard-Hamilton, 2011). With the growth of student life beyond the classroom, there was a call for a new system of student discipline that emphasized self-discipline, self-responsibility, and holistic human development. Colleges and universities turned to non-faculty specialists to take over these paternalistic and nurturing functions, the precursor to early student affairs work (Bloland et al., 1996).

Reform Movements in Student Affairs

In the 1930s, a group of early student affairs officers proposed five guiding principles of student affairs, creating the *Student Personnel Point of View* (American Council on Education, 1937), a foundational initiative that served as the field's first statement of philosophy, purpose, and methods of practice. This document affirmed that the work of

student affairs professionals was not distinct from institutions' educational missions and that true student affairs work functions as a part of students' educational processes (Rentz & Howard-Hamilton, 2011). Further, these principles sought to reintegrate the curricular and cocurricular into a unified approach to educate the whole student. The principles encouraged student affairs divisions to align their missions with that of their institutions, to coordinate continuous educational opportunities with other campus constituents, including faculty, and to emphasize "...the development of the student as a person rather than upon his [*sic*] intellectual training alone" (ACE, 1937, p. 76).

The 1960s and 1970s were volatile times of student activism and civil disobedience, which challenged institutions' traditional authority and oversight of students' behavior both on and off campus. Collegiate leaders began re-evaluating the student-institution relationship and, as a result, debated whether student affairs work was secondary or complementary to the academic mission. To justify their work, student affairs professionals argued that their practices humanized those of impersonal institutions, which shifted the focus of student affairs work from student learning to student development.

The student development movement was supported by a growing body of research-oriented by cognitive, psychosocial, and person-environment interaction theories. These theories allowed student affairs professionals opportunities to identify roadmaps for students' growth toward maturity and holistic personal development (Rentz & Howard-Hamilton, 2011). Facilitating the psychosocial development of students outside of the classroom became the center of the field's approach to their work and was intended to create an area of specialization for student affairs professionals. This specialization sought to provide the space in which student affairs professionals were distinct from that of faculty, yet equally

valuable to the mission of higher education (Blimling & Whitt, 1998). This approach only further dichotomized institutions, however, by separating the developmental focus of student affairs from the educational goals of the rest of the institution (Bloland et al., 1996).

In the 1990s, thought leaders in student affairs sought to reconceptualize the role of practitioners on campus. In a critique of the student development movement, Bloland et al. (1996) highlighted the problems associated with attempting to utilize theories and models that were difficult to understand and apply to the daily work of student affairs professionals. Instead, the authors suggested that the profession again look to the central educational mission of higher education to shape how practitioners approached their work, prioritizing students' learning processes and using these lenses to create programs and services. The focus on student learning placed academic and intellectual development at the center of student affairs work and re-emphasized learning as the primary value of higher education. Instead of applying limiting and irrelevant human development theories, leaders in the field encouraged student affairs professionals to utilize a combination of student development and learning theories to design experiences that would enhance students' learning (Rentz & Howard-Hamilton, 2011). Further, the authors argued that unless the academic goals and mission of higher education primarily drive student affairs, it has no function except to provide support services.

Similarly, *The Student Learning Imperative* (ACPA, 1994) was a critical document that reminded the student affairs field that the primary goal of professionals' work was to enhance not only students' personal development but their learning as well. It outlined practices in which student affairs professionals could create conditions that promoted these

goals, including collaborating with other institutional partners, and argued that a student affairs division's mission should complement that of the institution.

As these reform movements suggest, student affairs can rarely be considered as having a single, consistent purpose (Blimling, 2001). From these reform movements grew communities of practice, all of which create dynamic – and sometimes conflicting – perspectives of why the student affairs field exists and the roles student affairs professionals fill on college campuses.

Communities of Practice in Student Affairs

Often, student affairs divisions are shaped by both explicit knowledge and practical experience. This blend is a community of practice, which defines the purpose of the field's existence, how members of the field approach their work, what information they deem acceptable, and what and how they assess their work. Multiple communities of practice may be present within the same student affairs organization at an institution, which complicates the understanding of student affairs work and, at times, can cause conflicts in priorities and what issues are addressed (Blimling, 2001). Blimling (2001) identified four general communities of practice, all of which emphasize different aspects of the student affairs field and how student affairs professionals relate to their work. These communities of practice reflect nuanced emphases of the different elements of student affairs work and the principal purpose that student affairs divisions are perceived to fill on their campuses.

Student administration. Rooted in management philosophy, the responsibilities of a student administration community of practice primarily revolve around administering resources to students, which tends to be how faculty members perceive student affairs work (Blimling, 2001). Members of this community emphasize organizational and leadership

issues. This approach relies heavily on policies, procedures, and processes and espouses the viewpoint suggested by the *Student Personnel Point of View* (ACE, 1937, 1949), which reflects alignment with an institution's educational mission. This approach does not necessarily prioritize student learning but rather values efficiency and effectiveness in services and resources provided to students.

Student services. A student services community of practice mirrors management philosophy, which grew out of the student consumerism movement in the early 1980s and the neoliberalism movement of the late 1980s and early 1990s. The foundational content is formed by programs like total quality management and benchmarking (Blimling, 2001). The focus of these practices is to provide high-quality, cost-efficient student services that result in student satisfaction. Service is the ultimate goal because good "customer" service results in greater "customer" satisfaction.

Although this approach is how businesspeople and governing boards tend to view student affairs work, most student affairs professionals are drawn to the field to help, support, and educate students, not just to offer services to customers (Blimling & Whitt, 1998). These differences in perspectives may cause conflict between a department's priorities and staff members' commitment to the vision, mission, and goals. Additionally, this community of practice reinforces the school of thought that student affairs work is marginal to the teaching and learning mission of higher education (Blimling & Whitt, 1998).

Student development. The student development approach to student affairs work is cemented in an educational philosophy and assumes that student affairs professionals should be facilitators of psychosocial and cognitive growth of students. Proponents of this community argue that their work is equal to that of what happens in the classroom. The

primary focus is to individualize students' collegiate experiences and to structure programs that emphasize various aspects and stages of students' development. Much of the literature that shapes this community of practice consists of scholarly work in human development, particularly developmental psychology and counseling (Blimling, 2001).

Student learning. Also rooted in educational philosophy, the student learning community of practice argues that framing student affairs work using a learning approach is more inclusive than utilizing student development theories. Additionally, it proposes that student affairs professionals should be intentional about being partners in students' learning process and that by viewing their work through a learning process lens, professionals can still incorporate student development concepts as they engage students in active learning (Blimling, 2001). These experiences can result in skills and knowledge consistent with the mission of higher education. Influential documents within this community include *The Student Learning Imperative* (ACPA, 1994), *Principles of Good Practice for Student Affairs* (Blimling & Whitt, 1998), and *Powerful Partnerships: A Shared Responsibility for Learning* (AAHE, ACPA, & NASPA, 1998).

The student learning community of practice challenges student affairs professionals to create learning-oriented organizations and insists that the goal of their programs and services should be driven by learning outcomes. Additionally, divisions should consider it normal practice to collaborate across campus and to evaluate effectiveness by what and how much students are learning (Blimling & Whitt, 1998).

The lens through which this study and my perspective are situated reflects that of a student learning community of practice. Student affairs professionals are in unique positions to contribute to student learning *and* personal development within a wider context and should

strive to enhance learning environments in students' living and social settings. Focusing on student learning requires a commitment to collaborative relationships with faculty and to developing environments that promote holistic experiences through curricular and cocurricular education (Bloland et al., 1996).

In an early investigation into student affairs professionals' perceptions of academic and student affairs collaborations, Reger and Hyman (1988) found evidence to suggest that student affairs staff members who viewed themselves primarily as administrators and whose sole responsibilities were to deliver student services were less likely to initiate collaborations with faculty. On the other hand, staff who took an educational, student development-oriented approach to their work were perceived more favorably by faculty when it came to fostering collaborations. The student affairs profession's philosophy is entrenched in holistic student development; therefore, most student affairs professionals already recognize that external influences can greatly affect a student's academic success. As such, some literature suggests that student affairs professionals share responsibility in exploring opportunities that encourage a cultural shift to one in which academic affairs views student affairs staff as educators (Sandeen, 2004).

Additionally, evidence indicates that student affairs professionals can create more collaborative relationships with faculty by setting aside predetermined notions of faculty involvement and the roles faculty will be expected to fill in cross-divisional collaborations (Golde & Pribbenow, 2000). Limiting the perception of how valuable faculty members can be for student engagement can also limit the potential of a successful collaboration. Barriers are amplified when faculty members and student affairs professionals focus only on their

differences rather than on working together to help students achieve gains in learning (Arcelus, 2011).

Student affairs organizations that are motivated by student learning shape students' cocurricular education by allocating resources in ways that complement the institution's mission; aligning policies, programs, and practices with learning goals; and creating cross-functional collaborations in which student learning is everyone's responsibility (Whitt, 2006). A key player in RLC collaborations is the hall director, a position often found in student affairs. Describing this role – and the professional staff who serve in it – is critical to the context in which faculty members may perceive professionals in this role.

Hall Directors as New Professionals in Student Affairs

As this study explores faculty members' perceptions of hall directors at Oak University, it is appropriate to unpack this role to provide context regarding who faculty members worked with in RLCs. In student affairs, the hall director (HD) role is often considered an entry-level position and is designed for new professionals who may not have prior experience in student affairs or residence life. Although the residential life structure may vary widely from institution to institution, an HD is usually defined as a professional who lives on campus and supervises the staff, students, and operations of one or more residence hall (Uperaft & Pilato, 1982).

Over 70% of all student affairs positions are located on the bottom levels of the organizational charts (Pritchard & McChesney, 2018), indicating that many of these positions may be considered entry-level. Within the field of student affairs, these lower-level positions directly interact with students and deliver programs and activities designed to serve students (Barham & Winston, 2006). Many of the staff members who fill these roles are new

professionals, defined as having five or fewer years of experience in student affairs (ACPA, 2018; NASPA, 2018) and as having earned a master's degree in student affairs or higher education (Barham & Winston, 2006). Approximately 20% of student affairs professionals are new to the field (Tull, 2006; Renn & Jessup-Anger, 2008).

Hall directors, like many new professionals in helping fields, are susceptible to high turnover rates (Tull, 2006). New student affairs professionals report staggering attrition rates - researchers estimate that 50% to 60% of new professionals leave the field within their first five years (Lorden, 1998; Renn & Hodges, 2007). Reasons for leaving the field include emotional burnout (Brewer & Clippard, 2002; Tull, 2006); high levels of stress (Anderson, Guido-DiBrito, & Morrell, 2000); long work hours (Anderson et al., 2000; Marshall, Gardner, Hughes, & Lowery, 2016); and "other duties as assigned" (Lee & Helm, 2013; Ward, 1995). The cost of attrition is high, both financially and in terms of negatively effecting students and services offered by institutions, like RLC programs (Marshall et al., 2016). High rates of professional staff members in hall director roles may impact the relationships they attempt to develop with faculty members associated with RLCs.

Hall directors in residential learning communities are expected to develop and maintain constructive relationships with faculty members, all the while navigating new professional expectations, realities, and stressors. With their faculty partners, they are also expected to create, cocurricular opportunities designed to foster, not compete with, students' academic achievement. As the traditional authorities in student learning and the representatives in institutional governance, faculty members, however, may be new to this perspective.

Faculty Roles in Institutional Governance

Throughout the history of higher education, faculty have been awarded special status in institutional governance (American Association of University Professors, 1994). An institution's system of governance reflects which authority and responsibilities are allocated to the departments and divisions within the college or university. The responsibility for matters involving teaching and research primarily fall to faculty. Decisions regarding curriculum, choice of instruction method, subject matter, standards of student competence, and aspects of student life that relate to educational processes are often driven by the powerful voices of faculty members (AAUP, 1966). This may potentially shape how faculty perceive the work of student affairs professionals, including residence life professionals in RLCs. Because student affairs professionals do not necessarily have a role in institutional governance, faculty may assume they do not have the expertise or wherewithal to ensure student success in educational processes outside of the classroom. Exploring the perceptions that faculty have of residence life professionals in RLC collaborations may provide insight into how RLC learning-centered initiatives can serve to complement faculty talents and disciplinary expertise, rather than compete with faculty members' authority of students' educational processes.

Faculty as Organizational Boundary Spanners

Organizations are partially characterized by boundaries, which separate a system from its environment and define its processes within that system (Aldrich & Herker, 1977). Much of the literature is situated within organizational behavior, although institutions of higher education are represented when examining boundaries between the institutions and their respective surrounding communities (for example, Amey, Brown, & Sandmann, 2002;

Weerts & Sandmann, 2010). Individuals who have or adopt roles of linking their organization's internal systems with external networks are known as boundary spanners (Tushman & Scanlan, 1981). Boundary spanners are critical to finding and introducing new ideas into a system, as well as building bridges from internal to external networks. They interact with constituents outside their organization, represent perceptions and expectations of each side to the other, and negotiate norms to achieve mutual objectives (Weerts & Sandmann, 2010).

Within the context of residential learning communities, faculty members may be perceived as boundary spanners as they attempt to bridge the academic affairs organization to that of residence life – and, in some ways, student cocurricular life. Boundary spanners are expected to fulfill certain roles that sometimes conflict, and as they attempt to navigate separate organizations, they must learn how they should act, what values and attitudes they should express, and what interests they should represent as they participate in these environments (Friedman & Podolny, 1992). This can cause stress to individuals who serve as boundary spanners as they try to meet different expectations, and, at the same time, attempt to reduce the ambiguity that often characterizes these roles.

When examining faculty members as boundary spanners through the lens of community engagement, Weerts & Sandmann (2010) found that spanners played four distinct roles, two of which could represent those filled by faculty in RLC-associated positions: community-based problem solver and technical expert.

Community-Based Problem Solver

Individuals who serve in these roles were primarily professional staff in academic affairs units rather than traditional, tenure-track faculty members. These spanners focused on

the overall management and development of the university-community partnership, rapport building, and facilitating dialogue between the two systems. Additionally, the problem solvers assisted organization members as they navigated cultural barriers and often translated the language between the community partners and the university faculty.

Technical Experts

Tenure-track faculty members served as the technical experts in partnerships between their university and community-based organizations. Faculty contributed to the relationship as researchers and content experts, closely aligning their goals and motivations with those of the university. These boundary spanners were challenged to align their community engagement activities with their traditional academic norms and expectations, particularly those related to tenure and promotion. In these instances, community organizations viewed faculty members' attempts of engagement as merely a means to carry out their own research agendas.

The relevance of boundary spanning to this study is that often, faculty members who are associated with residential learning communities are expected to navigate the boundaries between two organizational systems: residence life and academic affairs. The extent to which faculty members are successful in travelling across these boundaries could influence the ways in which they engage with RLC programs. By viewing the role of faculty within RLCs through this lens, practitioners can begin to explore the faculty experience more deeply as they attempt to build bridges and strengthen their collaborations.

Academic Affairs and Student Affairs Collaborations

To provide additional context to the collaborations that may manifest within residential learning communities, a discussion related to general academic and student affairs

collaborations is necessary. In an era of growing public accountability and to support the mission of higher education, academic affairs and student affairs can no longer simply coexist on campus (ACPA, 1994). Instead, they must respond to issues surrounding higher education by finding points of collaboration. In doing so, they can enhance student learning by shaping experiences in many different settings that encourage student involvement, cumulative student development, and seamless learning environments (ACPA, 1994).

In 1998, the Boyer Commission urged universities – particularly research-intensive institutions – to place more emphasis on faculty teaching, student learning, and the undergraduate experience and less on faculty research (Boyer Commission on Educating Undergraduates in the Research University, 1998). Around that same time, a joint report published by the American Association for Higher Education (AAHE), the American College Personnel Association (ACPA), and the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA) argued that both academic affairs and student affairs had the responsibility to encourage student learning (1998). Collaborations between the two can positively influence undergraduate student learning and the report encouraged institutions to commit to and support actions that go beyond the individual faculty or staff member (AAHE, ACPA, & NASPA, 1998). The report also argued that learning is a social activity and by modeling through collaborations, the two divisions could create powerful opportunities for students to witness collaboration in support of a shared mission.

Throughout the ten years after the Commission’s report, institutions sought to re-center their activities on undergraduate student learning by exploring practices to improve student engagement, learning, and achievement (Kuh, 2008). These practices required both curricular and cocurricular experiences and sought to invest in the education of the whole

student. *Learning Reconsidered* (Keeling, 2004) further challenged the notion of the academic-cocurricular divide and argued that student learning does not stop when students step out of the classroom. Student learning is not fragmented; rather, it occurs in various settings, is holistic, and is influenced by many forces (Mayhew, Rockenbach et al., 2016).

A number of opinions emerged regarding the obstacles, outcomes, and navigation techniques of academic and student affairs collaborations. Some opinions encourage collaborators to focus on emphasizing each other's strengths to achieve student learning goals (Magolda, 2005). Others criticize faculty culture at research-intensive universities for such things as avoiding student interaction and being immersed in research (Pearson & Bowman, 2000). Still others go as far as to disagree that student affairs professionals have a role in student learning and that, by emphasizing holistic student development, higher education risks losing pedagogical methods that encourage free thought (National Association of Scholars, 2008). For the most part, the higher education industry has embraced the idea of such collaborations. Although there are instances of success, however, there is no shortage of research that illustrates the frustrations of attempting to bridge the campus divide. To better grasp the significance of successful academic and student affairs collaborations, it is important to also consider the obstacles that can impede the effectiveness of these collaborations.

Barriers to Collaboration

There are many reasons why collaborations between academic affairs and student affairs may not work. Campus climates are complex and, traditionally, professionals in academic affairs and student affairs are entrenched in institutional cultures that discourage collaborations (Schroeder, 1999). Differences among academic and student affairs divisions

have existed for centuries. The divisions function as silos in a segregated world, separated by responsibilities to students, career specializations, reward systems, institutional objectives, and, in some cases, physical distance (Browne et al., 2009; Schroeder, 1999). Although more cultural barriers can exist at public four-year institutions than at private four-year schools, this has been no indication that type of institution influences the number of successful collaborations of academic and student affairs units (Kezar, 2001).

Perceptions of the “other”. One of the most common barriers cited to faculty and residence life collaborations is a misunderstanding of roles the “other” plays on campus and in student learning. These perceptions influence the nature of collaborations, the success of such initiatives, and the learning environment on campus (Golde & Pribbenow, 2000; Peltier, 2014; Philpott & Strange, 2003).

Faculty perceptions. Faculty members are reported to have a general sense that residence life professionals are charged with students’ out-of-class experiences but are uninformed as to what, specifically, student affairs units do (Browne et al., 2009; Peltier, 2014). Some evidence suggests that faculty members’ willingness to be a part of student affairs-initiated programs is modest, at best (Peltier, 2014). As such, faculty members gravitate toward academic colleagues to implement cocurricular experiences and do not consider residence life professionals as potential collaborators in meeting student learning goals (Arcelus, 2011; Golde & Pribbenow, 2000; Jessup-Anger et al., 2011). Some faculty also hesitate to seek collaborations with residence life, nervous that involving such staff members will turn an initiative’s focus from academic rigor to fun and entertainment (Peltier, 2014). Additionally, some faculty members view the work of residence life professionals as an indirect influence of student learning by promoting students’ sense of comfort at the

university, accomplishing goals beyond students' academic pursuits, and providing financial and logistical assistance for campus initiatives (Peltier, 2014). However, some research shows that faculty appear to be interested in learning more about the work of residence life and seem to be open to dialogue about student learning outcomes (Peltier, 2014; Philpott & Strange, 2003; Reger & Hyman, 1988).

A quantitative study by Hardwick (2001) revealed empirical evidence of faculty perceptions and provides insight into faculty members' experiences at multiple institutions. Results indicated that faculty members perceived their roles as primarily classroom instructors and research supervisors, whereas the roles of student affairs professionals, including residence life professionals, were as counselors, residential advisors, and judicial officers. Survey participants indicated that both faculty and student affairs shared the role of being multicultural educators. Respondents supported some learning roles as the responsibility of both faculty and student affairs, particularly in academic club advising, advising internships, co-teaching a course, academic advising, and serving as a judicial officer for academic matters. Faculty participants showed high interest in out-of-classroom learning opportunities initiated by faculty and supported faculty collaborations with student affairs staff to enhance student learning. Evidence indicated only moderate support of involving student affairs staff in developing learning goals and integrating the curricular with the cocurricular, suggesting that faculty still felt that student affairs professionals' work only indirectly influences student learning. Faculty supported learning goals that included encouraging critical thinking skills, enhancing students' self-understanding, developing moral character, helping students develop personal values, and providing for students' emotional development, all of which enhance students' holistic development.

Student affairs perceptions. There is a perception among student affairs professionals that academic affairs units, including faculty members, have failed to participate in strengthening the relationship between academic and student affairs, particularly as faculty appear only to emphasize cross-disciplinary programs instead of cocurricular experiences (Arcelus, 2011). A study conducted by Philpott and Strange (2003) showed that student affairs professionals' perceptions of faculty were, generally, that faculty are quite removed from students' day-to-day experiences, are unaware of the burdens that students bring with them to college and are out of touch with a new generation of students. Whereas student affairs professionals broaden their efforts to include a wider, diverse population, some student affairs professionals felt that faculty had unrealistic, projected visions of academic learning and appeared to be selective in the tradition of academic elitism and rigor (Philpott & Strange, 2003).

Much of the literature appears to be critical of faculty and their lack of familiarity with the roles that student affairs professionals play in student learning. There are fewer critiques that address how student affairs professionals' views of themselves can perpetuate this unawareness. This study aims to explore this perceived lack of familiarity from faculty and may provide insight into how residence life professionals can assert themselves as active partners in student learning.

Value of research. Another cause of conflict in creating effective collaborations appears to manifest in the university system's valuation of research (Golde & Pribbenow, 2000; Pearson & Bowman, 2000). As faculty members at research-intensive universities seek promotion, they are encouraged to prioritize research activities and to avoid pursuits that distract from scholarly work, including opportunities to interact with students outside of

class. This faculty-student disconnect can negatively impact student learning and retention (Kuh, 1995; Mayhew, Rockenbach et al., 2016). Faculty members' agendas may necessarily focus on tenure and research activities, thus influencing their priorities and the time they allocate to their various work responsibilities. In contrast, the typical reward system for student affairs professionals, including those in residence life, emphasizes student engagement and providing psychosocial learning opportunities. While faculty members' choices to be involved with students are constrained by evaluation systems and embedded academic culture, residence life's culture *is* student engagement, and recognizing these different forces and priorities can help stakeholders understand how their collaborators relate to their work. Yet another conflicting factor in building collaborations is that faculty members and residence life professionals often receive different training for their distinct roles, rather than learning how they can help students learn and grow in all aspects of their college experience.

Traditional higher education environment. Traditional institutional silos in higher education have created roles that place student affairs professionals as the topical authorities in students' psychosocial development and faculty members as experts in students' intellectual growth. Cultural differences create a misunderstanding of each other's responsibilities on campus, particularly the perceptions of faculty of the roles of student affairs professionals (Arcelus, 2011), including those in residence life. Student affairs professionals argue that they do more than provide services to students; rather, they are an integral part of students' collegiate experiences and that they actively contribute to their learning (Sandeen, 2004). However, infrequent contact between faculty and student affairs professionals, competition for student time and institutional resources, and lack of interest or

knowledge about the functions of the other are well cited in the literature (Arcelus, 2011; Brown et al., 2009; Kezar, 2001; Philpott & Strange, 2003). The lack of time for both faculty members and student affairs professionals, faculty members' obligations to their disciplines, and lack of established shared goals have also been cited as obstacles to collaborations (Arcelus, 2011; Hardwick, 2001; Kezar, 2001).

Understanding of collaboration. The concept of collaboration, too, may be a source of frustration. To faculty, collaborating with student affairs professionals may include inviting them to conversations about the academic mission of the institution, the learning process, and the role that student affairs professionals might play in contributing to students' intellectual development (Golde & Pribbenow, 2000). Student affairs professionals may view collaboration with faculty as establishing an environment in which faculty feel welcome and have input into strategic planning for initiatives that promote student engagement (Golde & Pribbenow, 2000). These differing ideas of how collaboration manifests may suggest that, without setting expectations during the beginning stages of the educational initiative, collaborations may flounder before they have a chance to be successful. Even though they may show a willingness to learn from student affairs professionals about the experiences they have gained through student interactions, some faculty members may remain unconvinced that student affairs professionals have anything to offer to discussions about student learning (Golde & Pribbenow, 2000). Other faculty members, however, have witnessed the benefits of working with student affairs professionals and are committed to having them as collaborators in a learning-centered environment.

Members of academic and student affairs units have been wrestling with these barriers for decades, despite attempts to bridge the gap between the two divisions. Although

some institutions have found ways to navigate the divide, others struggle with cultural expectations, differences in motivation, and competing professional philosophies and obligations. At their most effective, residential learning communities cannot function as an initiative supported by either academic affairs or student affairs; both units must have a commitment to the communities' participants, objectives, and programmatic elements to achieve shared goals: enhancing student learning and improving the undergraduate experience.

Benefits of Collaborations

Even with considerable obstacles, collaborations between faculty and student affairs professionals have produced benefits that foster student learning and supportive institutional environments. Although faculty and student affairs' cultures and professional expectations are different, they may confront similar issues surrounding student learning (Hirsch & Burack, 2001). By shifting focus away from the obstacles in developing collaborations, faculty and student affairs professionals may find ways to stimulate conversation and coordinate expertise and knowledge to benefit students' experiences. Overlapping issues include assessment, shifting student populations, student retention, and general education (Banta & Kuh, 1998; Hirsh & Burack, 2001).

Building bridges across the campus divide between academic and student affairs not only helps to overcome cultural misconceptions but also re-centers institutional focus to student learning. By creating better relationships across campus, faculty and student affairs professionals can improve retention and academic performance by helping undergraduate students acclimate to the institution, assisting them in transitioning to social and academic demands of college rigor, fostering a sense of personal identity and community, and

encouraging persistence in college (Frost et al., 2010; Kezar, 2001; Kuh, 1996; Love & Love, 1995; Nesheim, et al., 2007). These collaborations become more powerful when they are intentional and driven by a higher purpose – rather than solely to achieve goals – and can improve the overall environment of an institution (Arcelus, 2011; Ellett & Schmidt, 2011; Magolda, 2005). Some students claim that their most meaningful educational experiences occur outside the classroom, suggesting more evidence of the importance of relationships between faculty members and student affairs professionals (Sriram et al., 2011).

Successful Collaborations

Barriers to and benefits of collaboration can shape academic and student affairs collaborations, but it is also relevant to consider other factors that can influence their success. Much of the literature cites structural changes, planning, and senior administrative support as significant to creating successful collaborations (Brower & Inkelas, 2010; Golde & Pribbenow, 2000; Inkelas, Jessup-Anger, Benjamin, & Wawrzynski, 2018; Inkelas & Associates, 2007; Kennedy, 2011; Schuh, 1999). However, studies conducted by LoParco (1991) and Kezar (2001) emphasized individual characteristics of the stakeholders as imperative to successful collaborations. Participants more often described successful collaborations in terms of the interpersonal skills of their counterparts, like a willingness to involve others, than those that included structural variables, such as financial support. Cooperation, the attitudes of student affairs professionals, common goals, and personalities were believed to make the most difference in the success of the initiative. The implications of these studies are significant in that they provide insight into the complexity of collaborations and may assist divisions in navigating new collaborations between the

academic and student affairs. The mixed emphases of structural elements and human characteristics, however, highlights a gap in our current understanding of collaborations.

Improving the quality of the undergraduate experience is complex and multifaceted. As such, it can benefit from collaboration by faculty members and student affairs professionals, the two groups of campus constituents who spend the most time with students. When faculty members and student affairs professionals coordinate their resources, they can personally observe what research shows about the impact of college – that students’ intellectual development cannot be distinguished from their personal development (Browne et al., 2009; Sandeen, 2004; Umbach & Wawrzynski, 2005). Students’ curricular and cocurricular experiences do not exist as independent events but rather affect one another in ways that are not immediately obvious (Kuh, 1995). By collaborating on initiatives and interventions, faculty members and student affairs professionals can save time and resources, can see student learning from multiple perspectives, and can coordinate practices that are more effective (Frost et al., 2010; Kezar, 2001). One practice in particular that research has supported is to facilitate interactions between students and faculty outside the classroom environment – opportunities that can be abundant in residential learning communities.

Residential learning communities open the door to innovative mutual influences, as learning that starts in the classroom blends into a student’s residence hall and social activities, creating a seamless and holistic intellectual experience (Ellett & Schmidt, 2011; Wawrzynski et al., 2009). To encourage integrative learning inside and outside the classroom, some RLCs pursue an affiliation with one or more faculty members, either through loosely-structured collaborations or through a faculty in residence (FIR) program. Faculty involvement in RLCs is one of the most crucial components to the success of these

communities (Browne et al., 2009). Although faculty involvement opportunities can be mutually beneficial, all stakeholders – RLC students, faculty, and student affairs staff – should be considered equal contributors in building successful living learning communities (Ellet & Schmidt, 2011).

For RLCs to truly foster integrated learning, they must exist as collaborations between academic affairs and student affairs, more specifically residential life departments. Among other characteristics, the strongest RLC programs have strong ties to both academic affairs and student affairs (Brower & Inkelas, 2010). Initiatives that underscore faculty emphasis on students' intellectual development and student affairs' knowledge of the holistic college experience are more successful in providing students with an integrated experience. In a strong, collaborative relationship, faculty and student affairs professionals respect and capitalize on each other's strengths, commonalities, and capacities to help students learn. Collaborators seek to add value to the student learning experience and to encourage integrative learning outside of the classroom. Opportunities introduced by initiatives like RLCs can be beneficial for all stakeholders and both faculty members and student affairs professionals can contribute to building a successful program.

Best Practices Model as a framework for success. To account for the varying degrees of structural differences among RLC models, Inkelas et al. (2018) introduced the Best Practices Model as an approach to evaluate the effectiveness and success of an RLC collaboration through a programmatic lens, somewhat regardless of structural components.

The Best Practices Model (BPM) reflects data gathered over the course of 10 years by the Study of Integrated Living Learning Programs, a national survey of undergraduate RLC programs. The strength of the BPM's framework is that it combines empirically-supported

practices that promote successful RLC programs. The components of the BPM are reminiscent of Maslow’s hierarchy of needs and are organized as a pyramid of four levels: the infrastructure, the academic environment, the cocurricular environment, and the pinnacle, intentional integration.

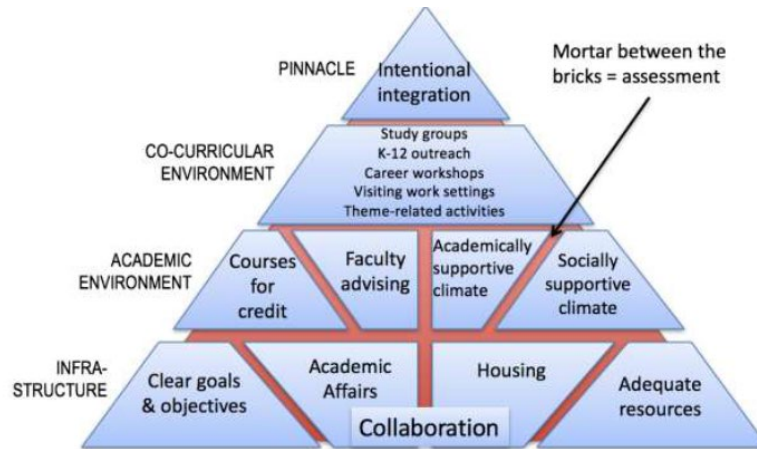


Figure 2.1. The BPM for LLCs. Reprinted from *Living-Learning Communities That Work: A Research-Based Model for Design, Delivery, and Assessment* (p. 18), by K. K. Inkelas, J. E. Jessup-Anger, M. Benjamin, & M. R. Wawrzynski, 2018, Sterling, VA: Stylus. Copyright 2018 by Stylus Publishing, LLC.

Infrastructure. The infrastructure includes components that, at a foundational level, must be present for other elements of the program to exist and grow. These elements include clearly articulated goals, collaboration between residence life and relevant academic departments (including faculty members), and adequate fiscal and human resources.

Academic environment. The academic environment of an RLC program must enhance students’ intellectual development through credit-bearing courses, academic advising carried out by faculty members, and a residence hall climate that is both academic and socially supportive.

Cocurricular environment. The third level, the cocurricular environment, consists of formal activities that supplement and reinforce the academic goals of the RLC outside of class. These activities relate to and enhance the theme of the RLC and can include orientation programs, study groups, and career workshops.

Intentional integration. The pinnacle of the BMP, intentional integration, represents the extent to which the other elements of the model align with the RLC's objectives. The model is grounded in assessment practices that evaluate the distinct components and the extent to which they integrate the other elements.

The Best Practices Model identifies *faculty advising* as an important component of the academic environment of an RLC, which includes both formal and informal situations that may go beyond the faculty member's office. Evidence suggests that students are more receptive to faculty members through informal interactions (Arensdorf & Tincknell, 2016; Cox & Orehovec, 2007; Mara & Mara, 2010). This response could indicate that students find informal interactions with faculty more meaningful and valuable than incidental or unintentional exchanges (Cox & Orehovec, 2007).

The BPM is an attempt to provide a framework for residence life professionals seeking to improve their RLC programs. However, it does not propose suggestions for evaluating the working relationships between faculty and residence life. Although the BPM framework identifies certain components as integral to the infrastructure of an RLC program, it does not offer advice as to how to ensure that the collaborations themselves are successful and that members are equal contributors. The BPM does, however, provide a conceptual framework that attempts to identify what components, if any, faculty members perceive to be the role of residence life professionals in RLC development and collaboration. The BPM

also provides a conceptual model of critical components to effective RLCs, including faculty involvement. Exploring the faculty experience in RLCs, as this study aims to do, may provide deeper insight into faculty members' perceptions of their involvement in RLCs and how these perceptions may influence their collaborations with residence life professionals in residential learning communities.

As faculty and residence life professionals learn to work through their perceptions of the "other" and the effect misconceptions may have on RLC collaborations, they must also consider the limitations of RLC knowledge. Although the literature is teeming with evidence to suggest that residential learning communities are high-impact practices, there is still much to be learned about them and their effect on student learning and campus collaborations. Faculty members and residence life professionals must address the gaps left by empirical and practitioner literature to inform the paths by which they can navigate RLC collaborations.

Residential Learning Community Research and Literature Limitations

As the research suggests, RLCs can emphasize active learning, student engagement, and meaningful interactions between faculty and students, which improve students' educational experiences (Kuh, 2008), to a degree; however, a note of caution is warranted as it is unknown whether residential learning community participation directly affects these gains. Student development is complex and is influenced by many factors (Mayhew, Rockenbach et al., 2016). It is unlikely that mere membership in an RLC achieves these outcomes; rather, residential learning communities may provide an environment to *facilitate* student development by connecting students with other influential agents, including faculty members, residence life professionals, and peers. By intentionally collaborating by way of RLCs, faculty and residence life professionals can provide students the opportunities to

develop relationships with faculty and residence life professionals, build strong peer-supported networks, and learn to integrate their curricular and cocurricular knowledge, all under the roof of a residence hall community.

It is also important to note that, from a practical standpoint, RLC programs cannot exist as a silver bullet initiative. There is an argument that practitioners cannot expect RLCs to have a dramatic effect on student learning outcomes (Arensdorf & Tincknell, 2016; Mayhew, Dahl et al., 2016; Pike, 1999; Stassen, 2003) and that as effective in some areas that RLCs can be, these programs still have limitations. Although residential learning communities have been shown to promote gains in academic content knowledge, little research shows gains in intellectual development (Pike, 1999). This suggests that RLCs may have a considerable impact on the day-to-day experiences of students, such as their cocurricular involvement, but a less significant impact on the integration of diverse curricular and cocurricular experiences. This could reflect the strength – or lack of – of faculty and residence life collaborations within the RLC environment. Additionally, the absence of substantial effects for faculty-student interactions in these communities is concerning (Pike, 1999; Stassen, 2003), particularly as faculty involvement is often cited as an important factor of RLC success. This suggests that some programs, which may tout faculty involvement opportunities, may fall short of high-quality interactions between faculty members and RLC participants.

Practitioner Literature

Residential learning communities are referred to many names within the literature, including living-learning programs, living-learning communities, themed houses, living learning communities (no hyphen), residential colleges, or living-learning centers (Inkelas &

Soldner, 2011). This lack of consistency in terminology has several negative consequences, including searching for literature. Scholars and practitioners struggle to articulate if there are differences among the elements represented in various names and have not been able to construct a definition of residential learning community practice. Without this tailored definition, the above terms are used interchangeably and often result in ambiguous or confusing scholarship and practice. Further, it is extremely difficult to develop an inclusive typology of RLCs when there is no agreement as to what constitutes an RLC in the first place.

Perhaps a critique more relevant to the argument of collaboration is the lack of empirical evidence regarding data-supported “best practices” (Inkelas & Soldner, 2011), including collaborations between faculty and residence life professionals. Most literature concerning best practices is written by practitioners who have implemented RLC programs on their campuses and who suggest methods grounded in lessons they have learned. This may indicate that the best practice literature available is based solely on programmatic reputation or perception and not on the evidence that the programs have data to support their successes. If no forms of assessment are implemented for these residential learning community programs, it is likely that not all elements of the practitioners’ programming are effective. This could hinder other residence life professionals in the field who attempt to replicate other institutions’ RLC structures and experience not only the beneficial aspects of the RLC programs but the detrimental as well.

Empirical Literature

Although extremely beneficial to the knowledge base of residential learning communities, research findings related to RLCs are limited in assessment. Because the

structure of RLCs is vastly different from campus to campus – and even within the same campus – it is difficult to generalize findings. There are few multi-institutional studies that examine the effects of individual RLC components and there are lingering questions of student participant bias in RLC versus non-RLC studies. That many RLC programs allow students to self-select into an RLC should be considered, as the higher education field knows little about students who may be predisposed to achieve learning outcomes. Additionally, few sources take into consideration the programmatic and institutional structures related to RLCs, such as integrated curricular components, overrepresentation of academic or student affairs staff, institutional capacity, departmental buy-in, and how the variation of emphases affect outcomes among similar RLCs across institutions.

The research is also limited in that few studies directly consider the nature of the faculty-residence life collaboration, if any. Throughout the last 25 years, the literature on the effects of RLCs has emphasized the influence collaborations between faculty and residence life professionals can have on the success of these programs. However, these insights have emerged *as a result of investigating the student experience in RLCs*, rather than from studying the collaborations between personnel in the two divisions (e.g., Frazier & Eighmy, 2012; Pike, 1999; Schein, 2005; Wawrzynski et al., 2009). Recent investigations into faculty experiences in RLCs have narrowed the research gap, but more work is needed to address how the nature of collaborations can impact RLC programs. There are also gaps in the empirical literature regarding residence life professionals' experiences working with faculty in RLC environments – insights that may help faculty members navigate the RLC collaboration.

Despite gaps in both empirical and practitioner literature, evidence remains that supports faculty and residence life collaborations in RLC programs (e.g. Cox & Orehovec, 2007; Mara & Mara, 2010; Schein, 2005). This suggests that both scholars and practitioners connected to residential learning community programs can benefit from a deeper understanding of how faculty experience their relationships with residence life professionals and how collaborators can find ways to relate to one another as they develop learning-focused, cocurricular experiences in residential environments.

Summary: An Absence of Consensus

Throughout history, learning communities have attempted to alter the very structure in which they function. Residential learning communities, in particular, have sought to incorporate the holistic student development philosophy of student affairs professionals as well as faculty members' focus on intellectual growth in spaces that challenge students to integrate their learning across the classroom and their cocurricular environments. For as powerful as this integration of curricular and cocurricular experiences can be, an absence of consensus by professionals in student affairs is a pervasive theme in RLC literature.

There is no agreement regarding the definition of *residential learning communities* or how residence life professionals should implement them on campus. This has made it difficult to find, compare, and generalize the research of these practices across various settings. With few parameters on what constitutes an RLC, the wide breadth of models has encouraged a rush to implement RLC programs without ensuring quality control and with little guidance. Conflicting evidence has led to uncertainty as to which factors are critical to an effective RLC. Student-faculty interaction, for example, is considered by some scholars to be critical to the success of RLCs. Others argue that these communities do not necessarily

foster more opportunities for faculty interaction but can still be considered successful in other outcomes, such as cultivating a sense of belonging. Disagreements as to the factors that can significantly nurture or impede faculty and residence life collaborations in RLC is also prevalent. Some research argues that institutional structures are necessary to promote program effectiveness, while other evidence suggests that human characteristics are the most critical elements that contribute to a successful initiative.

To further complicate research and practice, the two units that can shift an institution's focus from a division of responsibilities to a shared goal of student learning derive from different – and sometimes, conflicting – philosophies that can get in the way of collaborations. Faculty members prioritize research and disciplinary obligations, which can clash with residence life professionals' commitments to holistic student development and cocurricular engagement. Many stakeholders do not agree on “the other's” role in student learning and sometimes fail to consider how student learning can be enhanced through collaborations, rather than through separate – and sometimes redundant – efforts. The values of collaborations between faculty and residence life have been well-documented in the literature, yet cultural and structural barriers still impede their successes. Collaborations have been a persistent focus in higher education literature for decades, yet institutions still find themselves struggling to navigate the curricular and cocurricular divide. To pursue a cross-divisional collaboration for the sake of doing so is not enough; a collaboration with a higher purpose is necessary to produce intended outcomes.

In an effort to achieve a common understanding between faculty members and residence life professionals associated with RLCs, this study investigated RLC-involved faculty members' perceptions of residence life professionals' roles and responsibilities in

student learning, engagement, and development within the context of residential learning communities. There is a need to transcend barriers caused by misunderstandings and conflicting philosophies to strengthen RLC collaborations and the RLC practices intended to enhance student learning. By creating stronger collaborations in RLCs, faculty members and residence life professionals can broaden their own perspectives, foster seamless learning environments for their students, and support a culture of student learning and collaboration.

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Colleges and universities have an imperative to influence students' learning both inside and outside the classroom. Bridging the gap between students' curricular and cocurricular experiences, however, is not simple and requires collaborations between academic and student affairs (ACPA, 1994). Evidence suggests that both students and institutions can benefit from purposeful collaborations between academic and student affairs (e.g. ACPA, 1994; Browne, et al., 2009). The potential power of faculty and student affairs collaborations can shift students' experiences from fragmented activities to integrative learning opportunities intermingled into nearly every aspect of their collegiate experience. The purpose of this qualitative inquiry was to explore RLC-associated, full-time faculty members' perceptions of the roles of residence life professionals with whom they are in residential learning community (RLC) collaborations.

Research Questions

How do RLC-associated faculty members describe the roles of residence life professionals within the context of shared RLCs? This central research question guided this case study investigation. Additional sub-questions included:

1. How do faculty members describe their *relationships* with residence life professionals within the context of shared RLCs?
2. How do faculty members describe the *processes of working with* residence life professionals in shared RLCs?
3. What do RLC faculty members report as *best practices* of residence life professionals working with them in RLCs?

Collaborations as a Qualitative Exploration

A term coined by Kilbourn (2006), the *self-conscious method* (p. 530) is a process by which a researcher explicitly justifies the decisions made during the process of a study, from design to implementation to analysis. This is to provide as much transparency as possible and to consider perspectives, assumptions, and interpretations the qualitative researcher brings to the study. By using this method, I discuss the process by which I arrived at the topic of study, the experience and bias I brought to my research, and the procedures I used to embrace subjectivity yet leave assumptions unsettled and open to other perspectives.

This chapter begins with an audit of the research design including the philosophical assumptions of qualitative research and my own perspective, which shaped my approach to this exploration. I discuss my selection of the site and sampling for the study's participants as well as other procedures, including data collection techniques, data analysis, and data management. I then address credibility, consistency, and transferability before examining

my own biases and assumptions. The final section of this chapter discusses the limitations of the investigation.

Design of the Study

This study was designed as a qualitative, single case study. My approach to this design reflects the tradition outlined by Sharan Merriam (2009) in which a case study is an intensive analysis of a particular social phenomenon, event, program, or situation that yields a rich, thick description. Another defining characteristic of Merriam's approach is that a case study is heuristic, enabling the audience to understand the phenomenon in a practical way. For my case study, the phenomenon of focus was faculty perceptions of the roles of residence life professionals when working in shared residential learning communities.

Case studies are conducted in a natural setting for the phenomenon. A single higher education site with a vibrant residential learning community (RLC) program that emphasized faculty involvement was the context for this case study. The unit of analysis was faculty who were associated with RLCs and whose roles encountered collaboration with residence life professionals in the educational processes of students. The study of faculty perceptions at the research site can only be understood within that context, including the historical and cultural settings that influenced these attitudes. As such, I cannot necessarily generalize the findings from this study to different contexts (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). However, this case is characterized as an instrumental type of case study (Stake, 1995) which means that this particular case was undertaken as a practical effort to better understand residential learning communities toward consensus of meaning (Guba & Lincoln, 1994).

Conducting a case study at a single site provided me the opportunity to explore in depth the participants' experiences in residential learning communities within this context.

This deep dive offered a detailed narrative about the institution's faculty members associated with RLCs and their perceptions of residence life professionals. The bounding of this case study thus included its limited geographical location at one campus, its higher education environment, and time; the case only collected data during a time period of one semester and can only reflect data from that time.

The audience should find the researcher's process, including epistemologies and values, visible and accessible (Koro-Ljungberg et al., 2009). Doing so adds an element of credibility to the study's conclusions. The clear presence of an epistemological stance, a theoretical perspective, and its role in the design of a research project provides access to the audience but also requires an element of reflection from the researcher to ensure strong interrelationships among the design components, including the philosophical assumptions of this qualitative inquiry.

Philosophical Assumptions

This study design, as a qualitative inquiry, used a constructivist paradigm, in which an investigation explores multiple realities constructed by the participants (Patton, 2015). Additionally, reality is holistic and is not a fixed phenomenon one can observe and measure. This philosophical framework relies on the participants to make meaning of a situation and addresses the process of individual interaction (Creswell, 2009; Tuli, 2010).

My philosophical assumptions filtered not only interpretations of data, but also what I considered data and what data I selected to interpret (Kilbourn, 2006; Merriam, 2009). In this study, my stance aligned with constructivism in that I believe that faculty members associated with RLCs constructed their own meaning and realities based on the experiences

and interactions they had within the world. Their knowledge and meaning were contextual and were not discovered but constructed by them (Crotty, 1998).

In addition to a constructivist epistemological stance, an interpretivist theoretical perspective shaped this study, as well as the concepts I explored and the assumptions I made about reality, specifically that there can be multiple, constructed meanings of reality and I sought to find these meanings through dialogue with participants of a phenomenon. This is an appropriate perspective in that the purpose of my research was to explore the meanings others made of a particular phenomenon. It is, thus, a constructivist epistemology and an interpretivist theoretical perspective that informed my research design, including my research questions and methodology (Koro-Ljungberg et al., 2009). In turn, these questions guided the nature of my inquiry, which was to explore certain perspectives of faculty associated with RLCs.

To create a sound research design requires an awareness of each component of the process both as independent constructs and as interrelated concepts. By considering them separately from the research ideas, I prepared to engage in the design process and to ensure that my design aligned with my epistemology (Crotty, 1998). However, I would be shortsighted to provide only an awareness of my epistemology and theoretical perspective as influences on my research. To ensure as much transparency as possible, I also provide insight into my personal perspective as it shaped my motivation to make decisions in the study design and it necessarily provides a lens through which I viewed the data.

Personal Perspective, Biases, and Assumptions

The energy and time required to complete a doctoral dissertation can be overwhelming but is made less so if the doctoral candidate is deeply committed to the work.

My professional work prompted my interest in the topic of RLC faculty perceptions, so this experience frames my knowledge, opinions, and assumptions about RLC collaborations. My driving force is to inform my practice by learning new approaches. This motivation to improve my practice led me to ask questions that are more likely to make a difference in students' lives.

I embrace subjectivity as a lens through which I approach my scholarly work. An awareness of my subjectivity and the role my subjective self plays in my research are, as Peshkin (1998) suggests, better than assuming I can be completely objective. Being aware of my subjective self means that I am conscious of the beliefs that may improve my research but that may also skew my interpretation of the data.

I coordinated residential learning communities at my home institution for three years. During that time, I was immersed in all facets of developing and maintaining an RLC program, which included establishing relationships with faculty, designing learning-centered programs and practices, and working with various campus stakeholders to promote students' learning and development. I am wholly committed to my role as an educator and I believe that RLCs are stronger as collaborations between faculty and residence life professionals, that residence life professionals can influence students' learning, and that faculty may not be aware of the roles residence life professionals may fill in holistic student learning. This has driven my interest in attempting to understand how faculty members viewed my role in RLCs and how I might remedy a potential misconception that I was only present for student services and support. My commitment as an educator also shaped my interactions with faculty and as such, is important to clarify as this study involves a deep dive into faculty

perceptions of, generally, a role that I filled in my own practice, albeit at my own institution separate from the site of this study.

In addition to my former role in coordinating RLCs, I was also a participant of a national research seminar that investigated evidence-based RLCs as a high impact practice. I was a member of a multi-institutional team of scholars and practitioners that implemented a two-year research project exploring academic and student affairs collaborations within RLCs and the collaborations' influence on students' learning. This was an opportunity to delve into the practice and art of scholarly research and to refine both my own interests in RLCs and my dissertation topic. The collaboration with my five teammates and the experiences working alongside the larger seminar cohort further influenced and broadened my perspectives regarding faculty-residence life collaborations in RLCs.

As with any inquiry, I bring biases and assumptions with me to the research process. As an imbedded researcher within my topic of interest, I find it particularly important to spend significant time addressing my credibility, bias, and assumptions as a researcher and as a scholar-practitioner. Doing so will remind the audience of the particular philosophies that frame my interpretation and will leave room for readers to find the data meaningful within their own contexts.

Although I conducted the research in a different state and at a different institution from where I worked, my experiences may have influenced my reactions in interviews, during observations, and during data analysis. However, I often interacted with faculty in my role with RLCs at my institution, so I am relatively familiar with the context in which faculty relate to their work and in their motivations to be involved in an RLC program. This is a strength in that I am aware of contextual language that can trigger probing questions when

appropriate. To minimize bias, I sought informal peer reviews from colleagues and feedback from my dissertation committee during the data analysis process. I also kept an audit trail to record the process of the study that included evidence of how I analyzed and synthesized the data, as well as notes that reflect inner thoughts and reactions.

Because I view myself as an educator, I relate to my work through a student learning community of student affairs practice. The work that I produce is learning-centered and I seek campus collaborations that will enhance students' learning. In my collaborations with faculty who are associated with RLCs, I considered myself a partner in student learning and asserted myself as such in my interactions with individual faculty members. Although this perspective has motivated me to explore the topic of this study, it was extremely important that I considered how this viewpoint shaped my interactions with the study participants and my reactions to the data.

Although my practical experience certainly influenced the way I approached this project, this study was a genuine inquiry that attempts to offer a new understanding of RLC-associated faculty and their perspectives on working with residence life professionals in cocurricular environments (Kilbourn, 2006). In other words, because of my experiences in my practice, and based on what I have gleaned through associated research, I am not convinced that faculty members have a limited perception of residence life professionals. Rather, I was open to any perspectives RLC faculty at the research site may have had of staff members' roles in the RLC educational processes. To garner these perspectives, I made every effort to engage in deep, thoughtful, and data-rich inquiry that can be acquired through a single case study approach, which emphasized participants' experiences within the context

of the site. Because this exploration was limited to one site, it was critical to be intentional when selecting the sample from which to seek these experiences.

Selection of Site and Participants

Being purposeful about selecting a research site is part of the practice of qualitative case study research. Thus, the site selected was considered particularly for its likelihood of providing a rich but natural context for the phenomenon under study.

Purposeful sampling of participants is also often used in qualitative inquiry (Merriam, 2009; Patton, 2015). Purposeful sampling involves being intentional about selecting the participants: participants are selected because they can illuminate topics of particular importance to the purpose of the study (Patton, 2015). This approach does not seek to generalize from the sample to a population, but rather to give in-depth insight about a phenomenon.

Site Selection

I visited Oak University in April 2019 to conduct faculty participant interviews. I was on campus for one week, during which time I immersed myself in the Oak atmosphere as I interviewed participants, ate lunch near students, and worked in various places on campus. Oak University (pseudonym) is a private, medium-sized four-year institution in the southeast. According to the Carnegie Classification of Institutions in Higher Education, Oak is a selective, highly residential institution with a primarily full-time undergraduate student population (Carnegie Foundation, n.d.). The university is a non-sectarian, coeducational liberal arts institution and has a two-year residency requirement. First-year students are not required to participate in an RLC and are eligible to live in four of the seven housing units, called neighborhoods.

The residential life program at Oak seeks to integrate students' social, academic, and residential experiences. This aligns with the institution's focus on engaged learning and a strong intellectual campus climate. The emphasis of faculty involvement in students' residential experiences suggests that the institution and the residence life department prioritize holistic student learning and development.

The site was selected using a purposeful sampling strategy that involved an initial search of campuses that have robust, high-energy efforts in residential learning communities and that prioritized faculty involvement. Through personal knowledge of Oak University gained through colleagues and information collected through the institution's website, the institution appears to prioritize student learning and engaged learning practices, including residential learning communities (Schuh, 1999). The on-campus residential experience at the institution is emphasized in the university's strategic initiatives, which include growing the residential population, enhancing its residential facilities, and creating innovative opportunities for students to experience a seamless learning environment. The residence life program emphasizes student-faculty interactions outside the classroom by way of faculty directors, faculty-in-residence, and RLC faculty advisors. Additionally, the residence life program provides numerous options for cocurricular learning environments, including residential learning communities, thematic neighborhoods, and linked courses.

Participant Selection

I selected participants for this study using a purposeful, criterion-based sampling strategy. Specific criteria included:

- preference for full-time faculty members, but also considered part-time faculty members as the need arose for more participants

- associated with Oak University’s RLC program as faculty director, faculty-in-residence, or a cohort faculty advisor for at least one year
- appear to have established a relationship with their residence life counterparts
- represent diverse backgrounds in
 - gender
 - age
 - number of years as a faculty member at the university
 - academic department
 - RLC affiliation

Additional details for the criteria selected and for recruiting appear in the following paragraphs.

Full-time faculty members. Only one part-time faculty member was in this study because research indicates that most RLC-associated faculty members are full-time (e.g. Golde & Pribbenow, 2000; Jessup-Anger et al., 2011; Kennedy, 2011; Sriram et al., 2011) and as such, bounding the inquiry in this way will increase transferability of findings to other contexts. Additionally, focusing only on full-time faculty provided a deeper understanding of the dynamics of the faculty members’ relationships with residence life professionals. There was only one exception to this criterion; one participant who served as a faculty director was a full-time staff member with a part-time faculty appointment. More details about this participant can be found in Chapter IV.

Community association. Participants were faculty members who served as faculty directors, faculty-in-residence (FIR), or cohort faculty advisors. Although my initial preference was participants who lived on campus and were thus immersed in the student life

and on-campus living environments, I had to be flexible and consider other faculty participants as well based upon availability and willingness to participate.

Length of time associated with community. My initial preference was that participants be associated with the RLC program for at least one year. I anticipated faculty members who had at least one year of experience in an RLC program to have had the opportunity to build relationships with their residence life counterparts. Again, I had to remain flexible to the availability and willingness of the participants; two of the final eight participants had less than one year of experience with the residential campus initiative. These participants brought a unique perspective to the study, the details of which can be found in Chapter IV.

Established relationship with residence life professional staff. Because the focus of this study was the relationship between faculty members and residence life professional staff, it was critical to include participants who appear to have already established a relationship with their residence life counterparts.

Diversity in demographics. I also sought participants who represented diverse backgrounds in gender, age, number of years as a faculty member at the university, and academic department and RLC affiliation (Patton, 2015). These criteria were crucial for the study because these participants provided contributions to the understanding of RLC-associated faculty members' perceptions of residence life professionals.

Recruitment. After IRB approval from both OSU and the research site, I requested recommendations via e-mail from the site's RLC faculty engagement coordinator for five to six full-time faculty members associated with the site's program as a faculty-in-residence or an RLC faculty advisor. From the coordinator's recommendations and an additional roster of

faculty members connected to the program, I contacted the faculty members via email to request their participation in my inquiry into faculty experiences working with residence life professionals. I carried out this inquiry by collecting data through several techniques.

Data Collection

The heuristic nature of understanding a social phenomenon that is populated by individuals requires personal contact with study participants, immersion into the context, and rich, detailed insight into the focus of the inquiry. The personal nature of exploring perceptions of faculty justifies methodological practices that elicit and refine participants' multiple and social constructions through interaction with me as the researcher and a data collection tool (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Qualitative researchers gather data by "asking, watching, and reviewing" (Merriam, 2009, p. 86). For this study, I used five data collection techniques: documents, key informant, interviews, informal observations/field notes, and a visual exercise.

Documents

After IRB approval, I collected and reviewed documents prior to and during the site visit. Document analysis provided background information so that I could be sensitive to the context I studied, including the relationships among RLC-associated faculty and residence life professionals. I reviewed institutional and departmental websites and on-campus housing marketing materials related to general housing options. This provided some insight into the institutional context, including that of the residential life program. I also requested from the faculty engagement coordinator internal documents related to residential life departmental strategic planning, including mission statements, goals, learning outcomes, and organizational charts of all RLCs. This audit provided insight into the nature of the faculty

and residence life professionals' collaborations as well as the institutional priorities and support for these collaborations. I also received HD, faculty director, and RLC advisor job descriptions to better understand position expectations and responsibilities as I contextualized participants' experiences.

Key Informant

After securing IRB approval from Oak and OSU, I contacted the university staff member in charge of faculty engagement in Oak University's RLC program to gain her perspective on the program, its goals, and the degree of faculty involvement within the program. I also asked for her perceptions regarding the nature of the faculty and residence life professional relationship, guided by Schuh's *Guiding Principles* (1999) and the Best Practices Model (Inkelas et al., 2018). This staff member, who will be referred to as Loretta throughout the rest of this paper, served as a key informant. Loretta had extensive, firsthand knowledge about the setting (Payne & Payne, 2004) and the RLC program and provided valuable insight that help me to formulate questions for faculty member interviews.

At the time of our interview, Loretta was an administrator as the leader in academic residential partnership, but also had a faculty rank. This distinction was purposeful, "so that I literally am in some circles considered an administrator or staff member and in others a straight up faculty member. Because I have to make those partnerships happen all the time, so I kind of need to live in both worlds." Her role was to be an institutional leader in terms of ensuring that the intellectual and residential/social sides of students' experiences are somewhat integrated. Loretta was responsible for overseeing the faculty members who live in the residential spaces, as well as those who are engaged in the RLC program but who do not live on campus. She met with the live-in faculty members regularly and she worked

closely with the director of residence life to ensure smooth coordination between the faculty members and the residence life professional staff.

Interviews

An interview intended for research is a conversation with purpose and allows the researcher insight into the participant's perspectives (Patton, 2015). Interviewing can be particularly helpful when the researcher is limited in observing participants' behaviors, feelings, or interpretations about the world around them. Research interviews can be structured in different ways, from a highly structured format with predetermined questions to an unstructured, exploratory conversation.

After IRB approval at the research site and at OSU, I conducted semi-structured, one-on-one interviews with the faculty participants at Oak. Interviews were held in a private conference-type room in a building on campus. These interviews sought a rich description of faculty members' individual experiences with and perceptions of the residence life professionals (Stage & Manning, 2016). A research guide of critical topics or related questions, with no predetermined wording or order, guided the interview. This provided some standardization but still allowed flexibility to ask probing questions that encouraged participants to reflect on their experiences or to respond to emerging, related topics.

Interview questions were open-ended to allow participants to define their unique worlds and experiences (Merriam, 2009). Although Schuh's *Guiding Principles* (1999) does not serve as a theoretical framework for this study, concepts within this document were used to inform the key interview topics. I adapted general themes to frame some questions but utilized RLC concepts to make the topics relatable for the participants. All interviews were audio recorded for transcription and analysis. I transcribed each interview, verbatim, during

which time I also removed identifying information and replaced it with assigned pseudonyms.

Gathering demographic information. During my initial contact with participants, I requested that they complete a short, electronic survey via Qualtrics that collected demographic information. This included gender, age, race, ethnicity, number of years as a faculty member at Oak, academic department affiliation, and RLC affiliation. Gathering this information prior to interviews allowed me to dedicate my limited time at the site and with the participants to the experiences of the participants. This demographic information can be found in Chapter IV.

Interview protocol. Once faculty members identified themselves as willing participants and completed the demographic survey, I contacted them via email with a link to a Doodle poll to identify possible interview times during my site visit. I scheduled interviews based on participants' availability the one week I was on site. Prior to beginning each interview, I reminded the participant that participation was voluntary and addressed questions or concerns about the study. I began the interview by asking the participant for contextual information, including his or her role in the RLC and motivations for being involved in the community. I then asked questions related to the participant's relationship with the residence life professionals also associated with the RLC and how the participant and residence life professional influence RLC students. I also asked the participant to utilize a "rules of the road" visual to help frame the conversation and to give insight into to experiences that participants may not otherwise address. This visual is described in the next section. An interview guide is included in Appendix D.

Informal Observations/Field Notes

Because the case study research is deeply embedded in the context of the phenomenon, I made attempts to visit the sites of one or more of the Oak RLCs, in addition to getting a more general sense of the campus. To do this, I took a campus tour, led by an undergraduate student, with a group of prospective students and their families. I also explored accessible common and office spaces within the neighborhoods. I used field notes in the form of analytic memos to describe personal experiences and observations I made during data collection (Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 1995). These analytic memos served as an “intellectual workspace” (Saldaña, 2015, p. 44) as I processed my thoughts. I attempted to note observations as they occurred to record them as accurately as I was able rather than reconstruct them later. I processed my field notes through coding and analytic memos throughout data collection.

Rules of the Road: Visual Exercise

I adapted a “rules of the road” (R is for Thursday Network of Oklahoma, 2017) visual exercise to ground the interviews with the study participants. This tool provided a practical platform from which to visualize what participants perceived to be the responsibilities that faculty members had in the neighborhoods or communities, the roles that residence life professionals had in the neighborhoods or communities, and what, if any, obligations should be shared. The road served as a metaphor for the process of working together to develop community among students. The lanes represented the faculty member and the residence life professional. This visual exercise is included in Appendix E. Incorporating a visual exercise of faculty members’ perceptions has the potential to focus the participants’ responses and, in

the case of this study, highlighted aspects of their experiences that are not as easily captured through written or spoken words alone (Kearney & Hyle 2004; Kunter & Bell, 2006).

Although incorporating this visual exercise strayed from Merriam's (2009) traditional data collection techniques, a strength of utilizing visual data was that it conveyed meaningful relationships among variables (Meyer, 1991). In the case of this study, variables included faculty members' values, interpretations, and professional culture. Another strength is that this visual data improved analysis by enabling a more complex and subtle understanding of the interrelationships among RLC-associated faculty, residence life professionals, and their combined efforts (Kunter & Bell, 2006; Meyer, 1991). As with any method, however, visual data has limitations. Data can threaten validity by leading the researcher to overgeneralize participants' responses and may increase researcher bias in interpretation (Meyer, 1991). As an attempt to remedy these limitations, I asked participants for detailed descriptions of their visual responses during their interviews and included probing or follow-up questions where appropriate. So that I did not impose my biases, I did not engage in interpretation apart from the participants (Kearney & Hyle, 2004). In other words, the participants performed all the interpretation of the visual exercise.

Documents, key informant, interviews, observations/field notes, and a visual exercise provided a rich data set to analyze and interpret. Next, I address data analysis, but it is also important to note that during analysis, I embraced unforeseen data courses that emerged and that I judged to be useful in understanding the phenomenon of focus.

Data Analysis

Qualitative data analysis seeks to illustrate a phenomenon, rather than convince or define. The goal of analysis is to make sense of the data and to do so, it must be

consolidated, reduced, and interpreted (Merriam, 2009). The data that I made meaning of and analyzed include documents, interview transcripts, field notes, and the visual exercises completed by the participants. The basic strategy I used in my analysis was an inductive analysis. *Inductive* refers to a strategy in which the data build concepts relevant to the study, rather than testing a hypothesis (Merriam, 2009). I utilized coding techniques and continuous analysis beginning with early data collection.

Coding Techniques

I recorded and coded words, phrases, emergent patterns and possible themes throughout the course of data collection, which is critical to qualitative analysis (Merriam, 2009). During the early stages of data collection and analysis, I utilized an open coding technique to allow patterns to emerge (Patton, 2015) and to “break in” the data (Saldaña, 2015, p. 76). Open coding includes making notes on data that are particularly interesting, relevant, or important to the inquiry. Because I was unsure as to what data will be meaningful, I began analysis by identifying data segments that appeared as patterns. These segments highlighted information relevant to the study and could be interpreted with a minimum understanding of the context (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

I then compared segments to identify regularities by assigning open codes. These open codes were sorted into tentative categories using analytical coding. Analytical codes are interpretations of and reflections on the meaning of the data (Merriam, 2009). Categories can include findings, patterns, themes, or answers to my research questions and should contain several individual examples. I primarily used value and emotion coding to focus my efforts and compiled the categories in a memo to document findings that seem recur across interviews, observations, and field notes.

During the second coding cycle, I re-coded and identified a preliminary set of categories and found segments of relevant information until I reached saturation and no new information or insights were apparent. At this point, the analysis became deductive in that I tested my category scheme against the data (Merriam, 2009) through additional coding.

As I analyzed the data through coding, I searched for theories that deepened my understanding of the data. I did not intend to utilize these theories as additional coding but rather as an approach to bring more clarity to the themes that emerged through open coding.

Continuous Analysis

In a qualitative inquiry, analysis is continuous and begins during fieldwork by recording and tracking analytical insights (Becker, 2003; Patton, 2015; Saldaña, 2015). I reviewed website and internal documents prior to interviewing the participants to situate myself within context of the site. I also reviewed and made analytic notes on internal documents specific to the RLC program that struck me as interesting or potentially relevant to the study. This also inspired questions for the participants that were specific to their communities, which resulted in a deeper contextual understanding of their experiences with residence life staff. Analytic insights from documents, interviews, the visual exercises, and personal reflections were documented using field notes. I reflected upon and interpreted those notes immediately after leaving the field and throughout data analysis. After the interviews, I reviewed website and internal documents again to analyze these sources more deeply, although I did not utilize a coding scheme for these.

I transcribed each interview within one to two weeks and simultaneously engaged in rudimentary data analysis, so that I could remain focused, avoid being overwhelmed, and

become familiar and immersed in the data (Merriam, 2009). After data collection, I engaged in intensive analysis to corroborate, revise, and reconfigure these exploratory findings.

Data Management

I used the qualitative software program MAXQDA to store, organize, and retrieve all documents, transcripts, notes, and codes. This program was installed on my personal, password-protected laptop computer. Other data was also stored on this laptop. Once analyzed, I stored the recordings, transcriptions, demographic survey responses, and master codes electronically on a personal drive. I kept all self-identifying information of the participants confidential, including their names, titles, and the communities in which they are associated. The audio files of the interviews were stored on my computer, as I intended to be the only one to review them, although my research advisor and the university's IRB may also request access. Personal identifiers are not included in interview transcriptions; rather, I assigned participants pseudonyms to identify the interviewee. I recorded pseudonyms in a separate document, accessible only by me, and I will destroy the document after the study is complete and I have successfully defended my dissertation. If the results of this study are published in the future, all names and other identifying information from participants will remain private and confidential. I will delete audio files of the interviews one year after I have defended.

Role of the Researcher

The qualitative researcher serves as the primary instrument of data collection (Creswell, 2009; Patton, 2015). As such, the qualitative researcher must make sense of the data as it appears in the field. The emergent nature of qualitative data gathering and analysis requires the researcher to be adaptable as the data, analysis, and course of the project evolve.

To this point, I identified gaps and attempted to fill those as thoughtfully as possible by requesting additional information from participants via email and accessing supplementary documents (Patton, 2015). Additionally, I was intentional with reflection and reflexivity to monitor my own biases and assumptions by journaling my experiences, thoughts, and questions throughout the research process.

Data analysis is an important piece of any investigation, but it is only as dependable as the researcher. The researcher in any investigation must express consideration for reliability and validity of the study design, analysis, and data reporting; failure to do so can undermine the researcher's work and reputation. In the case of qualitative inquiry, credibility, consistency, and transferability are particularly important to address, as the researcher is typically the main instrument of data collection.

Credibility, Consistency, and Transferability

The data collection in a qualitative study requires highly detailed evidence that may challenge the researcher's initial assumptions (Ragin, Nagel, & White, 2004). Because of this, practices related to credibility, consistency, and transferability in qualitative inquiry are crucial to best assure that I have rigorously conducted my investigation. I intentionally use the terms *credibility*, *consistency*, and *transferability* to consider carefully terms in qualitative inquiry that reflect the philosophical assumptions of such research (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Credibility

Credibility refers to the congruence of study findings and reality (Merriam, 2009). Credibility begins with a well-designed study. Thoughtfully constructing a purpose statement and research questions that support my epistemology assisted me in clarifying my

epistemological position. Ensuring that data collection and analysis support this view authenticates the study's claims. I sought review from my committee regarding my study design to ensure that it aligned with my position and that my data collection methods were appropriate for the purpose of this study.

Triangulation is a strategy to increase the credibility of my findings and can include using multiple methods of data collection and multiple sources of data. In this case study, I triangulated the data through several methods of data collection, including interviews, internal documents, field notes, and participants' visual exercises. These techniques allowed me to check participants' perceptions against what I observed on the site or what I read about in relevant documents. I also sought data from several sources, which involved comparing and crosschecking data gained from the interviews, as well as any data collected from the research informant and follow-up conducted via email.

Reflexivity is another technique to promote credibility and is a systematic process of a particular kind of deep, personal reflection (Patton, 2015). Especially in qualitative research, I may have influenced the participants of the study and likewise, the participants affected me. To determine these effects, which are not always obvious, as the researcher I engaged in a critical self-exploration of my own interpretations of the context in which I was studying. I did this through analytic memos, and I utilized my field notes as a reflection tool. These explorations included frequent practices of self-analysis of my cultural awareness, political consciousness, and of my own perspective (Patton, 2015). This involved acknowledging my biases when writing, using first person and active voice to own my perspective. Reflexivity is also a way to exercise transparency to my audience when I report

findings. In qualitative inquiry, the researcher's perspective is part of the context of the investigation (Patton, 2015).

Another strategy I utilized was peer review. I sought peer review from colleagues during data collection, analysis, and interpretation. I attempted to solicit feedback from colleagues who were both familiar with RLCs and collaborations with faculty and those who were less familiar to gain a stronger assessment of whether my findings were plausible based on raw data (Merriam, 2009). I also utilized thematic charts, an if/then/therefore/thus matrix, and a findings and literature chart to organize findings and to illustrate the logical development and overview of my interpretive thought processes (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2018). These illustrations are included in Appendix F.

Consistency

Consistency is the extent to which one can replicate research findings if the study is repeated. Instead of attempting to isolate human behavior as a fixed concept, qualitative researchers attempt to describe and explain the world as participants in that space experience it (Merriam, 2009). Because there can be many interpretations of those experiences, replication of a qualitative study will not necessarily produce the same results. The focus of consistency in qualitative inquiry, then, must be on whether the findings are consistent with the data presented.

As the primary data collection instrument, I became more consistent through practice. I sought resources that helped me refine my interviewing skills, including relevant books, scholarly articles, and colleagues. Triangulation and an audit trail also promote consistency. Triangulation allowed me to collect data that were congruent with reality as understood by the participants (Merriam, 2009). An audit trail provides the audience with a review of how I

arrived at the results. Using analytic memos, I gave detailed descriptions of how I collected data, how I arrived at categories during the analysis, and how I made decisions throughout the project (Saldaña, 2015). I also included reflections, questions, and my interactions with data (Merriam, 2009).

Transferability

The degree to which one can apply findings of a qualitative study to other contexts is transferability. Qualitative inquiry often involves small, purposeful samples in order to understand a phenomenon in depth, not to discover what is generally true of a larger population (Merriam, 2009). In this sense, transferring the result of one study to another situation must be considered appropriately to reflect the philosophical assumptions of qualitative research. Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggest that “the burden of proof lies less with the original investigator than with the person seeking to make an application elsewhere” (p. 298). As such, the original investigator must provide sufficient and descriptive data that allows the reader to decide whether the findings can apply to his or her situation. I used thick descriptions to present the data, which involve highly detailed presentations of the site and the findings of the study (Merriam, 2009).

I have provided thick descriptions of the participants within the context of the setting. Thick description implies that the narrative of participants’ behaviors and contexts are detailed and that they give meaning to participants’ experiences (Rudestam & Newton, 2015). Presenting evidence through direct quotes from participant interviews, field notes, and documents will add depth to contextual details.

Ethical Standards

Credibility also involves the professional integrity and ethics of the researcher. An ethical researcher protects the study's participants from harm, maintains their privacy, receives informed consent prior to data collection, and, if applicable, addresses issues of deception appropriately and carefully. Patton (2015) provides an ethical issues checklist, which includes 12 common issues as a touch point to consider during study design, data collection, data analysis, and reporting (p. 496). Here, I address those that are relevant to this project.

Explain purpose clearly and honestly. When creating participant invitation language, developing consent forms, and requesting information and interviews from study participants, including the site's RLC faculty engagement coordinator, I explained the purpose of my study using language commonly referred to in the field of residential learning communities, higher education, and residence life. I shared details related to methods of data collection, including audio-recorded interviews and the possibility for publication after the conclusion of the study.

Reciprocity. Although I did not provide an incentive to study participants, I informed them that others may benefit from the knowledge gained from their experiences.

Risk assessment. Participating in this study did not create risk any greater than what is encountered daily; however, by reflecting on their relationships with residence life professionals, participants may have become uncomfortable or stressed depending on the nature of those relationships.

Confidentiality. I changed names, locations, and other details to protect participants' confidentiality. I used pseudonyms in place of participants' and the institution's names. I

also referred to the faculty members' titles and the RLC themes in broad terms. Data is stored on my personal, password-protected laptop. I intend to be the only person to listen to the audio-recorded interviews, and I have removed identifying information from interview transcripts. I will maintain identifying data for one year after I have completed the project.

Informed consent. Prior to data collection, I received approval from OSU's and Oak University's Institutional Review Board. I also required informed consent prior to data collection. This included consent from the site's RLC coordinator to access the site and share relevant internal documents, as well as from the faculty members before the interviews began.

Interviewer mental health and ethical advice. I utilized reflections and analytic memos to monitor my personal reactions during data collection and analysis. Although I did not need advice on these topics, I knew I could rely on my committee chair if I felt as though I needed to debrief information heard during an interview or if I needed guidance on matters of ethics during the study.

Data collection boundaries. I did not discuss highly sensitive topics during interviews, but I monitored participants' reactions to ensure I did not cross boundaries. I included probing questions where appropriate but was careful not to dictate participants' experiences the way I perceived them happening.

Intersection of ethical and methodological choices. I have attempted to be transparent throughout this chapter about my methodological choices, which intersect with ethics. I do not feel as though I faced any ethical challenges throughout the course of the project.

Summary

This chapter communicated the design of this instrumental, qualitative, single case study. The goal of this case study was to explore faculty members' perceptions of residence life professionals as collaborators in students' RLC-based educational processes. I purposefully selected the study's participants from a site that offered a robust selection of residential learning communities and that emphasized faculty involvement within those RLCs. I collected data through various avenues, including semi-structured interviews and visual representations, engaged in continuous analysis, and monitored biases and assumptions through reflection and reflexivity. The decisions made throughout the process, from design to implementation to analysis, prioritized the emergent nature appropriate for qualitative inquiry.

CHAPTER IV

PRESENTATION OF DATA AND THEMES

As outlined in Chapter I, the purpose of the study was to explore full-time faculty members' perceptions of residence life professionals with whom they work in residential learning community (RLC) collaborations. For data collection, I purposefully selected a site that had a robust offering of residential learning communities and that placed a heavy emphasis on faculty involvement within these RLCs. I visited Oak, a private, southeastern mid-size university, in April 2019. I was on-site for one week, during which time I interviewed six of the eight participants.

To triangulate the data, I used various data collection techniques, including field notes, semi-structured interviews, and participants' visual exercises. Throughout data collection, I engaged in continuous analysis. Using analytic memos, I practiced reflexivity by monitoring the biases and assumptions I brought to this research.

The following research questions guided the process: How do RLC-associated faculty members describe the roles of residence life professionals within the context of shared RLCs?

1. How do faculty members describe their *relationships* with residence life professionals within the context of shared RLCs?
2. How do faculty members describe the *processes of working with* residence life professionals in shared RLCs?
3. What do RLC faculty members report as *best practices* of residence life professionals working with them in RLCs?

This chapter presents rich, thick descriptions of the study site and the eight faculty members who participated in this study. I first provide description of the study site, followed by participant descriptions. I then present the data from my interviews. Finally, I present general observations about the participants and the research site and conclude the chapter with a presentation of the themes that resulted from my data analysis. To enhance understanding, verbal utterances have been removed from participants' quotes.

The Research Site

I had visited Oak University's campus twice before, but those visits occurred during the summer, when there were few students or faculty members on campus. My visit for data collection was quite different. Instead of a quiet campus, I saw one teeming with life and activity as people walked between buildings or lounged on the expansive open lawns. The campus was lush, green, and dotted with large oak trees and carefully manicured landscaping – no leaf appeared out of place. Nearly every building and sidewalk was built with red brick, and the facades of the colonial-style buildings were framed with tall, white pillars. I could

not help but notice that I saw few students of color as I walked through campus and felt old and out-of-place among the traditionally-aged undergraduate students – which I clearly was not.

I found comfortable nooks to work as I began transcribing interview audio and organizing my field notes. I often visited the library, where I found a quiet, but busy, environment. Students studied in groups, met with tutors, and conducted small meetings throughout the two expansive floors of the building. The quiet was frequently interrupted by small groups of prospective students, their families, and their boisterous campus tour guides trekking their way through the first floor. When I needed a break from transcribing, I wandered the campus grounds.

For lunch, I had my choice of eight different locations, each offering unique menus – everything from gourmet toast (delicious) to vegan-only options to made-to-order fresh salads. I ate in areas where students gathered with their peers, noticing often that they would drop their belongings at a table, walk away to order their meal, then return to the table with no fear that someone else would steal their laptops or other possessions. I observed this in the library as well, but the sense of security was more obvious in the high-traffic common areas.

Oak's residential learning communities were organized into seven neighborhoods, which were clusters of buildings and common spaces that formed smaller cohorts of students and were connected to a theme. Neighborhoods were spread throughout campus; some were located on the perimeter of campus while others existed among the academic buildings. First-year students who lived in these neighborhoods took residentially linked sections of foundation courses, such as English 101. In each neighborhood, a leadership team consisting

of faculty members, residence life professionals, and student peer mentors designed experiences for the students that attempted to extend residents' learning to their living and social environments.

The university's robust offerings of RLCs and small, cohorts of communities included academic themes like business, communications, and creative arts as well as special interest themes like gender and sexuality, leadership, and service learning. The RLC program boasted involvement from over 140 faculty and staff in the neighborhoods. Six neighborhoods had both a hall director (HD) and a faculty director. One neighborhood also had a faculty-in-residence (FIR).

The HD was a residence life professional staff member with a master's degree and was responsible for the general administration of a neighborhood, including disciplinary issues and student staff supervision. In addition to their administrative responsibilities, HDs were also expected to create strong partnerships with faculty members and partner with their faculty director to enhance student engagement and faculty-student interaction in their neighborhoods. The HD reported to the associate director of residence life and lived within his or her respective neighborhood. The hall directors at Oak were primarily young professionals who had graduated with their master's degrees within the last one to three years. In many residence life departments in the student affairs field, HDs are commonly between the ages of 25 and 29 and have fewer than five years of professional experience (for example, Davidson, 2012; Komives, 1991).

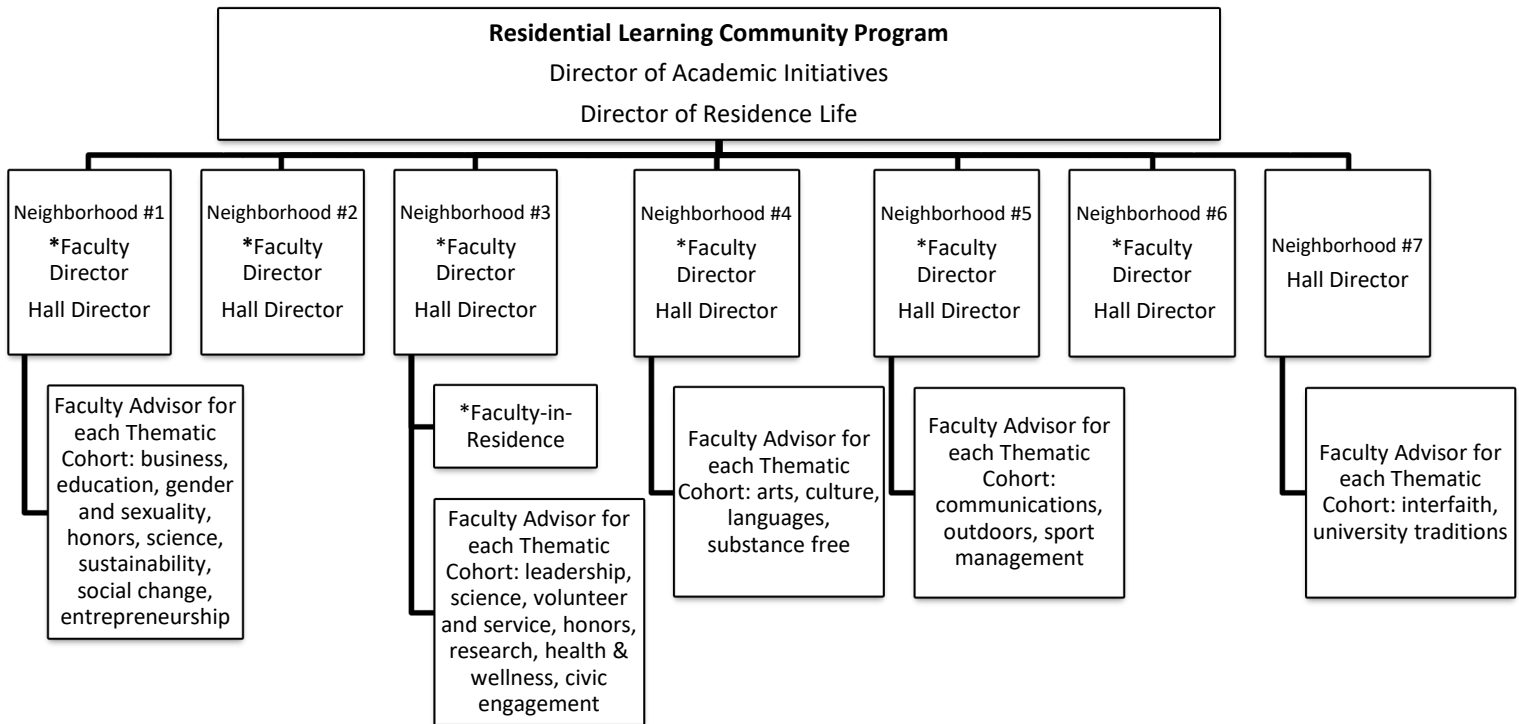
Faculty candidates applied for open faculty director and FIR positions and were selected by representatives from the residence life staff, the director of academic initiatives, and other faculty directors. Tenured or permanent faculty members were preferred for these

positions, which were ten-month, year-to-year appointments with an annual evaluation each spring semester. The positions included a year-round accommodation in a two- to three-bedroom apartment within the assigned neighborhood, a programming budget, a partial meal plan, and one course release. The explicit expectation was that the faculty directors and FIRs fully reside on campus. Other expectations included spending a minimum of six hours per week on community-oriented responsibilities and participating in the life of the neighborhood by maintaining visibility and regularly dining with residents. The faculty members filling these roles served for three to six years in the position. Faculty directors were expected to serve as leaders within their neighborhoods by collaborating with the hall directors to develop the intellectual, academic, and social identity of the entire neighborhood and to coordinate linked courses. Faculty directors had offices in their neighborhoods, where they were expected to spend an unspecified portion of their time. These offices were located in the same suites as their hall directors. Faculty directors also had their primary faculty offices in different academic buildings elsewhere on campus. Faculty directors reported to both the director of academic initiatives and the director of residence life.

One FIR also lived in an apartment in one of the neighborhoods and worked directly with a smaller, thematic cohort to organize academic experiences for residents. The FIR reported to the director of academic initiatives but did not have an office in the neighborhood. The FIR was also expected to work with the neighborhood's faculty director and HD to collaborate on events within the neighborhood and to encourage community participation from the students in the thematic cohort. The faculty directors and the FIR met regularly with the director of academic initiatives and members of the residence life leadership staff, although this was not explicitly stated in the job descriptions.

The faculty directors and hall directors provided leadership for their respective neighborhoods, which may also have included smaller, thematic cohorts of students who lived within those neighborhoods. These cohorts were advised by different faculty members who also reported to the director of academic initiatives and the associate director of residence life. The cohort faculty advisor was a ten-month, year-to-year appointment with an annual evaluation in the spring. Faculty advisors were compensated with a partial meal plan and a programming budget for community development among their cohort of students but did not live on campus. Cohort faculty advisors were expected to spend a minimum of four hours per month on cohort-related activities, including attending one residential event per month, dining regularly with students, and maintaining visibility in the residential community. This also included establishing strong relationships with residence life staff (not explicitly hall directors) and maintaining regular interaction with residence. Additionally, cohort faculty advisors were expected to attend regular meetings with the assistant director of residence life. These meetings occurred as large, monthly gatherings with other faculty advisors and the assistant director of residence life. These meetings were intended to serve as an opportunity for the assistant director of residence life to update them on department events, initiatives, and policies. Faculty members in this position typically served three years. To be considered for a cohort faculty advisor, faculty members must have been permanent members of the teaching faculty and showed an interest in engaging residential students. Figure 4.1 illustrates the general structure of Oak's residential learning community program.

Figure 4.1 Structure of Oak University’s RLC Program



Overview of Participants and Observations

I contacted 27 faculty members via email (Appendix B) who were involved in the residential learning community program at Oak University. Fourteen faculty members responded; four did not wish to participate. One faculty member was teaching abroad but agreed to be interviewed on the phone. Nine faculty members responded with a willingness to participate in the study and the availability that coincided with my site visit; however, two participants cancelled their interviews during my visit. Prior to participant interviews and my visit to Oak, I requested that faculty participants complete a demographic survey (Appendix C). These self-reported demographics are listed in the table below.

Table 1

Self-Reported Demographics of Study Participants

Participant	Academic Field/ Faculty Rank	Years as Faculty at Oak University	Age	Ethnicity	Gender Identity
Waylon	Music/ Associate Professor	13	40	White	Male
Patsy	Education/ Associate Professor	13	60	White	Female
Hank	Communications/ Instructor	12	36	White	Male
Reba	English/ Assistant Professor	4	37	White	Female
Garth	Political Science/ Assistant Professor	4	56	White	Male
June	Chemistry/ Assistant Professor	4	33	White	Female
Dolly	Foreign Languages/ Associate Professor	10	41	White	Female
Pam	Communications/ Assistant Professor	< 1	58	White	Female

The names shown for the participants in the table are pseudonyms and are used throughout this and the next chapter of my dissertation. As illustrated, three males and five females participated in the study. All participants identified as white. Four participants served as faculty members at Oak for 10 years or more, while four participants served for fewer than five years. Participants varied in their academic fields, which included music, education, communications, English, political science, chemistry, and foreign languages. Participants ranged in age from 33 to 60, with an average age of 45. Seven participants held doctoral degrees. Hank had a dual role on campus as a full-time staff member with a part-time faculty rank in communications.

Table 2

Study Participant RLC Roles and Years in RLCs at Oak University

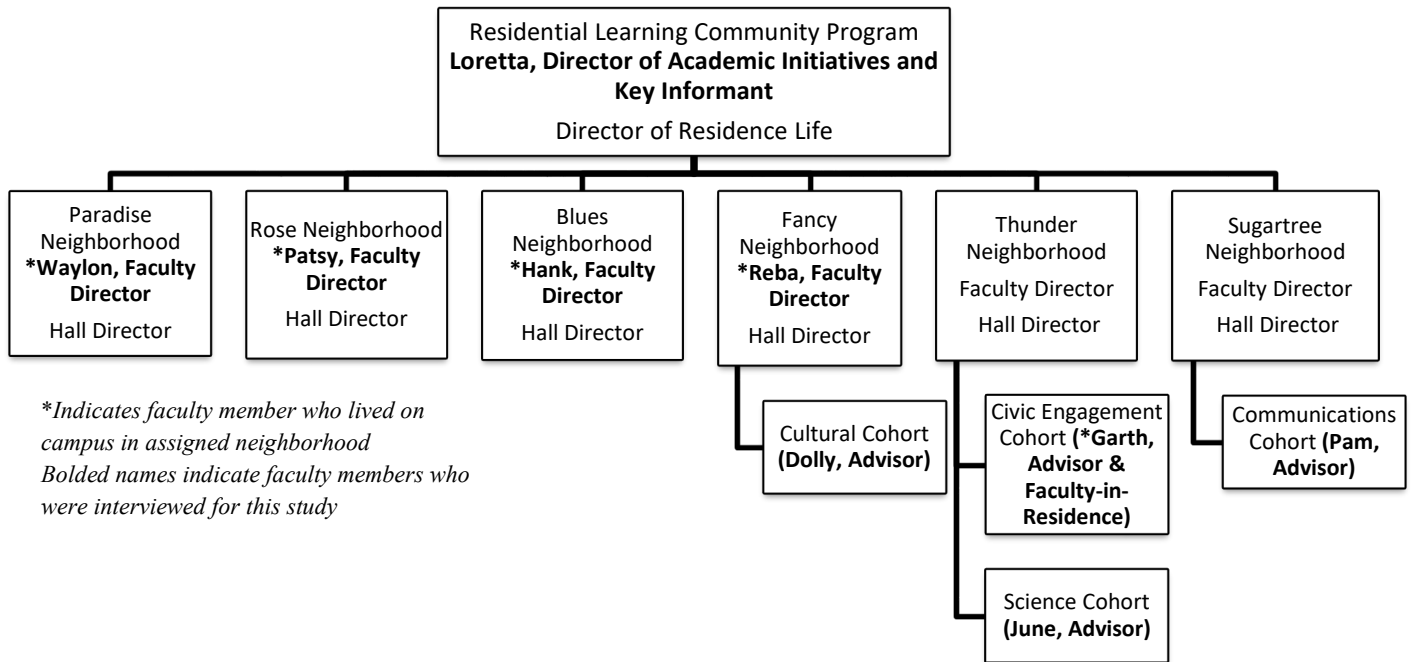
Participant	RLC Role	Years in RLC Role	Lived on campus in assigned neighborhood?
Waylon	Faculty Director, Paradise Neighborhood	< 1	Yes
Patsy	Faculty Director, Rose Neighborhood	3	Yes
Hank	Faculty Director, Blues Neighborhood	3	Yes
Reba	Faculty Director, Fancy Neighborhood	3	Yes
Garth	Faculty-in-Residence, Thunder Neighborhood and Advisor, civic engagement cohort	2	Yes
June	Advisor, science cohort	3	No
Dolly	Advisor, cultural cohort	8	No
Pam	Advisor, communications cohort	< 1	No
Loretta	Director of Academic Initiatives Served as key informant for this study	4	No

The table above illustrates the participants' roles in the RLC program at Oak. All neighborhoods were assigned pseudonyms to replace identifying information. Four participants served as faculty directors of their neighborhoods. Garth was a faculty-in-residence (FIR), a position in which he lived in the Thunder Neighborhood and advised a smaller cohort of residential students in a civic engagement-themed area of his neighborhood. His primary focus was not the entire neighborhood, but rather this thematic cohort. Three other participants served as faculty advisors for other thematic cohorts, including science, culture, and communications, but did not live within the neighborhoods in which they were housed. In 2011, three faculty members lived in the neighborhoods; as the

residential campus grew, however, residence halls were designed to include apartments for faculty members. Around this same time, university leadership charged Oak's residence life department with a strategic plan to improve faculty engagement in the RLC program. Since then, faculty presence in the halls has steadily increased, along with the growth of the residential campus. As such, most participants had served in their role for a relatively short time; two participants, Waylon and Pam, had held their roles for less than one year at the time of their interviews. Dolly served eight years as the cultural cohort advisor, as well as one year as an interim faculty director, although she did not live on campus during this time.

The figure below illustrates the make-up of the residential learning community program at Oak and includes the names of the participants interviewed for this study. Loretta, the key informant, and the director of residence life provided leadership for the program. The director of residence life was not interviewed for this study. Neighborhoods and cohorts that were represented by participants are shown in Figure 4.2.

Figure 4.2 Structure of Oak University’s RLC Program with Participants



Two participants, Patsy and Garth, were not on campus during this time so I conducted these interviews over the phone. Patsy was teaching abroad, and I interviewed her prior to my campus visit, while Garth had an interview scheduled for the week I was on campus but had to cancel for an emergency. We re-scheduled for the week after my visit. All interviews were semi-structured and lasted between 40 minutes and an hour-and-a-half, depending on the participant. Below, I provide a rich description of each faculty participant. Descriptions are based upon interviews, fieldnotes, observations, and reports from the key informant and director of academic initiatives, Loretta.

Participant Descriptions

Waylon. Waylon was the faculty director in Paradise Neighborhood (pseudonym). When I first met Waylon for our interview on campus, he was wearing a standard white button-down shirt, khaki-colored slacks, and a brown felt fedora wet from an unseasonably late snowfall. He had a jolly face and an easy smile, often holding his hat as he spoke about

the many metaphorical “hats” he wore at Oak. At the time of our interview, he had been in the position for approximately nine months. He lived in an 800-square foot apartment in Paradise Neighborhood with his family of four. Throughout our hour-long interview, Waylon spoke to how he perceived his role in the community – as the “academic enrichment to the living experience” – and how, as a new faculty director, he was learning that the job description was not an accurate representation of how the position played out in real life. He seemed to be figuring out how to balance his community obligations with his other professional and family commitments:

I’m just feeling now like I’m really kind of getting my legs underneath me and kind of go, okay, I’ve gotten to know my space, but it also means that I know, ah ha, so six to eight hours [of work as faculty director], it’s not realistic. It’s really, 10 is like a minimum and I’m really stretching over that a lot of times... It’s kind of part of that expectation that [this position] becomes part of your life. Which is a heavy thing.

Waylon seemed to lack confidence in his understanding of his role, stating that “... even after my [faculty director] orientation in early August, I really felt like I didn’t know what the position was and to be honest I still don’t know.” His relationship with his hall director (HD) appeared to be a work-in-progress: “... after eight months working with anybody, we don’t have as full or deep professional understanding as I would like.” Although he could easily identify tasks his HD carried out, he seemed to be unsure as to the overall purpose of the HD’s role. This is not to say he was unaware – he described the hall director as the “backbone” of the community – but he struggled to articulate the functional responsibilities the HD. He seemed to be committed to the role; as we talked, he would often wonder aloud about how he and his hall director could work together to create the neighborhood’s identity.

Waylon prompted me to consider the ways in which age and professional experience could affect the relationship between a faculty member and a hall director, a variable that I had not considered before his interview.

Patsy. Although she served as the faculty director of Rose Neighborhood (pseudonym) for three years, Patsy was teaching abroad during the time of our interview. She struck me as someone who appreciated rules and guidelines – in her words, she “lived and breathed” the faculty director job description – but, as a former K-12 teacher, approached her role with fun and creativity. She laughed easily and seemed to enjoy building deeper relationships with students outside the classroom.

In March 2019, we conducted a 40-minute interview via phone, during which Patsy discussed in detail how she perceived her role within the neighborhood as well as her relationship with her previous and current hall directors. I found her description of her relationship with her previous HD to be especially powerful – she expressed a level of intimacy about working closely with someone she had just met. When she was first selected by the residence life department and Loretta for the role of faculty director, she had “no idea” about the hall director’s role or who held that position, and how she felt “... going into [the faculty director position] is that I was marrying a person at first sight. I had no idea or anything about them. But here we were gonna be in this very intimate relationship...” She and the HD spent time outside of office hours getting to know one another and learning about each other’s lives by grabbing coffee, spending holidays together, and genuinely showing an interest in how the other was doing. Patsy did not indicate who initiated these gatherings, but I got the impression that they were mutual. I also sensed that one of the factors that helped the relationship become so strong was that both Patsy and the HD were willing to be

vulnerable about what they did not know and what they could learn from the other.

According to Patsy, “I remember saying [to the HD] ... ‘I have no idea what you know, but I know I don’t know all the things you know, and I really am hoping that I can learn from you.’” Patsy’s tenure as a faculty director included a weekly community event in her faculty director office, located in the Rose Neighborhood near her on-campus apartment. This event, according to the key informant, Loretta, and other participants, was a “hallmark” of the Rose Neighborhood because of its level of success in introducing students to faculty and engaging students in stimulating conversations.

Hank. Hank had served as a faculty director for three years. He lived in an on-campus apartment with his wife and two sons. He arrived at our interview dressed in dark slacks and a button-down shirt with a tie. He had a dry sense of humor, which he used with a boyish, crooked smile and spoke in a confident tone. As a full-time university staff member with a part-time faculty rank, Hank had a unique perspective on working with residence life staff in his role as faculty director of Blues Neighborhood (pseudonym). Because he was not a full-time faculty member, he felt he could connect with his hall director differently than other faculty directors because of his “staff side”. During our hour-long interview, he spoke of his relationship with his HD in very businesslike terms – like *productive*, *efficient*, and “no wasted space or time”. He credited his strong relationship with his HD to her job performance, her willingness to “get [her] hands dirty”, and mutual trust that each collaborator will do his or her job. He expressed that both he and the HD approached their collaboration with a willingness to do whatever needed to make sure all the pieces of an event or initiative fell into place.

My impression of Hank was that he was intentional to ensure that he and his hall director shared responsibilities. When he first became a faculty director, he approached the position as if there were only explicit responsibilities for the faculty director and explicit responsibilities for the HD. Once he was “in deep”, though, he realized that there were a lot more responsibilities that he viewed *should* be shared and seemed to drive the relationship with his HD to one that was more collaborative. He did not feel as though intellectual engagement was “his” lane and described a neighborhood event initiated by the hall director that stimulated such engagement. He fully supported the HD in this initiative. Similarly, the hall director incorporated his role into her student-staff supervision by telling the staff that if Hank “asks them to do something, they need to do that. So in some ways she's made me almost like a co-hall director among her staff.”

Reba. When Reba arrived for our interview, she was dressed casually in jeans and a cardigan. Unknowingly, I had scheduled our interview for a day that she was off, but she was enthused to be a participant and showed great interest in the study. She was passionate and articulate about her role as a faculty director and seemed to embody the “challenge and critique” mentality that is so often associated with faculty members. As a faculty director for three years in Fancy Neighborhood (pseudonym), Reba seemed to value efficiency and productivity. Our interview was the longest at an hour-and-a-half, and Reba highlighted an interesting dichotomy: She seemed to feel like a token faculty member and that residence life often forgot about her and the faculty members. She gave an example of residence life’s lack of communication regarding events or initiatives within residence life, a possible oversight because faculty members were not always present in their communities. “It’s easy for the residence life staff to kind of forget that we exist and forget that we’re important...”

Regardless, Reba described her relationship with her hall director as a “partnership” and, like Hank, communicated the importance of the HD being good at his or her job as a component of having a productive relationship. She appeared to be frustrated by her relationships with other residence life staff, however, and expressed distrust in other staff members. One interaction caused her to become more guarded in her relationship with residence life. This interaction involved a meeting with a member of residence life leadership and was intended as a way for Reba to gain insight to the strategic direction of the RLC program. However, the meeting turned into a critical feedback discussion – that “came out of nowhere” – in which the residence life staff member suggested that Reba had “outgrown” her role as faculty director. “I’m still a little upset about it, and I don’t really like talking to this individual, like, I have to watch myself now.” Another area of frustration for Reba was her perception of residence life’s lack of receptivity to feedback.

You know, I love [Fancy Neighborhood]. I love this residence life role. I love what I’m doing. Because of that love, I see all of these problems and I see pathways to start conversations to make them better and residence life doesn’t always want to hear that. They don’t want to see the challenges.

Reba experienced a learning curve as she attempted to communicate within the professional norms of residence life at Oak, particularly when it came to discussing challenges within the RLC program. “They [residence life] don’t want to hear those problems. So I think what I’m... learning is to collect data and try to not complain until I have a proposal for change.” Despite these frustrations, Reba valued her experience as a faculty director, citing several examples of how it had changed her approach to her own teaching in a formal classroom and how she developed relationships with her students.

Garth. At the time of our phone interview in April 2019, Garth had been a faculty-in-residence (FIR) in the Thunder Neighborhood (pseudonym) for approximately two years. During our interview, he spoke in a confident, matter-of-fact tone that seemed honed from spending several years as a former student affairs professional and as a FIR at other institutions prior to Oka. As a FIR at Oak, he lived in an apartment on campus in the Thunder Neighborhood and oversaw the community development of a specific cohort of about 15 Thunder residents who were engaged in a civic engagement-themed area of the community. Although his primary responsibilities did not necessitate development of the entire neighborhood, he was expected to assist the neighborhood's faculty director and HD to create cocurricular learning opportunities for residents in the neighborhood. Our interview lasted approximately 40 minutes, during which time Garth shared his unique perspective as a former student affairs professional and as a former faculty-in-residence at other institutions. Garth was the only participant to refer to residence life staff as "educators," a noteworthy detail because of the focus of this study. When comparing his experiences as a student affairs professional to his time as a full-time faculty member, he felt as though he still belonged to the world of student affairs, particularly because he believed that the field of student affairs was more open to innovation than the faculty side. This contrasted with Reba, who struggled to find receptive avenues to express her ideas for change, a difference that may have been explained, at least in part, by his familiarity with the world of student affairs. Garth felt his experiences in student affairs helped him build a strong relationship with his HD,

...when I told her that I had been a hall director before... I think that kind of... made her feel more comfortable with me, that I wasn't just the live-in faculty member, that you know, I have been in student affairs and understand... a lot of that world.

Garth's respect for the HD position seemed to come from a different place than Reba's. Whereas Reba held a deep respect for hall directors as experts in terms of student development outside of the class, I sensed that Garth's respect derived from his own experiences as a hall director and as a student affairs professional.

June. June arrived wearing a flowing skirt and a light cardigan and had a quiet sense of confidence that emerged throughout our interview. She was soft-spoken but clearly enjoyed the challenge of making the subject of science accessible to students. June's involvement with the residential learning communities at Oak started three years ago when she co-founded a cohort for science students in the Thunder Neighborhood. She also served as a member of the RLC advisory committee, a committee of faculty and staff that developed a strategic vision for the RLC program at Oak. I felt a sense of frustration just below the surface of her answers and it finally broke the surface near the end of our interview by me simply stating, "I want to be respectful of your time." She answered with, "And maybe that's a beef of mine, is [residence life being] respectful of [my] time" before launching into her experiences with seemingly unrealistic expectations surrounding timeliness of communication with residence life.

As the science cohort advisor, June seemed to have limited interaction with the residence life staff, although she did indicate that she attended a few of the monthly cohort faculty advisor meetings with the assistant director of residence life. Throughout our interview she did not identify or allude to the HD often. This may have been an indication of

distance between her role and the residence life staff in general. This distanced relationship did not necessarily indicate that her role was not beneficial to students, however; rather, it was more of a reflection of how June felt connected to – or disconnected from – the "residential" component of the residential learning community.

June believed that an explicit conversation with residence life about the larger initiative of the RLC program and how the cohort advisor role contributed to the vision would help her better grasp what was expected of her as an advisor. In June's words, "I know what the vision is. I know what the expectations are, but the actual execution, I'm not sure that that's necessarily getting back [to me] and helping to frame the next strategic vision." Overall, June felt that she was valued for the role she played as a cohort advisor but did not feel like residence life valued her as an individual. "...I feel like they [residence life] value [cohort advisors] in terms of, we're a piece of that mission that they're trying to execute... as an individual maybe not as much." Still, she felt her time as a cohort advisor was beneficial to both students and to her own experience as a faculty member. She felt compelled to make science more relatable to students who were not science majors and, as a result of her experiences as the science cohort advisor, developed a class for non-science majors that introduced fundamental chemical concepts and their relationships to cooking, baking, and other culinary processes.

So thinking through like, how do I kind of take [the application of science concepts] and translate that into a course that's going to help other students who aren't science majors think about the world from a scientific perspective? So that kind of is a... concrete example of taking what I learned [from the advisory role] and applying that in a new direction [in my faculty role].

Dolly. Dolly was immediately warm and friendly when she arrived at our interview. Her long, brown hair was tied back in a sensible ponytail and she had an inviting smile that made me want to confide in her as a peer and as a mentor. I felt I could relate to her so much that I found myself sharing personal details with her at the end of our interview. At the time of our interview, Dolly had been connected to Oak's RLC program for nearly eight years – the longest tenure of any participant in this study. Dolly shared a unique perspective during our hour-long interview that included a comparison between her time as an advisor of a cultural thematic cohort of students in Fancy Neighborhood and her time as an interim neighborhood faculty director. Her interaction with residence life staff varied greatly in these two different roles. As a cohort advisor, she indicated that she did not have nearly the level of interaction (or the level of connectedness) with residence life nor a strong relationship with the residence life staff as she did when she was an interim faculty director. As a faculty director, she had regular interactions with the staff – sometimes several times a week – and she believed the role was intended to be an intentional collaboration with the HD. Her interview highlighted a larger disconnect between cohort advisor and the hall director of the neighborhood and how this impacted her connectedness with the students in her cohort.

I realize that that could actually be one of the reasons why I feel less connected [to my cohort of students] is because I'm only a [cohort] advisor, so I see my students, but I'm actually not super engaged with the whole picture... but I only barely know our hall director.

She expressed the significance of knowing the one whose "boots are on the ground" (i.e. the hall director) and felt that she did not have a clear picture of how the community was developing because she was not in regular contact with the HD, if at all. She felt this

distance because she was returning from sabbatical the previous year and since the start of the current academic year, had missed several cohort faculty advisor meetings. Dolly found value in the hall director role because that person could contribute to students' holistic experience at Oak:

I think the residence life folks can help faculty understand what is happening in students' lives outside of their classrooms, and we [faculty members] can help build bridges to what's happening in their intellectual lives all around campus, inside of classrooms.

During our interview, Dolly also provided insight into power differentials that I had not considered but that may impact the relationship between faculty member and hall director in RLCs. She did not feel as though her relationship with residence life was peer-to-peer, particularly because she had more power in her faculty world than the hall directors have in theirs.

I have more power over my destiny as a faculty member than a hall director has over theirs... classes do not happen without me. I'm not dispensable... In some ways, I don't feel like I'm in any type of precarious position... But I don't feel like the residence life structure is at all structured in the same way. And so if we're functioning as total peers here, but in our separate worlds our powers are very different, that's interesting.

This power differential appeared in various ways throughout my conversation with Dolly as well as throughout other participants' interviews.

Pam. Pam arrived a few minutes late to our interview, blowing in with an air of disorganization one would expect from someone who is habitually tardy. She wore her hair

in a hair claw, but wisps of it fell around her face. She carried a leather messenger bag, from which she pulled a large, manila file folder filled with RLC-related documents she had printed and begun collecting for future reference. Pam was the least experienced participant in this study, both in terms of her advisory role of a cohort of communications students in Sugartree Neighborhood (pseudonym) and in her experience as a faculty member at Oak. She had been at the university for less than one year at the time of our interview, during which time she also served as the cohort advisor. Her faculty position at Oak was her first employment position in higher education, which provided another unique perspective on her role within the RLC program and her relationship with the residence life staff. During our hour-long interview, she had difficulty articulating the purpose and roles of residence life staff and her perception of residence life was limited to day-to-day logistics and operations. Pam's interview also highlighted a theme of learning in terms of how involvement in the RLC program contributed to faculty growth.

A few times, Pam alluded to not having enough time: time for the full two hours set aside for our interview; not having the time to learn more about what residence life does; not wanting to spend time on the weekends at student engagement events; and that she had her calendar booked weeks in advance. There was not necessarily a reference to the time that was expected of her as a cohort advisor, but I perceived that her fixation with time was more that she generally had limited time and wanted to spend it efficiently. She stressed that she was very busy, which seemed to be an element of Oak culture as it was also mentioned several times in other participants' interviews. I also found it interesting that Pam considered one of her responsibilities to develop the community identity within her cohort of communications students. Community identity seems to represent a concept that takes a

significant amount of investment – and time. At the same time, she spoke of *not* having the time to dedicate to the community and that she appreciated that she did not have to address the deeper challenges of students' lives, particularly roommate conflicts – that was residence life's lane.

General Observations

Both Pam and Waylon expressed a disconnect between what is expected of them (engaging and building relationships with residents of their communities) and faculty members' perceptions that students were not receptive to their efforts to meet these expectations. This led me to wonder how this reality affects the perception residence life had of faculty members' abilities to foster intellectual engagement in RLCs. Waylon, Patsy, Reba, Hank, Dolly, and Pam all described themselves as *learners* in their roles within their respective neighborhoods or cohorts – learning about the personal stressors that students bring to class, about how to connect with students on deeper levels, and about adapting their own pedagogy within the classroom.

Thematic cohort faculty advisors. Throughout the interviews with participants, I sensed that thematic cohort advisors – June, Dolly, and Pam – had an idea of the larger picture of Oak's RLC program but may not have fully understood how they contributed to it – they just knew that their thematic cohorts were initiatives within the larger picture of the total residential campus effort. The cohort advisors' descriptions of residence life were limited to addressing roommate conflicts and event logistics, but their real focus was on their smaller cohort of students within the neighborhoods. Because of this distance between the larger picture and advisors' focus on the smaller cohort, advisors had a difficult time defining

the role of residence life staff members as more than administrators and their conversations concentrated more on how participants contributed to student learning as cohort advisors.

An ethos of busyness. Almost immediately upon arriving on Oak's campus, during participant interviews, I perceived an ethos of busyness. This was confirmed by several participants, including Waylon, who described an "innovation culture" in reference to the busyness of campus life for students, staff, and faculty members: "Part of it might be the culture of Oak where we're on to the next new thing." Pam and Reba both alluded to the struggle to engage students who were simply too busy to participate in neighborhood or thematic cohort activities.

During my time on campus and on my campus tour, I observed an expectation that students be hyper-engaged – so involved in their experience at Oak that they have little time to spend outside of curricular and cocurricular pursuits. Students are encouraged to engage in multiple ways in both their curricular and their cocurricular endeavors. During my campus tour, an admissions video showcased ways in which students could get involved by joining one of the university's 200 student organizations, conducting research with faculty members, studying abroad, and living on campus. Even the students' time in the residence halls seemed busy; for instance, during her interview Reba mentioned a residence life initiative during the first six weeks of the fall semester that attempted to foster engagement in its residents. Instead, Reba explained:

What it ended up being was busy busy busy busy event event event event busy busy busy busy. And so... we had students who would come to a dinner, stop in for 15 minutes, start a conversation and say, "Oh I have another club to go to, I gotta go,"

and so students were coming late. They were coming early. They couldn't stick for a full hour...

Pam had a similar experience when attempting to engage students in her communications cohort:

[Oak] has a million things going on. This is a fabulous school, but even in communications, there's a movie every night at [the campus theater]. There's director screening a documentary every other night at [the campus theater] and they're invited to all these things... There are six speakers a week coming to speak just about communications. It's all I can do to keep up with the activities myself. So I don't want to overburden [the students].

Just as there seemed to be an expectation that students be hyper-engaged at Oak, that expectation appeared to be the same for faculty members and staff, including the study's participants and their hall directors. Patsy cited time as one of the biggest obstacles to her relationship with her HD, "and kind of dealing with the demands that are always before us." Waylon and Hank both indicated that their hall directors' busyness limited access to neighborhood strategic planning and faculty-HD relationship-building. Garth, too, mentioned that his hall director had not been as prominent within his small cohort of students because there were "so many demands on her time."

Many faculty participants recognized the amount of time that their residence life colleagues spent on the job. As Waylon remarked, "I do think [residence life staff is] severely overworked... It's perhaps not the healthiest thing but res life in particular... there's just a lot to do." Reba commented that hall directors were "overworked in [the] position. Often these individuals are not only doing their hall director job but signing up to be an

advisor to a student organization... that is also pulling them in another direction.” Although she expressed this sentiment, Reba also identified busyness as a norm of residence life: “In residence life the feeling is if... more needs to get done, then you need to show up and do it. But [as a faculty member] I’m stretched across campus...” Hank affirmed this sentiment when describing his HD’s lack of accessibility:

I’m like, when do you get actual community work done? [The HD’s] calendar is crazy. I’m like, can we just cool it with the meetings... Although the joke around here is that [Oak University] is Hebrew for meeting. So it's a cultural problem here.

This ethos of busyness across campus seemed to impact the relationships among faculty members and residence life staff. Some faculty participants, like Waylon and Hank, felt that their hall directors’ accessibility was limited because residence life was too busy for them to connect. Other participants, like Reba and Pam, felt, in Reba’s terminology, “stretched thin” across campus and did not have the time to dedicate to their relationships with residence life staff members. There also seemed to be a disconnect between some faculty participants’ feelings toward students’ busyness and residence life’s initiatives to encourage more involvement from its residents. This disconnect could have been a barrier to developing stronger collaborations between faculty members and their residence life partners.

Themes Resulting from Data Analysis

Codes are “nothing more than labels until they are analyzed” (Saldaña, 2015, p. 44). Throughout the several cycles of analysis, I relied heavily on the guidance of Saldaña (2015) and his coding manual. I utilized generic, open coding to “break in” the data (p. 76). Once I became familiar with the data, I organized these open codes into more structured patterns that

emerged, including values and emotions. During the second coding cycle, I practiced more advanced analytic skills to reorganize data coded through the first cycle methods. I merged data that were conceptually similar and recoded with more accurate words or phrases (p. 234). I also assessed codes used infrequently for utility in the larger coding scheme and removed marginal or redundant categories. I used MAXQDA throughout this cyclical process and at the end of these cycles, I had five themes with several subthemes, which are presented in Table 3 below. Column headers indicate themes with associated subthemes in the column space below. I used my central research question and sub-questions to organize the final themes and subcodes.

Table 3

Presentation of Themes and Subcodes

Roles	Processes	Relationships	Best Practices	Other
educator	co-constructing organizational boundary spanning <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • conflicting expectations and ambiguity of role • technical expert and intermediary tricky to navigate	collegial frustrating <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • age/professional experience • administrative barriers 	fostering awareness of student life keeping the pulse collaboration	“hired help”

After identifying these themes, I created thematic charts (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2018) to illustrate the logical processes to ensure credibility. These charts can be found in Appendix F. I present and support these five themes in the following paragraphs. Themes are supported with relevant quotes from faculty participants. As a reminder, faculty

participants were speaking to the roles of, their relationships with, and best practices of residence life professionals working with them in RLCs.

Theme 1: Roles

Educator. When discussing the role of the hall director (HD), the only clear, overarching role that emerged was *educator*, although participants described this in various ways including *teacher*, *mentor*, *counselor*, *supervisor*, and *developer*. Only two participants used *educator* as the role name, but six participants perceived that hall directors played an important part in students' educational experiences at Oak.

I think the hall directors serve a really important role in that they are not related to the academic side and students just sort of vent to them... And so I think hall directors in some ways are that sort of [a] troubleshooter, pal, but also [a] counselor, a person that they can go to, that they can ask honest questions to about life... and they're mentors in a different way... I think in some ways residence life staff and particularly hall directors who get to know the students really well can be can be kind of a bridge person [and] give thoughtful advice. (Dolly, personal communication, April 2, 2019)

Some participants observed their hall directors in "teaching moments":

... I think [the hall director is] always speaking with students in such a way that requires them to sort of do some self-reflection and some thinking about a thing or themselves and I think that's a really helpful exercise. So what I see in those moments, it's fun to watch because [the HD] is forcing [student-staff] to do a little bit more thinking about how they are interacting with their students, engaging their students, what's working, what's not, why, those kinds of things. (Hank, personal communication, April 4, 2019)

Two of the thematic cohort advisors struggled to identify the overarching role of the HDs as educators but listed some of the daily tasks filled by these residence life professional staff members.

My perception is that they assign students' rooms based on their questionnaires or other things, preferences that they've listed, and that they have to calculate how many go where and who will they be... I think they solve problems. They also have to supervise [resident assistants], I think... I don't know that but the [resident assistants] report to them. I'm imagining that there's a resource for emotional support, psychotherapy support, for disaster management of some kind, bad weather management of some kind, the roommate situations, travel... (Pam, personal communication, April 3, 2019)

In addition to serving as educators for residents within their communities, participants viewed the hall directors as educators for faculty members as well. As faculty participants attempted to navigate the world of residence life, many participants expressed that their HDs helped them learn more about student life and residence life's professional norms.

Some of the very first things I said [to my HD] were, "I don't have any idea what you do. You need to tell me what you do, and I don't know anything about student development from a staff life perspective. I don't know what the research literature says. I didn't take any of your classes. I don't know anything about being a [resident assistant]. I am completely ignorant and I'm hoping that you will teach me." And she was, she was a wonderful teacher. (Patsy, personal communication, March 18, 2019)

According to many participants, hall directors provided insight into student development that assisted faculty members in how they approached their work within the neighborhoods or

cohort communities. They also learned things from their HDs that helped shape how the participants engaged with their students in their own classrooms.

I've worked with a lot of students in my role as a faculty member and actually this has been very much informed by residence life, but... when students are going through troubling moments, I can be a good listening ear and I can send them to resources. I don't know how to do a lot of other things and so I see that training in my residence life colleagues and I really value that... (Reba, personal communication, April 1, 2019)

As previously mentioned, the clear, overarching role that participants perceived hall directors to fill was that of an educator. This was not just limited to educating students, but faculty members as well. Hall directors taught faculty participants more about student life from a staff member's perspective and new ways to interact with participants' students in the classroom.

Theme 2: Processes

According to faculty participants, the processes of working with residence life staff members seemed complicated. On one hand, participants felt like the process reflected a partnership in which both members worked to construct the identities of the neighborhoods or cohorts. On the other hand, working with hall directors required unique skills to help participants span boundaries and navigate the associated relationships.

“Co-constructing”. When participants worked with their hall directors, they felt as though they were partners in building their communities – everything from creating the climate of their residential communities to planning opportunities for their students to be engaged.

... the expectation is that [the HD] and I as a faculty would kind of co-construct the climate of the community together. We still have separate job descriptions, but the overlap between us is determining what the nature of our community is going to be like and so I think the big expectation from res life is that I work in collaboration with the... hall director. (Patsy, personal communication, March 18, 2019)

In both her roles as an interim faculty director and as a cohort advisor, Dolly identified certain responsibilities that she shared with her HD. Although she and her hall director may have fulfilled these responsibilities differently, she believed that made them a stronger pair.

... personal mentoring [of students] and also growing the personal intellectual life of the community, those are those are shared [responsibilities]. It's everybody's job but the approach that they may take to it is different. So my view of how to grow the intellectual life of the community will be rounded out by the person in residence life who's like, yeah, students are not going to do that, and their view of sort of how to promote activities may be rounded out by my sort of like, okay, how could we make this more thought-provoking? So we complete each other in some ways... we have different strengths. We have different training and so how we complete each other... (Dolly, personal communication, April 2, 2019)

Organizational boundary spanning. Participants often spoke of their experiences as having to navigate “the other world” of residence life – a world in which they lived only part-time. For most participants, their involvement in the RLCs was the first time they were exposed to residence life’s world and as I came to learn, the processes of working with residence life staff required faculty participants to reach across the usual organizational

boundaries, essentially to act as boundary spanners between residence life and academic affairs (Weerts & Sandmann, 2010).

So as a faculty member, I think most of us don't even think about the residence halls, it's just what they [residence life] do over there and it's just something I never even thought about so it wasn't like I had thoughts or feelings about what [the HD] does or who they are or their role in the university even. [Oak's] academic affairs is so separated from our student affairs... and so it was as if I lived in a world that never intersected with student affairs or residence life. (Patsy, personal communication, March 18, 2019)

Faculty participants had to learn how to translate the language of residence life. They were aided by the director of academic initiatives and the study's key informant, Loretta.

So the lingo, the jargon in student life is different than the jargon in the different disciplines in academic affairs. And the expectations in academic affairs are very different than the expectations in student life. Everything from, you know, the dress code to how you navigate the hierarchy in one division versus the other division... So then oftentimes I'll have to do that translation. (Loretta, personal communication, April 4, 2019)

Being boundary spanners required the faculty participants to fulfill roles as technical experts and intermediaries, discussed in the next section, and often muddied the waters of expectations and roles.

Technical experts and intermediaries. Faculty participants served as technical experts and intermediaries between residence life and the academic affairs side of the university. They viewed themselves as the “bridge” between residence life and other faculty

members, particularly when encouraging other faculty members to become engaged in the RLC program.

So I bring [to the relationship] disciplinary expertise and my research in the scholarship of teaching and learning, so how students learn, how to train students to think critically. I also bring knowledge of my colleagues' work. So thinking about the people who might be able to bring an interesting conversation or talk about something stimulating with students that my colleagues in residence life may not be aware of... then I'm the person who's going to reach out because faculty members may not respond to residence life staff that they don't know... faculty members can bring in other faculty members because if I write to somebody in the school of communications, they'll probably know who I am. But if my hall director writes to somebody in the school of communications, they may have no idea who they are, and they may not even know what a hall director is. So I think it's a faculty job to build the bridges to other faculty. Build the bridges to academic departments. Build the bridges to disciplinary knowledge. (Dolly, personal communication, April 2, 2019)

Reba had similar thoughts on being the bridge between the classroom experience and students' residential environments, something she viewed as an important contribution to her engagement with residence life staff.

I bring the rest of the university's perspective. I have been shocked in this role seeing how divided the university is between student affairs and academic affairs. Most faculty have no clue. No clue what goes on in student affairs... [I also know] what students are doing in the classroom, the classroom rhythms. What other faculty members think about students, being able to kind of bring some of those perspectives

into residence life, the way students are acting [in the classroom], I can bring it to residence life and similarly, and perhaps more so because I see [the student] world outside of the classroom, I'm able to bring that into the classroom space. (Reba, personal communication, April 1, 2019)

When working with his hall director to plan monthly dinners for the neighborhood residents, Hank said, “It’s my job to make sure... that the faculty are invited and are participants in the conversations [with residents].” Here, Hank’s explicit role in the relationship with his HD was to ensure other faculty members were present at the events and were engaged with the students.

Waylon found himself acting as a sort of conduit with other faculty members as he spoke with them about his work in the RLC program.

I don't know if the average faculty member knows much about it [the faculty director position]. To be honest I don't think so. My anecdotal conversations with colleagues kind of suggest that's not the case. They don't think about that. It's not that they don't value it because when I start to explain some of it, they say wow, okay yeah, that's important. (Waylon, personal communication, April 2, 2019)

Conflicting expectations and ambiguity of roles. Participants expressed examples of conflicting expectations and ambiguity surrounding their unique campus roles, perhaps partly created by differing expectations in the two different worlds and cultures of residence life and academics. There seemed to be a particular conflict regarding how much time they were expected to dedicate to the RLCs. Faculty participants felt as though the expectations outlined in their RLC job descriptions – job descriptions that had been crafted by both

residence life and academic affairs – conflicted with the expectations imposed on them by residence life.

The faculty [director] is supposed to be, give or take, about one-sixth of our full-time position. So I'm constantly also adding [hours], as I think about [RLC commitments] I'm going okay, I need to pull away or I'm going to get too invested and pull away from my other duties that Oak pays me to do. (Waylon, personal communication, April 2, 2019)

This expectation emerged several times throughout my interviews with participants and was the common theme across faculty directors and cohort advisors, like June.

And maybe that's a beef of mine, is [being] respectful of time. So recognizing that we're [faculty] not going to read 50 emails a day from you [residence life] because you know, we have other jobs. Our contract is not to do residential life. Our contract is to teach and so I think respecting that, respecting our time, and again, aligning expectations and reality of you know, we can't be a full-time advisor because we have to teach, we have service, we have research... But valuing time in terms of, if you send out an email and say the deadline's tomorrow, we might not necessarily have time to do that because it's not our full-time job. So I think there's some tension in recognizing what our multitude of roles are... (June, personal communication, April 1, 2019)

Reba voiced one of the more explicit cultural differences between faculty and residence life staff: her perception was that in residence life, staff members work until the job is done, regardless of how many hours it takes or hours they have already worked.

If I'm only spending six hours a week and four of those hours are doing the logistical work [of events], then I have no time left over for the intellectual work, but I'm brought in to do the intellectual work and people really balk, especially in residence life, when I'm like that... I'm not paid to do that. The best use of my time is not making flyers. I'm a faculty member. I have all of this stuff that I can bring. If the best use of my time is not making flyers, then it sounds like I'm not [being a] part of the team. It sounds like I'm not, you know, why not do more? Because in Residence Life the feeling is if more needs to get done, then you need to show up and do it. But I'm stretched across campus and I'm really, really trying to be mindful of, am I the best person to do this? (Reba, personal communication, April 1, 2019)

As is common in the role of boundary spanners, participants felt their positions in residence life could be ambiguous. When asked if responsibilities were discussed explicitly, Waylon answered,

I think they were explicit. Like I know when I go back and look at the job description, it's pretty much all there... Even after my orientation in early August, I really felt like I didn't know what the position was and to be honest I still don't know. I just kind of fit within it but I don't think that that's a failing of residence life here at Oak or of the position... There's so much variability in [the faculty director position] that even what was explained to me now at times I'm like, oh I get it or okay, that doesn't apply to me. (Waylon, personal communication, April 2, 2019)

Although faculty involvement was a key piece of the RLC program at Oak, cohort faculty advisors were not necessarily involved in strategic planning and communicated a sense of distance from the residence life department. These participants in particular seemed to have

more difficulty communicating the value of their roles in the RLC program and in what they brought to the partnership with residence life. June felt she lacked direction when it came to her contribution to the big picture of the RLC program in her role as a cohort advisor.

Maybe that's what I'm missing. I feel like we have this kind of surface level [understanding]. I know what the vision is. I know what the expectations are, but the actual execution, I'm not sure that that's necessarily getting back and helping to frame the next strategic vision. So I think there's a conversation that's missing between individual pieces and administrative pieces and part of that is because of how things are structured, so we have all of these other roles, hall director, faculty in-residence, community advisory council members who aren't [cohort] advisors, and so there's [sic] lots of roles and I think the value and meaning of those roles sometimes gets lost in the bureaucracy of hierarchy. (June, personal communication, April 1, 2019).

Despite the expectation that they contribute to the intellectual engagement of the RLC program, faculty participants expressed the perception that, sometimes, residence life staff did not know what to do with the faculty participants, at least in a meaningful way.

[Residence life says] share your expertise with the students. Maybe we should be sharing our expertise with the res life staff... I don't know that they've ever really asked about my research... and what it could teach residence life. I know that other colleagues in student affairs have been really interested in my work... and they've asked me to speak to student affairs, [but] residence life has never asked about my expertise so that could be something where you know, they hired us for a reason but then they don't think about that reason once they've got us in the job and what they might learn from [us]. (Reba, personal communication, April 1, 2019)

Tricky to navigate. Participants found some processes tricky to navigate as they tried to work with their hall directors. In some ways, faculty participants felt a power differential that required their sensitivity to navigate as they attempted to build peer-to-peer relationships with their hall directors that reached across an organizational and cultural divide.

The [faculty director and HD] roles I understand a little better from a power dynamics perspective... I didn't appreciate quite how much that [the faculty director] role has this kind of perceived power about it... There's [sic] things that faculty directors can do that staff can't. (Waylon, personal communication, April 2, 2019)

Reba felt that as the population of faculty directors grew, the group was becoming a “critical mass” that had more influence in how residence life navigated their relationships with the faculty members, particularly when it came to the timelines in which residence life implemented changes.

[Planning] for faculty is nine months to a year in advance and res life will often implement changes to... a couple weeks before [it goes into effect]. [Faculty] just don't operate on that timeline. So they're [residence life] learning and they're learning from the feedback of having kind of a critical mass rather than just a couple faculty directors. There's I think nine live-in faculty, somewhere around there. So because there's so many of us, now they're really able to hear like no, this isn't a one off thing.

No, it isn't a personality thing. (Reba, personal communication, April 1, 2019)

Loretta, the study's key informant and director of academic initiatives, spoke from an administrator's perspective about how the faculty members and hall directors work together. One of her roles was to help the faculty members navigate the processes that seemed clear to

residence life staff but that faculty members needed translated. This included communicating within the organizational hierarchy.

And the expectations in academic affairs are very different than the expectations in [residence] life. Everything from you know, the dress code to how you navigate the hierarchy in one division versus the other division and so oftentimes I will help translate, for example... if a faculty member is living in residence and goes and talks to [the vice president of student affairs] to get some immediate feedback on something that requires student life partnership or even res life partnership, rather than going first to their hall director, or even to an associate director in residence life or to the director of residence life... I have to sometimes explain how that feels to a student life staff member when a faculty member does that. And a faculty member will be like, "What are you talking about? I just needed to ask a question. How would that be offensive?" And I have to explain the way the hierarchy works in student life and that if you don't work up and down that chain, you could not only offend somebody, but you could get somebody in trouble unwittingly, which is not what you're trying to do. (Loretta, personal communication, April 4, 2019)

Reba found it tricky to navigate the process of giving feedback to residence life professional staff, who she perceived to be unreceptive to critique.

I think residence life would prefer not to hear the challenges. They would prefer that you just stick your head down and figure out a way to make it work and don't talk about the systemic [challenges]... I think they would rather have us put our head down and fix it rather than gripe about it not working. (Reba, personal communication, April 1, 2019)

The process of engaging students and assessing their learning seemed to require thoughtful navigation for Garth, who was able to compare his perspective as a former student affairs administrator to his current role as a faculty member.

...there's [sic] some things that I think that [residence life] does that can fall by the wayside and I'll be honest with you, if I have to sit through one more icebreaker, I just think I will be physically sick. I understand why sometimes they're necessary, but... I think sometimes student affairs tends to infantilize residents and their own staff. I think approaching learning in a serious way and... to concentrate on what's important and to do it in a serious manner.... this is as much hall directors as it is maybe industry wide, you know, [student affairs] spends so much time, *so* much time talking about learning objectives and our rubrics... and I'm telling you 90% of that stuff never happens, is never looked at it again. And I think it detracts from real work we could doing. (Garth, personal communication, April 19, 2019)

Sometimes, faculty participants had to adjust their own expectations as they worked with their hall directors. The personalities of the HDs impacted the way faculty participants and their residence life partners worked together, particularly if the participant had had experiences with more than one HD, as in Patsy's case.

I've had two different hall directors and my relationship with those two different people is *really* different. We all have the same job descriptions. I mean, I had the same job description with both of them and they had the same job description as each other, but because they have very different personalities, I think we have very different types of relationships and it's not wrong, it's not right, it's not bad, it just is. And so I find that the work that I'm doing with this second hall director feels very

different than the work that I did with the first hall director. And again, the job descriptions haven't changed but the nature of the personalities of the people have changed and so... I've had to acknowledge the differences in the personalities and one of the things that I actively have had to do is, you know, this new person is not the [other HD] and I can't expect her to be and I have to adjust accordingly and have different expectations to allow a different kind of relationship to grow out of that.

(Patsy, personal communication, March 18, 2019)

Theme 3: Relationships

Faculty participants seemed to feel that their relationships with their hall directors – and other professional staff members in residence life – were complicated to navigate. Participants described their relationships with HDs in positive terms that indicated a level of collegiality, including elements of camaraderie and mutual respect. In some ways, though, these relationships could be frustrating to manage as participants attempted to build and maintain connections with their HDs.

Collegial. Overall, participants felt a sense of collegiality with their hall directors. Many cited their attempts to learn about their HDs as both professionals and as humans, which created a sense of support for the participants as they navigated the world of residence life.

[One of the things I have learned] is always remembering to start with the personal, doing check-ins [with the hall director]. How are you doing? How's life? So that it's not just a job, because of the type of partnership we have and the fact that we're coming from kind of different worlds means that in some ways we have to be friends first and have an open communication channel and then move into the job, because

we're both live-in and that can be intensive. So really getting to know each other and trying to go out for dinner with our families and connecting as people has been really productive for that. (Reba, personal communication, April 1, 2019)

Participants also communicated that the support could not be one-sided – that they had to be support systems for their hall directors as well.

I also think it's just important in the human relationship. I want to be a good colleague to [the HD]. I want to support them. I want them to grow and most of the time faculty members are older than the hall directors... and you know, I don't know who's mentoring [the hall directors], and they're doing such important work and I don't know if they feel like they're growing. (Dolly, personal communication, April 2, 2019)

It seemed that learning more about the HDs' professional perspectives was just as beneficial for the relationship as learning about their lives outside of work.

... we would share aspects of our [professional] lives that were very different. So for example, she'd [the HD] want to know about what's it like to be on the tenure track, what's it like to apply for tenure and go through that process. So I shared that with her and I wanted to know about what it was like to have a master's degree in student affairs. What kind of classes did you take? What kind of things did you read? I asked her to recommend some of her favorite readings to me and I would read them, and we would talk about them together. So we just spent time getting to know each other. I guess you can equate it to dating and, just learning about each other's lives and from the get-go we knew we would never be the other [person], but we knew

together we could be something more powerful than either of us separately. (Patsy, personal communication, March 18, 2019)

Another collegial element that emerged was that participants respected their hall directors for the quality of work they produced as well as their level of investment into their communities.

[The HD has] a high degree of professionalism. I have a great deal of respect for her as a professional... she's firm but she's developmental in her approach. So she's very professional, very competent. She's also very... interested in social justice issues. I admire that in her... She gets what we're trying to do here in terms of integrating the life of the mind with the daily life of the students... So I really appreciate that about her. (Garth, personal communication, April 19, 2019)

Overall, faculty participants thought highly of their hall directors and generally attributed the strength of their relationships to their HDs' job performance and personalities.

I think the other thing that makes the relationship work again is she's just very good at all those little pieces of her job. Sometimes even the things you wouldn't think too much about. There's... a lot of planning and other logistics that go into pulling things off and it's just nice to know that there's someone there who's thinking through a lot of that because I think we can both fill in gaps... And she's also just generally, she's just pleasant person to be around and talk to which also makes it quite easy. And she's incredibly smart and thoughtful and so I think she's always thinking about opportunities that would really help the student. (Hank, personal communication, April 4, 2019)

As participants described their relationships with hall directors, they seemed to acknowledge that for the relationship to truly be a partnership, trust and confidence must be mutual.

I think [the HD] expects me to be honest with her. I think she expects me... to truly be a partner... I think [the HDs] want to know that that [the faculty member] is a partner and I think maybe it's for some of that hierarchical reason, like... you are a partner in this, you are not outside of this, you're not above me, like I don't report to you, that we are truly partners in whatever we're doing in this community. So I think that is a huge expectation. (Hank, personal communication, April 4, 2019)

Frustrating. Although participants described their relationships with the hall directors in very positive terms, there were also components of the relationships that were frustrating. Age and professional experience and administrative barriers emerged from the data.

Age and professional experience. Unprompted, Waylon was the first participant to suggest that differences in age and professional experience between faculty members and HDs may be a factor in the relationship between the two. At Oak University, hall directors were young professionals – in their mid-to-late 20s – and were relatively new in their professional careers, about one to five years' experience in a full-time position. Faculty directors and cohort advisors, on the other hand, were older, had significantly more years of experience in a professional environment, and often had family commitments to balance with their professional obligations.

... so often faculty members are coming at [the position] from a different point in their professional careers than hall directors, at least at Oak, and I wonder the role that that plays in various interactions. I'm not an old person by any means but I'm definitely far removed now from the students and from the hall director's role. Age, you know age in general and also all our hall directors, most are less than 30 I think,

but faculty directors range [in age] and most of us are probably more like the 40-ish to 50-ish area. A lot of us have families. (Waylon, personal communication, April 2, 2019)

Age and professional experience could also play a part in participants' expectations of their hall directors.

I think that that can be kind of a learning curve for faculty who are working as faculty directors with hall directors who are pretty much at the bottom, but they're doing the boots-on-the-ground work... and they're young. So you don't give them the expertise as you give to the dean of student life, but at the same time they are aware of things that not everybody is necessarily aware of sometimes and of course, they don't always make the best decisions. We don't all make great decisions, but I think it's important.

(Dolly, personal communication, April 2, 2019)

Loretta, the key informant, iterated how these elements can shape the relationship and the general expectations of the faculty-hall director partnership.

We have faculty members that are in very different places in their careers. Some of them are junior [faculty] but still when they're junior they're often much older, usually by at least a decade, than the student life professionals that we're hiring for those live-in roles. Many of [the HDs] are fresh out of grad school and they can be as young as 24. So there's a very different exposure to professional expectations that each one has had... We also have to have conversations with student life staff sometimes when they, because of their greenness, may be [avoiding] conflict [with] the faculty member and may have their own issues in terms of feeling like an imposter or feeling like they're not as smart as the faculty member because a faculty member has a PhD

and so they will avoid conflict. So we sometimes have some issues with the different levels of experience of being in a professional working environment and what that means in terms of basic expectations. (Loretta, personal communication, April 4, 2019)

Faculty participants also felt misunderstood in some ways, because hall directors did not seem to acknowledge that their faculty partners had full-time jobs at the institution. This failure to recognize could indicate that as new professionals, hall directors were not aware that this was an expectation.

I also have this other full-time job at the university that isn't asked about and isn't part of [the residence life] world. So I see the hall director's day-to-day world. I'm in some ways asked to live in that world. [Hall directors] don't see my day-to-day job. Very rarely does anyone [in residence life] know about or care about my full-time job at Oak. (Reba, personal communication, April 1, 2019)

Administrative barriers. Participants cited several examples of administrative barriers that hindered them as they attempted to build and maintain relationships among residence life professionals. One reoccurring barrier was the number of meetings that hall directors were expected to attend.

I'm trying to get time with [the hall director]... but initially I couldn't because [residence life] had him programmed with training all day for two weeks and I cannot develop a relationship with this person if you continually pull him out of the community for all of this other stuff. I understand the training is important. But how are we going to work or how's he going to work in this community if he's never here? Stop the meetings for a minute, allow relationships to flourish. They meet too

much... I'm like, when do you get actual community work done? I didn't understand it... his calendar is crazy... I'm like, can we just cool it with the meetings and allow relationships to flourish and develop for a moment... (Hank, personal communication, April 4, 2019)

When asked about what challenged the relationship with his hall director, Garth's response was only that, "I know this sounds minor, but sometimes it gets mildly irritating, is finding a time when all of us can meet. [The HD] is so scheduled with stuff..."

An administrative barrier to faculty members' fulfilling their roles was paperwork and other "housekeeping" items that participants were expected to complete and provide residence life. During our interview, for example, Pam produced a large file folder from her bag, stuffed with papers that were related to the RLC program and her specific cohort of communications students.

I got a lot of pieces of paper like this with too much information that I'm not gonna go into. I have the handbook... and then we have to create a syllabus, which I thought was not helpful to anybody because it contains events that [students] already hear about through other means. It seemed duplicating work that the students probably never read... There was a lot of housekeeping and I was just like, okay I have minimal time to do this housekeeping... I haven't had time to do this stuff. I'll do the minimal paperwork I have to do. I just want to connect to students, make sure they're okay... (Pam, personal communication, April 3, 2019)

Having limited access to the administrative knowledge also hindered faculty members' abilities to perform their jobs and further frustrated those who tried to work with residence life professional staff to develop their residential communities.

[Hiring a] lead student mentor is one that is entirely my responsibility and I wasn't very well trained on it... that was an area where residence life, I think, had assumptions for things that [faculty] knew how to do, it was like, okay time to pick your lead student mentor and we're like, wait what? How are we supposed to find that? What is the position even about, what's the stipend? So it's like I'm doing the hiring but I don't actually know the details because [the details] are held in residence life... (Reba, personal communication, April 1, 2019)

The data indicates that the relationships between the participants and their residence life counterparts could be complicated. On one hand, participants described these relationships in collegial terms and seemed to work as partners to develop their communities. On the other hand, there were many elements of these relationships that caused frustration, including age and professional experience and administrative barriers that hindered relationship development.

Theme 4: Best Practices

Participants also discussed practices of their hall directors that strengthened their relationships. Three best practices emerged from the participants' conversations: fostering awareness of student life, keeping the pulse, and collaboration.

Fostering awareness of student life. Participants discussed that prior to their experiences in the RLC program, they were not aware of students' lives outside of the classroom. As faculty members engaged in the RLC program, their hall directors were critical in building their awareness that students' performance in class was often impacted by their lives outside of class.

...you see students in a classroom, that's one environment. But when you see them outside of that and you understand what they're carrying with them all the time, emotionally, mentally, you become a little more empathetic and understanding. When they need help, you're not as quick to just go, well, that's too bad, figure it out. It's more like, alright, let's see what we can do to help you get to a point where you can be successful, and I think I've learned that from both my hall directors because I've seen how they interact with the students... (Hank, personal communication, April 4, 2019)

Dolly expressed a similar sentiment:

I think the residence life folks can help faculty understand what is happening in students' lives outside of their classrooms, and [faculty members] can help build bridges to what's happening in [students'] intellectual lives inside of classrooms. And the more faculty who are involved in sort of multiple aspects of students' lives, the better it is for students, I feel like. (Dolly, personal communication, April 2, 2019)

Keeping the pulse. Along with fostering an awareness of student life, participants trusted hall directors to keep a pulse on their neighborhoods or cohorts. Faculty participants relied on their HDs to know what was happening in their communities, from roommate conflicts to room changes, that could be impacting residents' academic performance and overall wellbeing. According to Waylon, "The hall director is really the one who has to kind of have a thumb on the pulse... [to be] the heartbeat of this community and deeply understand it."

Hall directors gave the faculty participants a sense of comfort knowing that residents were receiving personal, social, and emotional support and that the faculty members could focus on student learning.

So just being able to see [student life] rhythms and getting to know students in [residence halls] has really caused me to chill out and I realize how little my classes matter in the scheme of things and when you realize how little your class matters... So rather than making my class about rules and training students for adulthood, I realize they're getting trained for adulthood, so I can just make my class about my class and my class is now about learning. (Reba, personal communication, April 1)

As a cohort advisor, Dolly felt somewhat disconnected from her small community of students because she did not have a relationship with her hall director, who could help her read the pulse of the community.

In some ways I think more communication between [cohort] advisors and hall directors... when there are human things happening on the hall would actually be good... it might be nice to know, okay, there's something up, reach out to the whole community. [Those students] might need more TLC right now. (Dolly, personal communication, April 2, 2019)

Collaboration. Participants cited hall directors' practices that fostered collaboration, including a commitment to a shared purpose and an interdependent relationship (Leary et al., 2018). Faculty participants and hall directors seemed to both be committed to their students. "[We] just had the same idea... that neither one of us could be fully invested in the community if we're not both working together to put something in place that benefits all of our students." (Hank, personal communication, April 4, 2019)

The interdependent relationship between participants and their hall directors was often characterized by shared decision making.

...one of the things that we realized, and we laughed about this... [the HD] would have some ideas and I would have some ideas and somehow what we ended up with wasn't either one of our ideas. It was something different that we were both surprised with and we both had this kind of adventurous spirit that we would try something... in all the time we spent together, I don't know that either one of us could say this thing was “our” thing. It always a thing that we had truly co-constructed and that was really fun. That was a really fun part of the relationship. (Patsy, personal communication, March 18, 2019)

Throughout data collection and analysis, I learned that there were things the hall directors did that strengthened their relationships with their faculty collaborators. These practices allowed the participants to be more intentional about their roles in the RLCs and provided easier avenues in which to maintain positive, working partnerships with their HDs.

Theme 5: Other

One theme that emerged from my conversations with faculty members as important but that did not fit into the original research questions as posed, was one of “hired help.” The faculty members themselves did not see their HDs as hired help but faculty participants perceived the HD role as being used by others as a conduit to carry out tiresome tasks for little compensation.

“Hired help”. Faculty seemed to feel so positively about their experiences with the work of hall directors that they resorted to a type of mediator or advocacy position wherein they wished to call a halt to how others in the campus community treated hall directors.

Faculty participants perceived an injustice or unfairness about the way their HDs were seen almost as “hired help” by others on campus.

I absolutely respect the hall director. And probably more so seeing the work that they do, seeing the day-to-day demands, seeing the day-to-day work, the after-hours work... [the HD] position to me feels like it's built on young professionals because it asks a lot more than they're paid to do. I am concerned about the position actually... just thinking about labor because often hall directors will put in 14-, 16-hour days and then they'll also have to work on the weekends and then they don't actually get any overtime pay or extra vacation. And so it just doesn't seem like it's a sustainable position and that's true. We usually have two to three years before a [HD] leaves the position here. High burnout. High turnover. Sometimes they stick around for less time. (Reba, personal communication, April 1, 2019)

Although Garth was a former student affairs professional, his role as a faculty in residence (FIR) gave him more insight into the hall director position.

I probably have grown in respect for [the HD position] actually because in every single institution I've been in there has been a divide of sorts between student affairs people and faculty. So I've been in both worlds now and it's not easy to be in a hall director position and to some faculty, to be taken seriously... it's tough when you start a position where you're not exactly perceived as an equal... I have tried to be cognizant of that in all of my dealings with student affairs people and not to say, “[HD], this isn't this isn't my responsibility, *you* do this.” (Garth, personal communication, March 19, 2019)

Garth also noted that among the faculty members involved in the RLC program,

Oak is the first place I've been where there's the highest level of regard for the hall directors than in some other places I've been. I can't speak for all the faculty here, but the ones that I'm most close with I certainly have not sensed that “they're the hired help” attitude. (Garth, personal communication, March 19, 2019)

Participants described their HDs as *overworked*, *undervalued*, and the “yes people”, indicating that residence life professional staff members said “yes” to tasks or responsibilities that were asked of them, even if those things were not their responsibilities. Waylon wondered if more investment should be directed at developing HDs than faculty positions in the residential communities.

I think the hall director is at the center of each individual community and how they create that space... I mean money isn't always the answer, but I think if we invested in a position... I mean to be honest the [the HD position is] probably more important to [the community] than the faculty [director] because those are the people who really... are on the shop floor every day, sometimes every night. (Waylon, personal communication, April 2, 2019)

Dolly had a particularly interesting insight about the hierarchal nature of residence life and how that may affect how others perceived hall directors on campus.

[Faculty members] are sort of trained to think critically and question authority... and that's not the way things roll on the other side [residence life]. So in some ways that can be confusing for a faculty member who is working with the hall director if that person doesn't necessarily think that that hall director's voice is being heard in the way that it should be by members higher up.... it was something that I encountered a couple of times where I felt like, hmm. This person's contributions are not

necessarily being heard and they're invaluable... I knew that it had something to do with the pecking order. And so I think that that can be kind of a learning curve for faculty who are working as faculty directors with hall directors who are at the bottom, but they're doing the boots-on-the-ground work. (Dolly, personal communication, April 2, 2019)

Summary

From a faculty perspective, the relationships and processes of working with residence life professional staff members can be complicated and frustrating. By the same token, study participants expressed a deep respect for the expertise and investment their hall directors contributed to the RLC partnership, indicating that the relationships and processes can also be beneficial for each other. In the next chapter, I unpack these themes and discuss the implications for research, theory, and practice.

CHAPTER V

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION

Throughout previous chapters, I introduced the purpose of my study, explored literature relevant to academic and student affairs collaborations within the context of residential learning communities (RLCs), identified my data collection and analysis methods, and presented the data and emergent themes. This chapter reports the findings from my study and situates the findings within the current literature on RLC collaborations. These findings address my central research question, “How do RLC-associated faculty members describe the roles of residence life professionals within the context of shared RLCs?” The chapter also addresses the implications these findings have on research, theory, and practice and identifies the limitations of the study. Finally, the chapter concludes with identifying additional gaps in RLC collaboration research and a summary of the study’s findings.

Case Study Findings

The site where this study took place, Oak University (pseudonym), prioritized faculty involvement in its robust residential learning community (RLC) program. While my research question focused on the roles of residence life professionals, the data I collected was the perceptions of the faculty members who collaborated with these professionals. This data provided insight into how faculty members viewed the roles of residence life professional staff within RLCs and how they worked together to foster student learning in a co-curricular environment. In this section, residence life professional staff are referred to as hall directors (HDs).

The findings and sub-findings of this case study are organized by ways in which faculty participants described their experiences working with hall directors in RLCs. This allowed me to best consider the complex nature of the relationships between faculty members and hall directors. This organization also presents findings in a research-to-practice-friendly way that I felt would be most useful for practitioners seeking to improve their RLC programs through strengthening relationships with their faculty collaborators. As a scholar-practitioner, my own professional work drove this study and my hope is that these findings give residence life professionals practical strategies to consider as they build and maintain their RLC programs.

Faculty Members Described Residence Life Professionals as Subject Matter Experts

1. Hall directors informally educated faculty members about student life.

Prior to their involvement with residential learning communities, faculty participants lacked familiarity with student life as an area of professional expertise and with ways in which student *lives* can be leveraged to foster student learning. Faculty members sought

insight from the hall directors with whom they worked and expressed interest in learning more about what students learned outside of class and how their “outside” lives influenced their academic performance. Additionally, faculty participants described “teaching moments” in which they witnessed HDs challenging their students to reflect, communicate, compromise, and confront conflict.

2. Faculty members learned a new discipline.

Faculty participants learned the language and professional norms of residence life that helped them serve as a “bridge” between academic affairs and other faculty members and residence life. Participants also learned new strategies to develop the identities of their neighborhoods or cohorts and how to foster students’ intellectual growth within the residential learning community context. Faculty members expressed a level of confidence in recognizing the importance of addressing students’ holistic development and in knowing the resources to aid students facing non-academic concerns. For many, this confidence was a result of their involvement in the RLC program at Oak.

3. Hall directors kept faculty members informed.

As subject matter experts, HDs were those whose “boots [were] on the ground” and who were in positions to deeply understand the students’ living environments. Faculty participants relied on their hall directors to keep them informed about how students in their neighborhoods or cohorts were developing community among themselves and areas of improvement that faculty members could address. Hall directors kept a pulse on how students in the RLCs were doing and provided this insight to faculty members so they could develop their own strategies to connect with residents.

Faculty Members Described the HD Role as Providing Continuity for the RLCs

1. Faculty members lived with one foot in academia, one foot in residence life.

The worlds of academia and residence life differed in many aspects including expectations, pedagogical philosophies, university commitments, educational backgrounds, and professional norms. Faculty participants translated the language of residence life and served as the “bridge” between academic affairs and other faculty members. Faculty members also indicated that they were busy with responsibilities across campus, including their full-time faculty responsibilities. As such, the time commitment that residence life expected of faculty members in RLC roles may have been unrealistic given faculty members’ various responsibilities elsewhere on campus. Although faculty participants indicated that they did not necessarily have as much time as their residence life counterparts to commit to their roles within the RLC program, they invested by sharing their expertise, putting forth their best efforts to be partners, and showing interest in hall directors’ perspectives and day-to-day tasks.

2. The HD position provided stability regardless of who filled it.

The *faculty* role within Oak’s RLC program lacked defined expectations, processes, and procedures. However, the *HD* position was clear and defined. This helped faculty participants focus on the intellectual engagement of their neighborhoods or cohorts and gave them clarity on what their roles were *not*, including student discipline and student staff supervision. This clarity was not linked to a person, but rather the *position* due to its defined nature. Faculty members could rely on the position to fulfill the day-to-day functions of community development, even during personnel changes/transitions.

Faculty Members Described HDs as Close Partners in Student Learning

1. Relationships varied by team.

Relationships between faculty participants and their hall directors varied in levels of closeness. Individual participants connected differently with their HDs, but for several faculty members these relationships went beyond what a typical faculty member would develop with a student affairs staff member in terms of respect for the HDs' contributions to students' experiences, confidence in the HDs' work, and insight into the personal and professional lives of their HD counterparts. Relationships were influenced by personalities, job performance, trust, peer-to-peer support, reciprocal learning, professional experience, individual characteristics, and duration of time spent in roles associated with the RLC program at Oak.

2. A shared goal of student learning established common ground.

Faculty participants considered themselves partners with hall directors in building the identities and climates of their neighborhoods or cohorts. For many faculty members, they viewed their roles as fostering academic and intellectual enrichment among students in their communities. Participants valued the perspectives that their hall directors brought in terms of student learning and supporting the whole student. Although the faculty members and the HDs came from different worlds and were guided by different philosophies, they were both working to foster student learning. That shared goal gave the relationship its foundation and was the driving force in faculty members' efforts to maintain their relationships with their HDs.

3. Faculty viewed HDs as peers.

Faculty participants wanted to learn about HDs' daily lives to be able to connect with them on a peer-to-peer level and seemed to genuinely care for the people in the HD positions. Faculty members respected the student development expertise the hall directors brought to the partnerships and sought feedback from their HDs in developing strategies to engage residents in co-curricular learning. Faculty respected the skills that HDs demonstrated when helping students navigate college and viewed the hall directors as serving important roles on campus. Although participants were not always able to articulate the hall directors' responsibilities, they acknowledged that the HD position was more than their initial, surface-level understanding of the position.

Discussion of Case Study Findings

There are parallels between the findings of this study and the literature. Results from this study support and, in some cases, contribute to the literature surrounding residential learning communities and collaborations between academic affairs and student affairs divisions.

1. HDs informally educated faculty members about student life.

In 1966, AAUP released its seminal statement on institutional governance that still serves as the basis of shared governance policies at many colleges and universities. According to this statement, faculty members should have a clear representation in decisions related to standards of student competence, curriculum, instructional methods, and "*aspects of student life which relate to their educational processes* [emphasis added]" (AAUP, 1966, p. 378). Although faculty members may have opportunities to influence the aspects of student life directly related to educational processes, their world often lacks a connection to students' lives outside of the classroom that could still strongly impact their learning.

In Philpott and Strange's (2003) case study of faculty and student affairs collaborations, researchers found evidence that student affairs professionals perceived that faculty were detached from students' daily experiences. Faculty participants in this study seemed to support that perception as they did not necessarily know how consider students' lives outside of the classroom in relation to impacts on their academic performance so, in some ways, these faculty members were removed from students' daily experiences at Oak University. In Hank's experience, for example, he gained awareness of student life with the help of the hall directors with whom he worked: "I've learned... how to be a little more empathetic when dealing with students and that's a large part because of [the HDs] ..." (personal communication, April 4, 2019). This suggests that when hall directors work closely with faculty members, they can help faculty consider students' daily experiences through a holistic lens and how students' lives outside the classroom may influence their learning inside the classroom.

Faculty participants appeared to value hall directors' unique contributions toward student learning and held respect for their professional norms, even if they didn't fully understand them. Participants viewed the HDs as experts because of their experiences and educational backgrounds that prepared them for a career in student life. This finding suggests that hall directors can serve as reputable representatives of the student development discipline and should recognize the importance of their roles in helping faculty members become more aware of the issues impacting students' academic success. This also indicates that RLCs – and faculty members' relationships with residence life professional staff members – can help facilitate a more holistic perspective of students through greater awareness of student life outside of the classroom. By viewing students' experiences through

a lens of holistic student development, faculty members – as charged by the AAUP’s statement on institutional governance – and their collaborators can make more informed decisions about students’ educational processes and the ways in which institutions support student learning inside *and* outside the classroom.

2. Faculty members learned a new discipline.

Prior to their the involvement in the RLC program, faculty participants were not aware of what the roles and responsibilities of residence life professionals, including hall directors. In Browne et al.’s (2009) and Peltier’s (2014) explorations of faculty members’ perceptions of student affairs collaborators, evidence suggested similar findings: faculty members were uninformed as to what student affairs professionals did on campus. The faculty participants in this study recognized their involvement with the residential learning community program at Oak as an opportunity to learn new things about student development. From Dolly’s perspective, through her involvement with the RLC program she gained an awareness of “how the student body has evolved, and the different types of concerns that people in residence life are thinking about and how those interact... with the academic lives” of students at Oak (personal communication, April 2, 2019).

Learning this new discipline helped faculty participants re-frame the way they taught in the classroom, *what* they taught, and how they created student-centered policies. Reba in particular expressed a newfound approach that integrated this new student development discipline into her teaching practices. During her interview, she expressed that instead of focusing on classroom rules and “training students for adulthood, I realize they're getting trained for adulthood, so I can just make my class about my class and my class is now about learning” (personal communication, April 1, 2019).

Klein (2000) and Sriram et al. (2011) cited similar changes in mindset – Klein, as a reflection of his experiences as a faculty member living in the residence halls and Sriram et al. in an investigation of faculty experiences in residential learning communities. This suggests that the more faculty members interact with students in multiple environments, the more faculty members can be involved in several aspects of their students' lives and the bigger the benefit to students. This finding also indicates that if faculty members are more aware of what is going on in their students' lives outside of class, the better they can support them as humans and focus on helping individual students be successful *in* their classes. This is supported by findings from Frost et al. (2010), Nesheim, et al. (2007), and Umbach & Wawrzynski (2005), whose studies identified ways in which students benefit from engaging with faculty members outside of the classroom.

In addition to learning more about the field of student affairs and the discipline of student development, faculty participants in this study expressed respect for the work performed by hall directors and conveyed interest in learning more about HDs' knowledge about students' holistic development. That faculty members may lack familiarity with student affairs but express interest in learning about the field has also been found in studies investigating student affairs and academic affairs collaborations, including work from Peltier (2014), Philpott and Strange (2003), and Reger and Hyman (1988).

In their analyses of student affairs and academic affairs collaborations and the barriers that impede them, Arcelus (2011), Brown et al. (2009), Kezar (2001), and Philpott and Strange (2003) cited infrequent contact between the two units, lack of interest about the functions of the other, and competition for students' time as common conflicts. This suggests that frequency of interaction with residence life professional staff may lead faculty

members to build closer and more collaborative relationships with hall directors, an assumption supported by participants in this study. At Oak, the study's faculty participants – particularly faculty directors – indicated that contact with hall directors was frequent and helped faculty members learn more about residence life functions. Additionally, there was no evidence that faculty members “competed” with the HDs for students' time. In fact, faculty members relied on HDs to keep a pulse on the community and to help them develop strategies to engage with students in their communities.

This finding suggests that creating opportunities where faculty members can interact more frequently with residence life staff could increase interest and knowledge about the functions of each other. Additionally, because the HDs and the faculty members worked together to foster student learning within the same residential environment, they did not feel as though they were competing for students' time.

3. Hall directors kept faculty members informed.

According to Sandeen (2004), Umbach and Wawrzynski (2005), and Browne et al. (2009), who discuss the merits of academic affairs and student affairs collaborations, when members of these units combine resources, they can personally witness what research suggests about the impact of college on undergraduate students: that their intellectual development is not separate from their personal development. Similarly, faculty participants in this study interacted with students in residential learning communities and saw fuller pictures of students' collegiate lives rather than disparate experiences they may only have witnessed in formal academic settings. Although they could not dedicate as much time as hall directors, faculty participants in this study wanted to be partners in their students' development. Faculty members only lived in the student life world part-time and recognized

that they were not subject matter experts in student development. As such, they relied on hall directors to keep them informed about their communities and to monitor the pulse of the neighborhoods or cohorts.

Because they were involved in RLCs in addition to teaching, faculty participants had front-row seats to students' experiences at Oak, both inside and outside the classroom. They witnessed how students' circumstances or events in their lives can deeply impact their intellectual development and academic performance. Faculty participants worked with their HDs to ensure students were supported in all aspects of their experiences at Oak and focused their attention on the academic enrichment of their communities. In turn, HDs helped guide the faculty members in developing opportunities that would attract students by providing insight into the culture of a specific community, which faculty felt was critical to their success as RLC faculty affiliates. In this way, faculty members and HDs combined their resources to support students as they navigated college. In terms of the relationship between faculty members and HDs within residential learning communities, this suggests that there must be a high level of confidence in each other's capabilities to fulfill individual roles and that hall directors can be critical to helping faculty members connect with students in their RLCs.

4. Faculty members lived with one foot in academia, one foot in residence life.

Although they were expected to co-construct their communities with the hall directors, faculty members in this study were only expected to live in the residence life world part time – specifically, six hours per week. Time, as well as other structural barriers like office space, ambiguous processes and expectations, and working within the professional norms of residence life, left faculty participants with limited resources to dedicate to their

residential communities and their relationships with their hall directors. These barriers have also been identified in studies exploring faculty experiences in RLCs, like those conducted by Jessup-Anger et al. (2011) and Golde and Pribbenow (2000). Golde and Pribbenow (2000), for example, explored the experiences and motivations of 15 faculty members associated with RLCs and found that the culture of academia plays a large role their involvement in those communities – and can create barriers to relationships with residence life. This suggests that perhaps RLC stakeholders in residence life have expectations of faculty collaborators that are idealistic, given deeply rooted cultural differences and professional expectations. Instead, it may be necessary for residence life stakeholders, including hall directors, to consider more pragmatic strategies to support faculty members asked to navigate both worlds.

Despite these barriers, including limited time and competing professional norms, faculty participants in this study acted as bridges between residence life and other faculty members at Oak. They were the RLCs' connections to Oak faculty members: they invited faculty to events, encouraged other faculty to get involved, and communicated with other faculty about the roles that hall directors and other staff in residence life fill. As Dolly explained, “A live-in faculty director is building a bridge between the academic side of campus and the residential side of campus... they are the person who's got a foot in both worlds...” (personal communication, April 2, 2019).

This finding suggests that faculty members associated with residential learning communities may also serve as boundary spanners. There is limited research in the academe that identifies faculty members as boundary spanners and what is available includes insight into the relationships between a university as an organization and its surrounding community.

A study conducted by Weerts and Sandmann (2010) found that boundary spanners navigated new professional norms and languages as they attempted to establish effective lines of communication between their universities and the communities. Similarly, faculty participants in this study had to navigate the professional norms of residence life, including expectations and jargon *even while they remained within the university*. This process was aided by Loretta, the key informant of this study, who acted as a problem solver between the two worlds of residence life and academia. This problem-solving role, identified in Weerts and Sandmann's (2010) multi-case study that examined boundary spanning practices of research universities, was critical to developing partnerships between the RLCs and faculty by building rapport among stakeholders; facilitating two-way dialogue; helping faculty members negotiate expectations and cultural barriers; and "speaking the language" of residence life.

Literature relevant to residential learning communities often identifies professional norms within academic affairs that impedes the success of RLC collaborations, but rarely identifies norms within *residence life* that may also get in the way of successful RLC programs. Specifically, a professional norm that often impacted the relationship between faculty participants and their hall directors was the abundance of meetings the HDs were expected to attend, thereby reducing their accessibility. The participants did not indicate that the HDs were at fault for this, but rather recognized it as a professional norm in residence life. This could have been highlighted because faculty members tend to work more independently and do not work in collaborations as often with other departments on campus. This culture of meetings is common in the residence life world, perhaps because many of these organizations are expected to collaborate across campus, thus creating a need for

everyone to meet regularly to discuss progress. However, this suggests that it may be worthwhile for residence life departments to identify specific practices, policies, or responsibilities that may distract hall directors from building stronger relationships with faculty members associated with RLCs.

In their longitudinal study involving labor union negotiations, Friedman and Podolny (1992) found that people acting as boundary spanners represent the perceptions, expectations, and ideas of each side to the other – in other words, a boundary spanner serves as an intermediary between two parties. In this study, faculty participants served as intermediaries between residence life and other faculty members. They represented other faculty perceptions, expectations, and ideas of university faculty, even if the participants in this study were independent of each other and approached their roles in the RLCs differently. Faculty participants also represented the RLC program to other faculty members. For instance, they encouraged faculty involvement within their RLCs, helped their colleagues navigate personal connections with students, and communicated the value of residence life's work to students' experiences at Oak. This indicates that RLC-associated faculty members may be strong allies of student affairs in terms of recruiting other faculty to RLC programs and giving residence life institutional credibility in the realm of student learning.

That faculty members lived with one foot in academia and one in residence life also suggests that research and their other faculty responsibilities kept them rooted in the world of academia, but their connection and commitment to the RLCs influenced their priorities, too. As Golde and Pribbenow (2000) illustrated through interviews with faculty members living in residence halls, faculty members are often encouraged to prioritize tenure and research activities at the cost of student engagement outside the classroom. However, most faculty

participants in this study were already tenured, so it is possible they were not as focused on the faculty promotion processes and this influenced their involvement within the RLCs.

5. The HD position provided stability regardless of who filled the position.

As faculty participants lived part-time in the world of residence life, they relied on the position of the hall director to provide stability. Whereas the faculty role lacked some clarity, the HD role was defined and remained steady in its expectations and day-to-day functions, including community development, student discipline, and student staff supervision. The HD role was also a full-time, 40 hour-per-week position that required the person in the role to be present in the residential community on a regular basis. In contrast, the faculty member was expected to spend approximately six hours per week on RLC-related activities.

This suggests that the hall director role serves as a source of stability even in periods of staff and/or faculty transition and that faculty members can rely on the HD role to monitor students' needs and environments. The person in the hall director role kept a pulse on their residential communities and kept faculty members informed of their communities' development, but it is interesting to consider this finding given the typical professional who works as a hall director. At the time of study, HD roles at Oak were filled by new student affairs professionals who had fewer than five years of experience in the field and who, as suggested by relevant literature, may have been likely to leave the profession within their first five years. For example, Lorden's (1998) examination of attrition on the student affairs profession estimates that approximately 60% of professionals left student affairs within their first five years. This assumption of short stints in an entry-level position like a hall director was recognized in interviews with faculty participants. As Garth noted, "My anecdotal

impression is that [HD] positions at most universities turn over fairly quickly and so it's not going to be a position somebody stays in for a real long time..." (personal communication, April 19, 2019). Reba, too, noted the brevity of time spent in the HD position: "We usually have two to three years before a person leaves the position here. High burnout. High turnover. Sometimes they even stick around for less time" (personal communication, April 1, 2019). This sentiment is reminiscent of many studies concerning student affairs turnover rates, including Brewer and Clippard's (2002) exploration of burnout and job satisfaction among student affairs professionals. Among their findings, the researchers suggested a significant, negative relationship between emotional burnout and job satisfaction. High attrition rates among entry-level positions in student affairs suggests that it is likely that faculty members will be expected to work with more than one hall director throughout their time in an RLC program, which may impede strategic continuity and closer-knit partnerships between faculty member and HD.

There appears to be a gap in research that addresses how frequent staff turnover may impact the relationships between faculty members and their hall directors within the context of RLCs. This consideration is beyond the scope of this study but could be an area for future exploration.

6. Relationships varied by team.

The research surrounding collaborations between academic affairs and student affairs suggests that collaborations are shaped by many forces. Inkelas, Jessup-Anger, Benjamin, and Wawrzynski (2018) developed a best practices model based on 10 years of learning community data that includes many of these forces, including structural support and strategic planning initiatives. On the other hand, Kezar's (2001) results of a national study of

academic and student affairs emphasized individual characteristics of stakeholders. Faculty participants cited many things that contributed to the strength of their relationships with their HDs, including personal characteristics like job performance; intelligence; peer-to-peer support; a willingness to educate faculty on student development/student life; shared interests; and mutual respect. Relationships were also strengthened by structural support systems like proximity to office space; having the support of Loretta, the key informant; and input in the strategic vision of their RLCs.

In this study, both structural support and individual characteristics seemed to play critical roles in the strength of the relationships between faculty participants and their hall directors. This suggests that these relationships are complex and that there is no silver bullet to achieving a successful collaboration between faculty members and residence life professionals. That hall directors performed well in their jobs and took the time to know their faculty partners as humans seemed to be foundational for the relationships, but relationships could not have flourished unless the structural support was present, too.

Relationships varied by level of closeness as well. Results from this study suggest that the relationships between faculty cohort advisors and hall directors were disconnected and that stakeholders operated parallel to one another. Relationships between faculty directors and hall directors, however, were much closer than the typical relationship between university faculty members and staff members. Faculty directors had a greater potential for developing stronger collaborations with HDs as they were expected to spend time working with their HD to develop their communities. Cohort advisors did not have that expectation. This suggests that the level of closeness may have been heightened for faculty directors because they worked *and* lived alongside HDs. They shared experiences as full-time

professionals living on campus among college students and navigating work-life harmony and the world of student co-curricular life.

7. A shared goal of student learning established common ground.

In their survey of chief student affairs officers, Reger and Hyman (1988) found that student affairs professionals who approached their work with student learning at the forefront were perceived more favorably by faculty when collaborating. Similarly, Hardwick (2001) studied 300 faculty members and their perceptions of student affairs professionals' roles and found that they supported student learning goals that enhanced students' holistic development. This aligns with findings from this study – because HDs emphasized student learning while collaborating with faculty members, faculty participants perceived them favorably in terms of supporting holistic student learning. At Oak, faculty participants and HDs collaborated on the strategic development of their communities to ensure intellectual development was represented in programs and activities, but also that their holistic needs were met.

Faculty members viewed HDs as partners in student learning and respected the expertise they brought to the relationship. Faculty admired the way the HDs worked with their students and challenged them to learn from their experiences in their living environments, like through roommate conflicts and student conduct meetings. Faculty and HDs framed their partnerships using student learning outcomes, which was another attempt to focus on student learning. It was also an expectation of the faculty role that the faculty member collaborated with the hall director to create a learning-centered environment within the RLC. Faculty participants sometimes challenged their hall directors to ensure that students' intellectual development was being addressed, but they also recognized that this

was not necessary for everything. This insinuates that faculty participants saw some value in student engagement beyond the academic focus, which is contrary to findings suggested by Peltier (2014), who found that faculty members stressed the importance of academic rigor over informal learning opportunities.

This finding also suggests that faculty participants and HDs shared interdependent relationships in which they both worked together to positively impact student learning. As they worked with their hall directors, faculty members developed expanded ideas of how – and where – students learn in the collegiate environment. Participants cited examples of how they believed their HDs were the experts in college student psychosocial and cognitive development. They also discussed the programs and educational efforts created by their HDs to address the psychosocial, moral, and cognitive growth of their residents, including conflict management during disciplinary hearings. This is significant because the student development community of practice indicates that student affairs professionals are contributors to students' educational processes. As established in the early considerations of faculty-student affairs collaborations work of Reger and Hyman (1988), when faculty members view HDs as having roles in student development, rather than just administration of student services, faculty members may feel more favorably about developing collaborations. Similarly, faculty participants in this study viewed their HD counterparts as more than student services administrators – they considered them close partners in student learning – and expressed positive feelings toward collaborations with their HDs.

Magolda's (2005) practical analysis of academic affairs and student affairs collaborations recommended that stakeholders create intentional partnerships driven by a higher purpose rather than to merely "check boxes." At Oak, faculty members associated

with RLCs and the HDs built and maintained their relationships to create opportunities for students to learn. This higher purpose helped faculty participants view student learning through the hall director perspective and to try new ways of engaging their residents. Even if some relationships between faculty participants and their HDs were not as developed as others, the destination was always the same: student learning.

8. Faculty viewed HDs as peers.

Before their roles in RLCs, faculty members did not have perceptions of hall directors at Oak. Some did not even know the role existed. Through their involvement, faculty participants learned more about student development and the ways in which hall directors encourage student learning in the RLC environment. Participants came to see HDs as partners in student learning and respected the expertise they brought to the relationship. This suggests that simply having reason to interact with residence life professional staff members may increase faculty members' awareness of both student development and the campus role of hall directors.

Faculty members admired the way the HDs worked with and challenged their students to learn strategies that helped them navigate their experiences at Oak. Faculty participants appeared to value HDs' unique contributions to student learning and held respect for residence life's professional norms, even if they did not fully understand them. This indicates that by working with faculty members to foster student learning in RLCs, hall directors were able to get to know the faculty participants on a personal level, thereby challenging perceptions they may have had of them. Philpott and Strange's (2003) study identifies misperceptions of "the other" as a barrier to successful collaborations, but it could be that providing the space for relationships between faculty members and hall directors to

develop and by challenging them to work toward the same goal – student learning – such barriers could be minimized.

This notion that the faculty participants viewed hall directors as peers challenges findings in the academic affairs-student affairs collaboration research, including Golde and Pribbenow's (2000) findings that faculty do not consider residence life professionals as collaborators in student learning. Similar findings exist in Jessup-Anger et al.'s (2011) case study of faculty meaning-making of their experiences in a residential college. In that particular study, participants turned to other faculty colleagues for student learning collaborations rather than residence life counterparts. In this study, however, the faculty participants wanted to be contributors to the residence life staff and to share their expertise, research, and experiences as full-time faculty members – just as they might with their own faculty colleagues. This suggests that faculty members associated with RLCs may want to contribute to the RLC program beyond what they can do for students; they may also want to invest in their relationships with HDs through knowledge sharing and professional growth.

Although faculty participants in this study may have viewed HDs as peers, they did not necessarily feel that HDs saw *them* as peers. According to Loretta, the key informant, the HDs appeared intimidated by faculty members because of stereotypes about faculty or because faculty often have PhDs in their disciplines. Faculty participants indicated, however, that they viewed the relationship as one between peers and they viewed their HDs as colleagues. This difference in perceptions presented a potential disruptor in the working relationship that, at minimum, faculty may desire. Faculty in RLCs may want to be equals with their HDs, but their hall directors, as young and less experienced professionals, may not reciprocate that view. This suggests that as peers, hall directors must practice reciprocal

learning by expressing interest in and a willingness to learn about faculty members' disciplines, research interests, and day-to-day responsibilities. This finding also suggests that the complex nature of traditional higher education structures and cultures served as a barrier to the peer-to-peer relationship that Oak's RLC program encouraged between faculty participants and hall directors. Higher education structures and cultures as barriers to collaborations are well-cited in research (e.g. Golde & Pribbenow, 2000; Peltier, 2014; Philpott & Strange, 2003); less is known about distinctly *peer-to-peer* relationships between faculty members and student affairs professionals. The relationships that are often represented in the research are indicative of stakeholders involved in the strategic vision of RLC programs, such as academic affairs administrators and chief (i.e. higher-level) student affairs officers. Kezar's (2001) national study on academic and student affairs collaborations is an example of such representation, wherein the sample consisted of higher-level student affairs professionals because they were assumed to have accurate and thorough knowledge of institutional collaborations with units in academic affairs. The lack of peer-to-peer exploration indicates that more research is warranted to understand the relationships between stakeholders charged with the *day-to-day* responsibilities of RLC development, including hall directors and faculty members.

The peer-to-peer relationship between faculty members and hall directors in RLCs may also be largely absent from the current research because, generally, the field of student affairs lies in the periphery of formal student learning. This assumption is supported by many studies, including Peltier (2014), who found that faculty participants worried their student affairs collaborators focused more on fun and entertainment than academic rigor. Faculty members are the accepted authorities of formal student learning and have a voice in

institutional governance, whereas student affairs professionals – particularly HDs – are not typically invited to the table. It could be that a true peer-to-peer perception of each other is unattainable given these cultural and structural chasms.

Limitations

As with all qualitative explorations, this study has several limitations. This inquiry represents only one side of the faculty-hall director relationship at Oak: the faculty participant perception. Participants' opinions cannot represent those of all faculty members, either at Oak or in general, particularly faculty members who have no connection to RLCs. In addition, findings are based on experiences that the faculty participants elected to share with me. They chose what information to share and what they shared was from their perspectives. This is the nature of qualitative research, but it is also a limitation.

As a qualitative study, the findings are not intended to be generalizable. This was a single site study, and the data and findings apply to Oak University, although they may be transferrable to similar institution types and RLC program structures. Oak University is a highly selective, liberal arts institution; results may be different at other institutions where faculty have heavier research obligations, student populations are larger, admissions standards are less selective, or students are not required to live on campus.

Implications

Research

This study contributes to the research in higher education by addressing a gap in the literature pertaining to perceptions of faculty who work in close contact with professional staff members in residence life. Whereas much of the literature on faculty experiences in RLCs addresses their relationships with students, this study provides a glimpse into

relationships between faculty members and hall directors. The research and literature surrounding residential learning communities is now one study closer to identifying ways to create stronger collaborations between faculty and residence life. This study also provides stronger evidence that when faculty members interact with students in multiple environments, they are more likely to practice empathy and recognize that students' academic performance is closely linked to their lives outside of the classroom. This has implications for many areas of higher education research, including retention, residential learning communities, and perhaps even faculty roles in institutional governance as faculty members consider spaces outside the classroom that foster student learning.

Theory

In reference to the theoretical implications of this study, findings suggest the need for deeper exploration into the ways in which faculty members are asked to act as organizational boundary spanners within the context of universities and, particularly, residential learning communities. Viewing the faculty experience in RLCs through a lens of organizational culture theory, potential RLC collaborators can explore ways in which faculty members serve as intermediaries between academic affairs and residence life departments – and even other organizations on campus, such as senior leadership and administration. Additional theoretical insight into how faculty members navigate organizational boundaries may give RLC collaborators guidance into impacts on RLC development, student outcomes, and relationships with residence life professional staff. It may also assist residence life professional staff members to identify the tensions that exist between the two worlds that faculty must navigate, the degree to which they are able to navigate them, and how residence life professionals perceive this as an indication of how “good” a faculty member is as an

RLC affiliate. This study also suggests a need to expand the concept of boundary spanning in the academe to include roles within the same organization, not just between campus and community. Doing so could provide insight into the nuances of higher education culture and expose opportunities to provide development opportunities for faculty, staff, and even students expected to act as boundary spanners within and between higher education organizations.

Practice

As a scholar-practitioner, I am heavily drawn to providing the practical implications for student affairs professionals wishing to improve their relationships with faculty, particularly within the contexts of RLCs. Although it is difficult to find an exact formula for exemplar relationships between hall directors and faculty members, there are practices that can assist in developing stronger ties.

1. Place hall directors who are high performers in residential areas expected to foster faculty involvement.

Faculty members affiliated with RLCs must feel that they can trust HDs to perform their jobs well and to keep faculty abreast of what happens within the community. Placing high performers with faculty members helps build strong foundations for relationships that share trust and that can be relied upon to develop collaborations. It could be that pairing a seasoned or high performing hall director with a new faculty affiliate would provide stability and expertise for the faculty member new to the world of residence life.

2. Empower hall directors to see themselves as educators and as subject matter experts.

Encourage HDs to support their work using sound research, explicitly stated learning outcomes, and best practices to help faculty understand student holistic development. Hall

directors can build more rapport with faculty if they can translate their work into a language that faculty understand by borrowing principals from academia to foster student learning in residence halls.

3. Develop a formalized structure for using hall directors as educators for faculty.

Instead of “accidentally” educating faculty members about student development, residence life should provide intentional, formalized structures by which faculty members can learn from HDs. This could take the form of faculty development sessions, hosted by members of student affairs or residence life, to introduce faculty members to theories and practices that support students’ holistic development. These development sessions should include a charge wherein the student affairs hosts work *with* faculty participants to work toward goals or initiatives that foster students’ development inside and outside the classroom, pulling from each other’s strengths to engage students.

4. Similarly, provide formalized structures for hall directors to learn from faculty members.

To develop rapport and to strengthen the relationship, HDs should be encouraged to express interest in faculty members’ roles and research interests outside of their affiliation with residence life. This might be accomplished by encouraging HDs to read publications written by their faculty partners or to attend lectures presented by the faculty member(s). Additionally, formalized opportunities for shared research projects may also encourage shared interests. Providing programs that fund and/or support research conducted by the HD and the faculty member would provide professional development for each stakeholder and have the potential to further the field’s understanding of residential learning communities.

5. Place seasoned faculty associates with new hall directors.

It may be that faculty members who are familiar with the RLC environment and residence life processes can better assist new hall directors' transition to heightened professional expectations, translate the language of faculty, and develop confidence in their area of expertise – student development.

6. Analyze residence life departmental culture to determine if it inhibits or promotes partnerships with faculty members.

One component that should be reviewed is the defined nature of the hall director role and if the department's HD staffing model supports long-term relationship development with faculty members. This includes how long professionals serve in these HD roles and if job growth opportunities exist so that they can maintain long-term relationships with faculty.

7. When recruiting faculty for roles in RLC, residence life departments should seek faculty members who are willing engage in reciprocal learning.

Residence life professionals should invite faculty members into spaces where they can learn more about student development by encouraging faculty members to attend student affairs conferences, webinars, and other professional development opportunities.

Additionally, departments should seek faculty involvement in RLCs *as an avenue by which to improve student learning* – not faculty involvement as an end unto itself nor to merely “check a box.”

8. Encourage both faculty members and hall directors to participate in “job shadowing.”

Provide time for HDs to attend faculty members' classes, committee meetings, and research sites and for faculty members to attend HDs' conduct hearings, professional staff meetings, and student staff one-on-ones. If given the opportunity, they may also engage in research, wherein both parties can make shared contributions to the field of higher education,

student affairs, and faculty development. The faculty-hall director relationship cannot lie within the periphery of either the faculty affiliate's or the HD's job descriptions. Building the relationship must be an intentional effort on both parts. Although this may challenge the traditional structure of higher education, both faculty and HDs must create space to learn more about how the "other" approaches and relates to his or her work. This provides different perspectives from which to approach the relationship and, ultimately, the collaboration that will enhance student learning.

Recommendations for Further Research

This study highlighted several areas that are ripe for further research. There is more exploration needed in the relationship between hall directors and faculty members affiliated with RLCs. A particularly interesting perspective would be to explore non-RLC faculty members' perceptions of HDs and compare those with the perceptions of faculty members who have worked with HDs to enhance student learning in residence halls. This could provide more insight into the strength of collaborations between residence life and academic affairs and how those may impact an RLC program. To assist residence life in translating the faculty language, it may be helpful to explore the experiences of former student affairs professionals who have become faculty members. This would provide a perspective of student affairs professionals who may have become boundary spanners when they had to navigate and adjust to a faculty member's world of expectations, professional norms, and perceptions of other student affairs professionals, and how they might assist other student affairs staff in working in tandem with faculty members to enhance student learning.

Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to explore RLC-associated, full-time faculty members' perceptions of the roles of residence life professionals with whom they are in residential learning community collaborations. Data collection took place at Oak University, a medium-sized, private university in the Southeast that is highly regarded for its full-time faculty engagement in its residential learning community program. Perceptions of participants were qualitatively explored utilizing one-on-one interviews, observations, documents, and a visual exercise. Using MAXQDA to organize, code, and analyze the data, five themes emerged that developed into findings that answered my central research question and additional sub-questions.

As this chapter illustrates, RLC-associated faculty members at Oak described the roles of residence life professionals – specifically hall directors – as subject matter experts, as providing continuity for the residential learning communities, and as close partners in student learning. I situated these findings and subsequent sub-findings within current RLC and academic affairs-student affairs collaboration research and literature. In this chapter, I also identified limitations, future areas of research, and implications that this study has for research, theory, and student affairs practice.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: OSU IRB Approval



Oklahoma State University Institutional Review Board

Date: 11/21/2018
Application Number: ED-18-157
Proposal Title: Faculty Perceptions of Residence Life Professionals as Educational Collaborators in Residential Learning Communities

Principal Investigator: Sam Kramer
Co-Investigator(s):
Faculty Adviser: Kerri Kearney
Project Coordinator:
Research Assistant(s):

Processed as: Exempt

Status Recommended by Reviewer(s): Approved

The IRB application referenced above has been approved. It is the judgment of the reviewers that the rights and welfare of individuals who may be asked to participate in this study will be respected, and that the research will be conducted in a manner consistent with the IRB requirements as outlined in section 45 CFR 46.

The final versions of any recruitment, consent and assent documents bearing the IRB approval stamp are available for download from IRBManager. These are the versions that must be used during the study.

As Principal Investigator, it is your responsibility to do the following:

1. Conduct this study exactly as it has been approved. Any modifications to the research protocol must be approved by the IRB. Protocol modifications requiring approval may include changes to the title, PI, adviser, other research personnel, funding status or sponsor, subject population composition or size, recruitment, inclusion/exclusion criteria, research site, research procedures and consent/assent process or forms.
2. Submit a request for continuation if the study extends beyond the approval period. This continuation must receive IRB review and approval before the research can continue.
3. Report any unanticipated and/or adverse events to the IRB Office promptly.
4. Notify the IRB office when your research project is complete or when you are no longer affiliated with Oklahoma State University.

Please note that approved protocols are subject to monitoring by the IRB and that the IRB office has the authority to inspect research records associated with this protocol at any time. If you have questions about the IRB procedures or need any assistance from the Board, please contact the IRB Office at 223 Scott Hall (phone: 405-744-3377, irb@okstate.edu).

Sincerely,
Oklahoma State University IRB

NON-OSU Employee Collaborator Assurance



University Research Compliance

Non-OSU Employee Collaborator Assurance

Oklahoma State University – Stillwater Campus
IRB Office

Instructions: Please submit this form along with a copy of the Non-OSU-Employee Collaborator's CV showing education and research experience. A description of the Collaborator's role and responsibility must be included in the protocol.

Institutional Organization: Oklahoma State University

Federalwide Assurance (FWA): 0000493

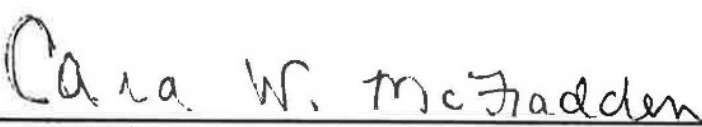
Name of Principal OSU Lead Investigator: Samantha Kramer

Non-OSU Investigator's Name: Cara McFadden

Specify Research Covered by this Agreement: ED-18-157, Faculty Perceptions of Residence Life Professionals as Educational Collaborators in Residential Learning Communities

- (1) The Non-OSU-Employee Collaborator understands and hereby accepts the responsibility to comply with the standards and requirements of the Belmont Report, the Department of Health & Human Services (HHS) regulations, and relevant OSU institutional policies and procedures for the protection of human subjects, and to protect the rights and welfare of human subjects involved in research conducted under this Assurance.
- (2) The Non-OSU-Employee Collaborator will comply with all other applicable federal, international, state, and local laws, regulations, and policies that may provide additional protection for human subjects participating in research conducted under this Assurance.
- (3) The Non-OSU-Employee Collaborator will abide by all determinations and requirements of the OSU Institutional Review Board (IRB) designated under the above FWA and will accept the final authority and decisions of the OSU IRB, including but not limited to directives to terminate participation in designated research activities.
- (4) The Non-OSU-Employee Collaborator will complete any educational training required by the OSU IRB prior to initiating research covered under this Assurance.
- (5) The Non-OSU-Employee Collaborator will report promptly to the Principal OSU Lead Investigator any proposed changes in the research conducted under this Assurance. The Non-OSU-Employee Collaborator will not initiate changes in the research without prior OSU IRB review and approval, except where necessary to eliminate apparent immediate hazards to research participants.
- (6) The Non-OSU-Employee Collaborator will report immediately to the Principal OSU Lead Investigator any protocol deviations and/or unanticipated problems involving risks to research participants or others in research covered under this Assurance.
- (7) The Non-OSU-Employee Collaborator, when responsible for enrolling research participants, will obtain, document, and maintain records of informed consent for each such participant or each participant's legally authorized representative.

- (8) The Non-OSU-Employee Collaborator will provide all information requested by the Principal OSU Lead Investigator in a timely fashion.
- (9) The Non-OSU-Employee Collaborator will not enroll research participants in the research study under this Assurance until authorized in writing by the Principal OSU Lead Investigator.
- (10) The Non-OSU-Employee Collaborator acknowledges that he/she is primarily responsible for safeguarding the rights and welfare of each research participant, and that the research participant's rights and welfare must take precedence over the goals and requirements of the research.
- (11) The Non-OSU-Employee Collaborator understands that his/her failure to comply with the terms of this Assurance may result in immediate termination of the collaborative project.


1-31-19

Non-OSU-Employee Collaborator - Signature Date

OSU PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR ASSURANCE


By my signature, I certify that the Non-OSU-Employee Collaborator is knowledgeable about the regulations and policies governing research with human subjects and has sufficient training and experience to participate as key study personnel on this study in accordance with the research protocol. Additionally,

I agree to communicate with the Non-OSU-Employee Collaborator on a regular basis to monitor study progress.

I agree to promptly report protocol modifications, deviations, and/or unanticipated problems as defined by OSU IRB policy to the OSU IRB, as applicable.

If I will be unavailable; e.g., sabbatical leave, vacation, or resignation, I will arrange for an alternate to assume responsibility during my absence, and I will submit a modification to the OSU IRB in advance.

When the Non-OSU-Employee Collaborator has finished his/her human subjects research duties on this research project, I will provide all necessary documents for modifying or terminating the study to the IRB.


1/16/19

Principal OSU Lead Investigator – Signature Date

APPENDIX B: Recruitment Emails to Participants

Subject: Participation in RLC Study (#1)

Dear [Faculty Member],

My name is Samantha and I am a doctoral student at Oklahoma State University. I am seeking ways to help residence life professionals strengthen their collaborations with faculty in their RLC programs. As a participant [in a] research seminar on RLCs as a high impact practice, I have become intrigued with [Oak's] emphasis of faculty involvement in students' cocurricular development. As such, the topic of my dissertation revolves around RLC-associated faculty members' perceptions of residence life professionals within the context of RLCs.

[Loretta] has identified you as a faculty member who may be willing to participate in my study, which will consist of an in-person, one-on-one interview as well as technology-based one-on-one interviews as needed. Interviews will last approximately 1.5 hours. Identifiable information will be removed for reporting purposes and no one at [Oak] will have access to this information.

If you are willing to participate, [please complete this survey](#), which will ask for some demographic and background information as well as your general availability the week of March 18. By collecting this information prior to our interview, I will be able to utilize our time together more efficiently. *Please complete this survey no later than March 1.* Should you have any questions or concerns, do not hesitate to contact me. Thank you for your consideration and I look forward to exploring this topic with your valuable insight!

Best,
Samantha Kramer

Subject: Participation in RLC Study (#2)

Hi [Faculty Member],

I am still seeking a few more participants for my study that will be exploring faculty members' perceptions of residence life professionals within the context of residential learning communities. The study will consist of one-on-one interviews with faculty members involved in the RLCs and/or neighborhoods at [Oak]. [Loretta] identified you as someone who may be willing to participate.

If you are willing to participate, [please complete this survey](#), which will ask for some demographic and background information. By collecting this information prior to our interview, I will be able to utilize our time together more efficiently. *Please complete this survey no later than March 7.* My goal is to visit campus the week of April 1. Should you have any questions or concerns, do not hesitate to contact me.

Thank you!

Samantha

Subject: Interview Times

Greetings! Thank you so very much for volunteering to participate in my study, which will be exploring faculty members' perceptions of residence life professionals within the context of residential learning communities. The study will consist of a one-on-one, in-person interview **the week of April 1.**

[Please click this link](#) to identify some time(s) that you are available. Please note that the interviews are scheduled for 2 hours; however, I don't anticipate them lasting more than an hour-and-a-half. If none of these times work for you, please let me know and I will adjust my schedule accordingly.

I am attempting to schedule several interviews that week, so I appreciate your patience as I try to work with your schedule!

Thanks again!

Best,

Sam

Subject: Reminder: Interview for RLC Study

Hi [Dolly],

This is a gentle reminder that we have an interview scheduled on **Tuesday, April 2 from 8:30 AM to 10:30 AM**. The interview will be held in **[room assignment]**.

There is no need to bring anything, although I did want to mention again that our interview will be recorded. All identifying information will be removed during analysis and reporting.

Should you need it, my cell phone number is XXX-XXX-XXX. Please don't hesitate to call or text me if you have any questions! See you soon!

Best,
Sam

APPENDIX C: Demographic Survey

Study Participation and Demographics: RLC-Associated Faculty Members' Perceptions

Informed Consent

Welcome to the research study!

I am interested in exploring RLC-associated faculty members' perceptions of residence life professionals in shared RLCs. You were selected as a possible participant because you are regarded as a faculty member who is involved in a residential learning community and/or a neighborhood at [Oak] University. I ask that you read this form and contact me with any questions you may have before agreeing to be in this study. Your participation is entirely voluntary.

This study is being conducted by Samantha Kramer, doctoral candidate at Oklahoma State University, under the direction of Dr. Kerri Kearney, Higher Education and Student Affairs, Oklahoma State University.

Procedures

If you agree to be in this study, you will be asked to do the following things: Complete the following demographic survey, participate in an audio-recorded, one-on-one in-person interview, and participate in audio-recorded, one-on-one technology-based follow-up interviews as needed. Participation in this study involves the following time commitment: No more than 2 hours.

Risks and Benefits of Participating in the Study

Participating in this study will not create risk any greater than what is encountered daily; however, by reflecting on their relationships with residence life professionals, participants may become uncomfortable or stressed. There are no direct benefits to you. However, the knowledge and insight you provide may benefit others.

Confidentiality

The records of this study will be kept private. Direct identifiers will be removed during audio transcription and replaced with a code on the information provided. Only the researcher will have access to the code(s). This includes the RLC or neighborhood of which you are associated.

Contacts and Questions

The Institutional Review Boards (IRB) for the protection of human research participants at Oklahoma State University and [Oak] University have reviewed and approved this study. If you have questions about the study itself, please contact the Principal Investigator at 405-968-6514 or samantha.r.kramer@okstate.edu. If you have questions about your rights as a research volunteer or would simply like to speak with someone other than the researcher about concerns regarding this study, please contact the OSU IRB at 405-744-3377 or irb@okstate.edu. All reports or correspondence will be kept confidential.

Consent

By clicking the button below, you acknowledge that your participation in the study is voluntary, that you are at least 18 years of age, and that you are aware that you may choose to terminate your participation in the study at any time and for any reason.

Please note that this survey will be best displayed on a laptop or desktop computer. Some features may be less compatible for use on a mobile device.

- I consent, begin the study
- I do not consent, I do not wish to participate

Start of Block: Block 1

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this study! Please complete the following information.

Preferred Title (Dr., Professor, etc.)

Preferred First Name

Preferred Last Name

Please indicate the primary academic department with which you are affiliated.

What is your faculty rank?

- Instructor
- Assistant Professor
- Associate Professor
- Professor
- Decline to state
- Other _____

How many years have you served as a faculty member at [Oak] University?

With which residential learning community/neighborhood are you affiliated?

What is your age? (If you decline to state, please enter "N/A")

I identify as...

- American Indian or Alaska Native
- Asian
- Black or African American
- Hispanic or Latino
- Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
- White
- Two or more races/ethnicities
- Decline to state
- Other _____

What is your current gender identity?

- Female
- Female to male transgender
- Intersex
- Male
- Male to female transgender
- Not sure
- Decline to state
- Other _____

End of Block: Block 1

APPENDIX D: Interview Guide

- Inform participant:
 - Participation is voluntary
 - Although there are no direct benefits to participating, knowledge and insight may benefit others
 - Free to withdraw from the study at any time with no repercussions
 - Withdrawing will not be penalized or cause loss of benefits to which otherwise entitled
- Explain nature and purpose of study
- Address questions, if any
- Sign consent form
- Remind participant of confidentiality
- Ask participant to choose pseudonym by which he/she will be referred in data reporting

- The Faculty Lane**
 - What is your role in the RLC program?
 - How did you come to be involved in an RLC?
 - What does the residential life department expect of you and your role in the RLC?
 - Your academic department?
 - What do you try to achieve through your role in the RLC?
 - If I were to observe you interacting with students in your RLC, what would I see or hear?

- The Other Driver**
 - Whom in residential life do you work with on a frequent basis? Who shares the road?
 - What is that person's general role within residential life and/or the RLC?
 - Prior to being involved in an RLC, what was your perception of the residential life professional staff?
 - How has your experience in an RLC shaped how you view residence life professionals?
 - Tell me about your relationship with the residence life professional.
 - Would you describe your relationship with residential life as more transactional or collaborative? Why?
 - If you believe it's collaborative, in what ways do you collaborate?

Introduce Rules of the Road Visual Exercise

Participants will be given a Rules of the Road visual (see Appendix E) on an 8 ½ x 11 sheet of paper. Participants will also be provided with a pen or pencil.

Instructions to the participant:

Pretend this road represents your relationship with the residence life professional staff member who is also associated with your RLC. The left side represents the skills, knowledge, and responsibilities you bring to the relationship. The right side represents the skills, knowledge, and responsibilities the residence life professional staff member brings to the relationship. We'll call this an exercise on identifying rules of the road – who is responsible for what in the relationship? On each side, I want you to write words or phrases that respond to the following questions:

- What is the residence life professional responsible for in the RLC?
- What are you responsible for in the RLC?
- What are shared responsibilities?

While the participant is working on the exercise, I will remain with them quietly, observing nonverbal cues.

Ask participant to explain the diagram: Tell me about what you have written on the road. Possible probing questions:

- How did you decide/know where to put things/tasks on the road? (e.g. Has this been transparently discussed? Learned over time? Etc.)
- Tell me about why you placed ----- at that position on the road?
- What do you think is the probability that residence life staff you work with would draw a similar visual? Why or why not?
- How would the visuals of your RLC faculty peers look in terms of similarities or differences?
- Do you feel you head in the same direction as residence life staff when it comes to student learning? Why or why not?
- If you were to draw the ideal Rules of the Road for your RLC, how would it be similar or different from this one?

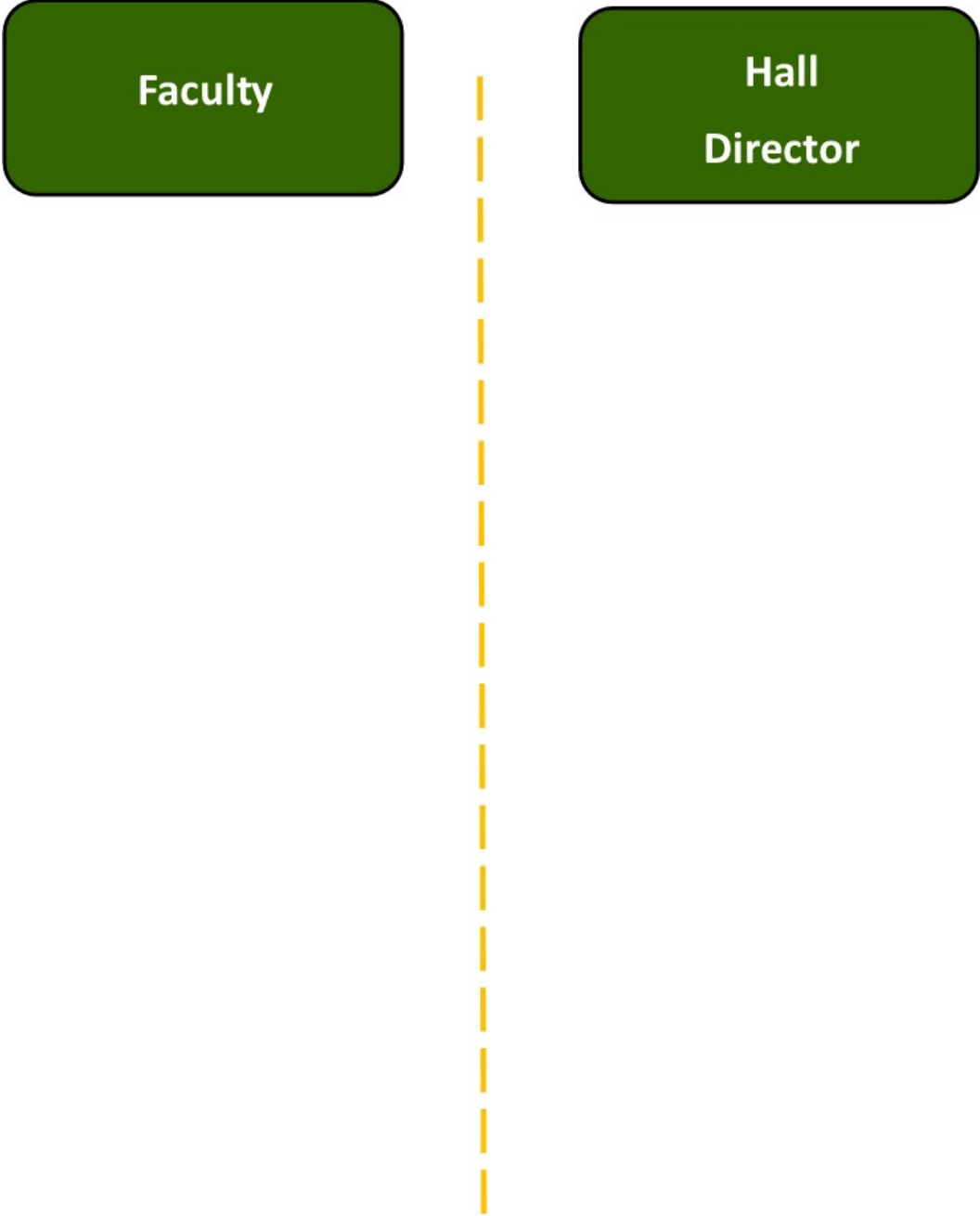
Ask participant follow-up questions, if appropriate

- How do you think the residence life professionals influence students living in RLCs?
- How do you think your involvement in the RLC influences students?
- Do you see your relationship as a successful collaboration? What about it makes it successful? If it isn't successful, why isn't it?
- What about your relationship is difficult?
- What are your expectations of residence life professionals?
- How do you think RLC students would describe your relationship with residence life professionals?
- Is there anything I should have asked, but didn't?

Thank the participant

APPENDIX E: Rules of the Road Exercise

Neighborhood/LLC Relationship



APPENDIX F: Thought Process and Development Tools

Thematic Charts

Theme 1: Roles

<p>THEME 1: Roles Question: How do faculty describe the roles of res life pros? Keywords: educators</p>
<p>OVERVIEW</p> <p>Faculty members recognized that HDs play a significant role in students' cocurricular learning. Participants used terms such as <i>teacher</i>, <i>mentor</i>, <i>counselor</i>, <i>supervisor</i>, and <i>developer</i> to describe the roles that HDs play in the lives of students.</p> <p>Participants also described "teaching moments" in which they witnessed HDs challenging their students to reflect, communicate, confront conflict, and compromise. Faculty participants appeared to value HDs' unique contributions toward student learning and held respect for the HDs' professional norms, even if they didn't fully understand them.</p> <p>Faculty participants also learned more about student life outside of the classroom from the hall directors. This suggests that HDs not only served as educators to students, but to the faculty participants as well. Some participants also described ways in which their teaching practices and community engagement approaches were informed by what they learned from their experiences in RLCs and working with hall directors. Participants in the study confirmed findings from Haynes and Janosik (2012) and Sriram et al. (2011) that as a result of their affiliation with RLCs, they learned new teaching strategies to incorporate into their classrooms that helped them understand students on a deeper level. Participants incorporated practices and experiences they learned from their hall directors into the relationships with students in their classes.</p>

FINDINGS/OUTCOMES

1. Faculty became students. Faculty members weren't familiar with student life and sought insight from the hall directors with whom they worked. Participants viewed the HDs as experts because of their experience and their educational background that prepared them for a career in student life. Faculty members expressed interest in learning more about what students learned outside of class and how their "outside" lives influenced their classroom/academic performance.
2. Faculty learned a new discipline. Faculty members learned the language and professional norms of residence life that helped them serve as a "bridge" between academic affairs/other faculty members and residence life. They learned how to help develop RLC identity and how to help foster students' intellectual growth in students' residential environment. They learned more about students' holistic development and expressed a level of familiarity with recognizing students in crises. They recognized their limitations but knew the resources on campus to aid those students.
3. Faculty relied on hall directors to keep them informed. Faculty members only lived in the student life world part-time and recognized that with the limited time they had, they couldn't consider themselves subject matter experts. As such, they relied on hall directors to keep them informed about their communities and to monitor the pulse of the neighborhoods or cohorts. As subject matter experts, HDs were those whose "boots [were] on the ground" and who were in positions to deeply understand the students' environments, how to connect with the residents, and ways in which community was built among the students in the residence halls. HDs knew how the communities were developing and how their students were doing and helped guide the faculty members in providing academic enrichment and support opportunities by providing insight into the culture of a specific community, which faculty felt was critical to their success as RLC faculty affiliates. Trusting HDs to have this knowledge, faculty could focus their attention on the academic enrichment of their communities and develop opportunities that would attract students.

PARTICIPANT PERSPECTIVES

1. Faculty as students:
 - a. Some of the very first things I said [to my HD] were, "I don't have any idea what you do. You need to tell me what you do, and I don't know anything about student development from a staff life perspective. I don't know what the research literature says. I didn't take any of your classes. I don't know anything about being a [resident assistant]. I am completely ignorant and I'm hoping that you will teach me." And she was, she was a wonderful teacher. (Patsy, personal communication, March 18, 2019)
 - b. But so next time I met with him I asked him I was like, okay tell me about the workings of how this goes because res life to me is a completely new field really and I have my experience from decades ago living on campus. I have some knowledge of it just from being at Oak but really, I mean, I know very little about it. Being in this role as made me realize just how little I knew them. So there's also I think an educator role that happens to the hall director position. (Waylon)
 - c. So, um, because I think from my perspective at least that's what I, I wanted to learn. Um I wanted to be a better academic person because I learned more about this other person's role and this other person was willing to share um with me and at the same time be willing to learn from the academic perspective. (Patsy)
 - d. I wanted to know about what it was like to have a master's degree in student affairs. What kind of classes did you take? What kind of things did you read? I asked her to recommend some of her favorite readings to me and I would read

them and we would talk about them together. So we just spent time getting to know each other. (Patsy)

2. Learned new discipline:

- a. I've worked with a lot of students in my role as a faculty member and actually this has been very much informed by residence life, but... when students are going through troubling moments, I can be a good listening ear and I can send them to resources. I don't know how to do a lot of other things and so I see that training in my residence life colleagues and I really value that... (Reba, personal communication, April 1, 2019)
- b. So this has been one of the most irreversible changes. I can never teach the same way again. As a faculty member learning about students' lives outside of the classroom hours has really helped me understand students in a different way. So faculty members tend to be somewhat myopic about you know, that hour and a half when students are in their classroom. So students come in tired, they come in hungover. They come in with excuses. They come in stressed and all you can really think about is how students aren't meeting your goals. They were outlined in the syllabus. Your job is to be here at college. Why can't you do the fundamentals? When you're able to see the entire ecosystem of what students are doing and you see ways that RAs are completely fulfilled as human beings doing that work and so their class is important, but maybe something else is more important or they're involved in a club that is tied, aligned with their identity as well as their passions and you see that they're they're doing very deep intellectual work through that it becomes easier to a) be more forgiving in the classroom and b) channel that in the classroom. You also see the stress structures. So you see when there's a campus incident that you may not have even heard about in the classroom or you see them studying intensively not partying during midterms and then when they come in tired and freaked out in your class, you don't blame it on partying because you realize that they probably weren't. They're probably just stressed about the midterms. So just being able to see those rhythms and getting to know students in those spaces has really caused me to like chill out and I realize how little my classes matter in the scheme of things and when you realize how little your class matters it helps you I think have a good check and balance about what does matter in your class. So rather than making my class about rules and like training students for adulthood, I realize they're getting trained for adulthood, so I can just make my class about my class and my class is now about learning. So if a student's learning what I want them to learn from the day they entered to the time they exit I care less about how they get there. So, you know deadlines are more relaxed now, just all kinds of like the structures and the rigidity of teaching has really relaxed for me because I see the bigger picture. (Reba)
- c. there's been some things that as far as models within student life and in residence life of you know learning or we are a predominately sophomore community. So about second year development and how students are processing and other needs and wants. That's been really helpful for him to kind of bring some of that expertise as well. (Waylon)
- d. I think that those types of relationships are incredibly beneficial for sort of understanding the multiple wheels and cogs that are going on that may help a university run because when we are separate from each other we're less effective... Both, I mean academic departments are siloed from each other but particularly sort of, rather than residence life and faculty, you know classroom life are very siloed. So for me, it was very eye-opening and you know as a person who's pretty open to

that anyway, I still feel like I learned a ton and also I feel like my hall director learned a ton because our worlds do not at all look the same. (Dolly)

3. Kept informed:

- a. An example of this connection is Dolly, who felt that more communication between the HD and the faculty member regarding the “human” happenings in the communities would be helpful, particularly when students may need additional support. “I think more communication between advisors and hall directors or RAs when there are human things happening on the hall would actually be good, but I understand that there may be some confidentiality things. So I wouldn't want to overstep those confidentiality things, but it might be nice to know, okay, there's something up, reach out to the whole community. They might need more TLC right now.” (Dolly)
- b. largely for hall director would be maybe community development and identity. They have more touches with students than I do, those people in those roles for a variety of reasons and because they work much more closely with the student staff and the student staff are on the ground, helping sort of push forward or attempting to do, I do feel like maybe the hall director probably has a larger role in that development piece. (Hank)
- c. I think the residence life folks can help faculty understand what is happening in students' lives outside of their classrooms... (Dolly)
- d. So what's going on in the community? Fill me in on, so I do want to know things like I mean, are students upset about X Y or Z or are a lot of students moving out? Why? Are there lots of students moving in? Why? Is there a particular issue going on that's a problem in the community because I think all those things roll together to a feeling of community. And so the kind of day-to-day stuff that [the hall director]'s in charge of, I mean are important. But then also I think there's an energy and a power that comes from being the person whose kind of the accountable, like, who does this here? I mean when people say I have a, I happened to be in my office one time when [the administrative assistant] wasn't and uh, somebody came in with a form that needed to be signed for a transfer, you know they were moving to another community, and I realized I just had really no idea what to do at that point. Like wait. Is this just something I sign or is this just something because somebody needed to sign, it was due at it like five, in two hours, right? And so somebody needed to sign it or not. And there all these things about the process that I didn't know, and I also didn't know the questions I should ask... (Waylon)

MOVING FROM FINDINGS TO ACTION

1. In what ways did HDs teach faculty members?
2. What, specifically, did HDs teach faculty that faculty also implemented in their communities?
3. What did HDs teach faculty that faculty also implemented in their classrooms?
4. How can HDs see themselves as subject matter experts? What pro devo needs to happen to help them get there?
5. How can HDs help faculty members learn more about the discipline of student life?
6. What motivates faculty to learn more about student life?
7. What are the key facilitators and barriers to HDs serving as subject matter experts?
8. What structures needs to be in place for HDs to effectively inform faculty members about the discipline, the RLC communities, etc.?
9. How can res life support faculty members as students?

Theme 2: Processes

THEME 2: Processes

Question: How do faculty describe the *processes of working with res life pros*?

Keywords: co-constructing, organizational boundary spanning, tricky to navigate

OVERVIEW

Faculty participants described working with the HDs to build their neighborhoods or cohorts together – to co-construct the community identity and climate. Both faculty and HD brought certain strengths to this co-construction, thereby fulfilling their responsibilities differently, but still both working toward fostering student learning in the RLCs.

Faculty members lived part-time in a world in which they were less familiar than that of academic affairs. They had to cross the usual organizational boundaries between academic affairs and residence life, acting as boundary spanners as they learned to navigate this new world. Faculty participants found themselves having to translate the language of residence life – a process aided by the key informant – and serving as intermediaries between residence life and other faculty members. Although this contributed to the effectiveness of the RLC program, this also led to ambiguity within the faculty role in residence life and conflicting expectations from leadership.

Some participants described the processes of working with residence life as tricky to navigate. In some ways, faculty participants felt a power differential that required their sensitivity to navigate as they attempted to build peer-to-peer relationships with their hall directors. That their roles, at times, seemed ambiguous further muddled their attempts to work with HDs, as did cultural norms that differed between faculty life and residence life. Participants expressed examples of conflicting expectations and ambiguity surrounding their unique campus roles, perhaps partly created by differing expectations in the two different worlds and cultures of residence life and academics.

Cohort faculty advisors were not necessarily involved in strategic planning and communicated a sense of distance from the residence life department. These participants in particular seemed to have more difficulty communicating the value of their roles in the RLC program and in what they brought to the partnership with residence life.

FINDINGS/OUTCOMES

1. Faculty lived with one foot in academia, one foot in student life. Although they were expected to co-construct their communities with the hall directors, faculty members only lived in the residence life world part time. Faculty members navigated two separate worlds: the world of faculty and academia and the world of residence life. Faculty participants translated the language of residence life and served as the “bridge” between academic affairs and other faculty members. These worlds differed in many aspects including expectations, pedagogical philosophies, university commitments, educational backgrounds, and professional norms. Faculty members were busy with responsibilities across campus, including their full-time faculty responsibilities. This left limited resources to dedicate to their residential communities and their relationships with their hall directors. The time commitment that residence life professionals expected of faculty members in RLC roles may have been unrealistic considering faculty members’ various responsibilities elsewhere on campus. Faculty participants indicated that they did not necessarily have the time to commit, so instead they invested by sharing their expertise, putting forth their best efforts to be partners, and showing interest in hall directors’ perspectives and day-to-day tasks.
2. Faculty associate role lacked defined expectations, processes, and procedures. Although faculty members only “lived” in the residence life world part-time, they felt an implicit expectation that they must blur the boundary between personal and professional life to create meaningful presence within their communities. In the residence life world, putting in the time – regardless of hour of the day or previous time spent contributing – demonstrated commitment to the team or to the cause.

PARTICIPANT PERSPECTIVES

1. One foot in each world
 - a. We have several faculty and staff, faculty affiliates and staff partners who are on this and kind of inform the workings of the community, right? It's supposed to be about once a month or so. We typically meet at [The Brew House]... and I'll find myself often like literally rubbing elbows with a student having a pint. Not crazy but and certainly totally legal but a little different, right, in like that that's I don't know how typical that is... we say, order what you like. No pressure at all to have, you know, whatever to tip back a glass of wine or anything. But if you want coffee or but what if you do want a drink and you're of drinking age, no problem, we'll pick it up. So [the hall director] and as a staff person and those rules are pretty clearly defined I guess a hall director can't swipe his card for that because there's alcohol on the tab, but as faculty director, I can swipe it, alcohol on the tab - no problem. So there's some separation there and it really shocked me at first for some reason just because I'm used to Oak picking up the tab for these sorts of things because they value the sort of relationship that can occur, right, over coffee, over a glass of wine. There's reasonable limits to that, of course, I mean, I'm not going out, drinking three, four drinks, but to have a beer with a colleague breaks down barriers and power structures in a way that's really helpful. [the hall director] that I did that at first a lot to try and get to that and so here we do the same thing. We want to try and not to be like I'm faculty director. You are the student, right, or something like that but to try and all meet on an equal footing so to speak. So I but that I have to swipe my own card. So that's just that's one example, but the ways that we're able to interact I think with folks differs... I think that can easily, they've

become like this sort of thing happens with faculty directors above or something. To better or worse, I think there's some of that kind of that play in the background. So I find myself kind of constantly having to try and work against that or [inaudible] my feeling on it, but I don't ever want to be the person who like yes, I'm the faculty here. You know, it feels pompous and not helpful to me. So I've got to translate, no, please I wanna be part of this conversation and facilitate in a power more than run or direct or coordinate. (Waylon)

- b. so we're on a 10 month contract and as a faculty member I'm on a nine month contract, so during summer when I'm not on contract I was in doing interviews. So the only way I can be involved is doing work on top of my contract which I'm not compensated for because you know, you live in this world where res life isn't very well compensated, faculty are also like during the summer, I have to work, but I'm mindful... I really can't be putting in massive hours of labor if I'm not on the calendar. (Reba)
 - c. Past patterns, faculty, in the faculty world, I chose my I put in my course requests for next year in September. I know already what I'm teaching all of next year, right? So thinking about that, thinking about that timeline, everything for faculty is nine months to a year in advance and reslife will often implement changes to something a couple weeks. Before we just don't operate on that timeline. (Reba)
 - d. I find myself being more kind of faculty with a capital F and having to say, yeah but, yeah but, yeah but, and sometimes I take the role almost of kind of the negative influence to say look, that sounds great, but what's... why are we doing this event? Is it just to get butts in a room to do something? I mean that's worth something. But after you do seven or eight of those, you know, you start to go well, let's, let's find a deeper connection here. (Waylon)
2. Lacked defined expectations, processes, and procedures
- a. there's some things we're doing really well and we're doing the really well though because of x y z and it's not always like this magical like well, we got it all figured out. It's that we've been building it in the water. We're just a little farther along building it at than others. I think this is actually one of those things and of course there are plenty of places that figure this out and are doing it really well, but Oak, as we've trying to sort of retrofit our campus and our community to residence life, it also comes along with all the other things that we're already really well known, for like experiential learning, things like oh, well this is a no-brainer, right? No like it's a, it's a brainer. It's a it's a lot of things that we haven't thought about how does this work together, things that should be kind of easy in some ways, like as you said like engaging with students you're like, oh sure, must be easy right? No, they don't they don't wanna open that door and see me, you know, they're being like hey, how are you Jess? Did you sleep? I mean if it was students I had in class it'd be one thing but that isn't the way we structure, it's meant to be like this almost like, so there is kind of some ways that can happen with faculty. I think a tokenization that you can feel. I'm I never feel that personally, but I could see how somebody could say, oh I'm the faculty, check, we've got a faculty person. There, great, sort of thing. And that's not what Oak's trying to do. But it does sometimes, the role is so flexible that it feels like you're like, okay. So what am I supposed to do? (Waylon)
 - b. But I grow weary of that, and I you know, I know assessment is the point of the realm but the one question I've had which no one has been able to answer to my satisfaction has been, you know, we're dealing with with people who are at a formative time of their life and a lot of things we do, a lot of the learning they are

doing now, will not manifest itself until years from now. And so and there is no way to measure that and so to try to take some numbers, arbitrary numbers, and declare something a success or failure, I think it's all in the eyes of the beholder and and I just think it's, I think it's really another form of anti-intellectualism because I think it gives people some numbers and charts and graphs to look at and they don't have to think about what stage of life these students are in and what we have to do to reach them. Sorry. That's that's kind of my, a burr in my saddle. (Garth)

- c. I mean I think residence life would prefer not to hear the challenges. They would prefer that you just stick your head down and figure out a way to make it work and don't talk about the, the systemic... like for example, there's been a shift in student culture, this is normal at every university. So this year our students have just been totally disengaged and one of the things that a lot of people have been pointing to is we have had this new first six weeks initiative. A lot of academic research indicates the first six weeks are important. So there was a lot of focus on the first week, six weeks. I felt like the initiative was was brought kind of last-minute, but that's neither here nor there. What it ended up being was busy busy busy busy event event event event busy busy busy busy. And so our students were, we had students who would like come to a dinner, stop in for 15 minutes, start a conversation and say oh I have another club to go to I got to go and so students were coming late. They were coming early. They couldn't stick for a full hour and then you start talking to people around the university and they're like, yeah, we're getting that too. What's the deal? So then when you start to say to Residence Life, what's our plan for next year? The first, I get why the first six weeks are important, but it didn't work. It just didn't work. Students were too busy. I think they would rather have us put our head down and like fix it rather than gripe about it not working. (Reba)
- d. What does... can you tell me about what residence life expects of you in your role? □ Reba: So that's a great question and one that I'm constantly refining and readjusting. So, so some of it so it's been a really interesting experience defining, what does it mean to, you know, I'm supposed, required to do a dinner monthly. What does that mean for me to do the dinner? Does it mean that it has to be super academic? Does it mean that I'm coordinating it? Does it mean that it's in collaboration? What does it mean? Our film series. You know it, the turnout has gone from pretty good to [poor]. Why? Well, everyone's doing a film series these days. So maybe we need our academic event needs to not be a film series. But then what? So always having to kind of have that pulse on students to know what it is that I'm supposed to be programming and then when things start to fall apart, whose responsibility is it? I'm not trained to do all of that logistical work and if I'm only spending six hours a week and four of those hours are doing the logistics, doing the like logistical work, then I have no time left over for the intellectual work, but I'm brought in to do the intellectual work and people really balk, especially in Residence Life when I'm like that... I'm not I'm not paid to do that. (Reba)

MOVING FROM FINDINGS TO ACTION

1. In what ways do HDs provide stability where faculty members cannot?
2. How does res life see the faculty role in contributing to community stability?
3. What is community stability?
4. How can HDs help faculty members navigate the res life world?
5. In what ways can res life develop better expectations, processes, and procedures? Who needs to be at the table?
6. Why is it important to define expectations, processes, and procedures for faculty associate roles? How will this benefit an RLC program?
7. Does res life have realistic expectations for full-time faculty members who live part-time in the res life world? What do realistic expectations look like?
8. How does res life determine how committed a faculty member is to his/her role in an RLC? Is it measured by time? Does the measurement translate to the faculty member's language?

Theme 3: Relationships

THEME 3: Relationships

Question: How do faculty describe their *relationships* with res life pros?

Keywords: collegial, frustrating, administrative barriers

OVERVIEW

Faculty participants seemed to feel that their relationships with their hall directors – and other professional staff members in residence life – were complicated to navigate. Participants described their relationships with HDs in positive terms that indicated a level of collegiality, including elements of camaraderie and mutual respect. In some ways, though, these relationships could be frustrating to manage as participants attempted to build and maintain connections with their HDs.

Overall, participants felt a sense of collegiality with their hall directors. Many cited their attempts to learn about their HDs as both professionals and as humans, which created a sense of support for the participants as they navigated the world of residence life. Participants also communicated that the support could not be one-sided – that they had to be support systems for their hall directors as well. Participants respected their hall directors for the quality of work they produced as well as their level of investment into their communities. Overall, faculty participants thought highly of their hall directors and generally attributed the strength of their relationships to their HDs' job performance and personalities.

There were also components of the relationships that were frustrating. Age and professional experience and administrative barriers emerged from the data. Faculty participants also felt misunderstood in some ways, because hall directors did not seem to acknowledge that their faculty partners had full-time jobs at the institution. This failure to recognize could indicate that as new professionals, hall directors were not aware that this was an expectation. Participants cited several examples of administrative barriers that hindered them as they attempted to build and maintain relationships among residence life professionals.

FINDINGS/OUTCOMES

1. Relationships varied by couple. These varied in levels of intimacy and participants connected differently with their HDs than others, but for several participants these relationships went beyond what a normal faculty member would develop with a student affairs staff member. This level of intimacy may have been heightened because of the faculty worked and lived alongside HDs. Elements that helped the intimacy of the relationship were unique to each couple, and there was no "magic bullet", like

complementing personalities, individual characteristics, and specific structural support, that guaranteed the relationship to be successful. As supported by the data, the relationship was positively impacted by a shared goal of contributing to student learning – a finding that rose to the surface as a common theme among all the relationships between faculty participants and their residence life counterparts.

2. A shared goal of student learning established common ground. Faculty participants and HDs shared interdependent relationships in which they both worked together to positively impact student learning. Just as Hardwick (2001) found that faculty members viewed student learning as a shared responsibility with student affairs staff, faculty participants in this study considered themselves as partners in building their communities' identities and climates. This suggests that as they worked with their hall directors, faculty members gained an expanded idea of how students learn in the collegiate environment and that faculty members and HDs both contribute to the residential community, but sometimes in different ways. For many participants, they viewed their role as fostering academic and intellectual enrichment among students in their communities. This is significant in that, depending upon the strength of their relationship with the HD, this co-construction could be considered a collaboration, a critical component to the success of a residential learning community program.
3. Faculty viewed HDs as peers. Although faculty participants may have been students, they also viewed the HDs as peers. Faculty members wanted to learn about HDs' day-to-day lives to be able to connect with them on a peer-to-peer/personal level and seemed to genuinely care for the people in the HD roles. They respected the expertise the HDs brought to student development and sought feedback from their HDs concerning strategies to engage students differently in co-curricular learning.

PARTICIPANT PERSPECTIVES

1. Relationships varied by couple.
 - a. The hall director I worked with in [C Community] was wonderful, the woman I'm working with now, I think is probably the, she's the she's done the best at this job that I've seen in my three years living on campus, which I think is also just... I don't know my luck that she's there and I'm there and I think she's a real reason why this relationship actually works. Because I've seen other faculty directors come into some conflict with their hall directors or for a variety of reasons some of it's lack of communication or just there's not a lot of trust there. (Hank)
 - b. I don't think it works when the faculty directly or committee director are working in silos. They're just they just feel like they're handling their thing, their thing and then that's it and every now and then they go hey, we got this thing coming up, okay great, then they sort of split apart. That partnership piece is really important. I've seen it play out in different ways where there's a hall director who's doing all the stuff over here, not informing the faculty director, not really even allowing the faculty director to participate. And then I've seen it where faculty director's doing all this stuff and for some reason doesn't feel like they can trust the hall director so they're just not keeping that person in the loop when. And when that's happening it's just never going to... there's no cohesion. It won't work at all. (Hank)
 - c. she acknowledged that my background was very different from her own and she wanted to learn from me as well. So we did a lot of, you know, taking something and then she'd tell me how it looked from her perspective and how it was approached from her perspective and I'd tell her what it was like from my perspective and we would share aspects of our lives that were very different. So, you know, for example she'd want to know about, um, what's it like to be on the tenure track, what's it like to apply for tenure and go through that process. So I

shared that with her and and I wanted to know about what it was like to have a master's degree in student affairs. What kind of classes did you take? What kind of things did you read? I asked her to recommend some of her favorite readings to me and I would read them and we would talk about them together. So we just spent time getting to know each other. I guess you can equate it to dating and, just, you know learning about each other's lives and, and from the get-go we knew we would never be the other but we knew together we could be something more powerful than either of us separately. And that was a belief that we both held onto and um, and worked towards and so it was, it was a great relationship. (Patsy)

- d. I think the nature of collaboration is very different. So the first hall director I worked with I think, I keep saying, you know, we would have ideas and come up something completely different and I haven't found that with this second person. I feel like with a second person we walk parallel to each other. We don't, we don't interact in ways that are, more synergistic like I did with the first one and I think that's just I think personality yeah. So it's different. (Patsy)
2. Student learning established common ground.
 - a. And I think we both both now the both of us now and then also the two of us from [C Community] just had the same idea about how this needed to work, that neither one of us could be fully invested in the community if we're not both working together to put something in place that benefits all of our students. (Hank)
 - b. But the expectation is that that person and I as a faculty would kind of co-construct the climate of the community together. We still have separate job descriptions, but the overlap between us is determining what the nature of our community is going to be like and so I think the big expectation from res life is that I work in collaboration with the res life person... (Patsy)
 - c. working with the hall director to plan events within the community that move us towards the outcomes that we've identified together. The, the theme that we've identified together and the ways that we want to help students in our community to grow, both in their self-awareness and their personal development as well as in their academic development. So working alongside the hall director to, to plan for events and activities in the community that will bring us towards those particular goals and desired outcomes. (Patsy)
 - d. in spending time with each other, um, one of the things that we realized, and we laughed about this and we would say this to other people. She would have some ideas and I would have some ideas and somehow what we ended up with wasn't either one of our ideas. It was something different that we were both surprised with and we both had this kind of adventurous spirit that we would try something and we, we tried a bunch of stuff that was a flop, but we tried a bunch of stuff that was awesome. And, and so, but, I, you know in all the time we spent together, I don't know that either one of us could say this, this thing was our thing. It always a thing that we had we had truly co-constructed, um, and that was really fun. That was a really fun part of the relationship. (Patsy)
 3. HDs as peers:
 - a. the kind of day-to-day stuff that [the hall director]'s in charge of, I mean are important. But then also I think there's an energy and a power that comes from being the person whose kind of the accountable... (Waylon)
 - b. I look to the hall director and say okay, how can I help facilitate this [student learning]... (Waylon)
 - c. I think a student who has a challenging, whether it's you know, just a residential situation or just a social environment that isn't welcoming, that isn't conducive to

the holistic support of the student, isn't going to perform well in classes and going to succeed as well as they could, isn't going to reach all the potential they could. And that's also not a one-size-fits-all model. So I think it's an incredibly challenging, role and really important. And faculty I think have a have a role to serve and this linkage with the faculty directors I think is super helpful as almost a bridge. I think the hall director still is at the center of each individual community and how they create that space. It's a different answer for every community. I mean money isn't always the answer but I think if we invested in a position there, I mean to be honest it's probably more important to that than it is faculty director in residence because those are the people who really lack a deeper understanding and are you know, are on the shop floor right every every day, sometimes every night, right? (Waylon)

MOVING FROM FINDINGS TO ACTION

4. How do HDs communicate their goal of student learning? How is that goal established within the HD role and within the RLC program?
5. What does the HD have control over when it comes to developing a relationship with the faculty associate? How can HDs be supported as they navigate new relationships with faculty?
6. What are ways in which HDs and faculty can develop intimate working relationships with one another?
7. How does residence life define “partner”?
8. How can HDs and faculty members establish clear goals and responsibilities for this partnership? Are there specific topics that must be explicitly discussed?
9. How do HDs define ways in which they foster and/or contribute to student learning? Is student learning a priority in their positions?

Theme 4: Best Practices

THEME 4: Best Practices

Question: What do RLC faculty report as *best practices* of res life pros?

Keywords: fostering awareness of student life, keeping a pulse, collaboration

OVERVIEW

Faculty participants reported ways in which hall directors contributed to the residential communities and/or to the faculty-hall director relationship, including practices like fostering an awareness of student life outside the classroom, keeping a pulse on the climate within the cohorts or communities, and acting as collaborators with their faculty members. In terms of collaboration, the HD’s job performance seems to have had a significant impact on the strength – and perhaps level of intimacy – of the relationship. Many participants indicated that they trusted their HDs to fulfill their responsibilities and that they took part in shared decision-making within their communities or cohorts. This interdependent relationship was also characterized by attempts to integrate their efforts to foster student learning the RLCs. This element was more apparent in the relationships between faculty directors and their HDs. The experiences of the cohort advisors suggested that they worked parallel with residence life – they appeared to be working toward similar goals, but they did not integrate their efforts.

Prior to their experiences with the RLC program, faculty members were not as aware of student life outside of the classroom. Hall directors were a key factor in realizing that students’ lives outside of class can deeply impact students’ academic performance.

FINDINGS/OUTCOMES

1. Although the faculty role may have lacked clarity, the HD position was clear and defined. This clarity was not linked to a *person*, but rather the position due to its defined nature. Faculty members could rely on the *position* to do the day-to-day functions of community development, even during personnel changes/transitions.

PARTICIPANT PERSPECTIVES

1. Brevity vs. longevity:
 - a. I don't think that that's actually seen as an important role of the hall director. This is me outside looking in right but I don't think that understanding the what the community is and how it shifts and changes is seen as that valuable because we don't invest in that role. The pay is what the pay is, living in is what it is. It's kind of an understanding, it seems that it's a transitory role that we'll probably have a person for two, three, maybe four years and then they'll be gone. I think there is actually a limit right to what it can be. So it's difficult to get kind of a deep understanding of what that is in a short time period. (Waylon)
 - b. I mean, I absolutely respect the hall director. And probably more so seeing the work that they do, seeing the day-to-day demands, seeing the day-to-day work, the after-hours work, There, there are things that, that I like come to understand about the position. There are, so so the position to me feels like it's built on young professionals because it asks a lot more than they're paid to do. So as a laborer-oriented feminist, I am concerned about the position actually and I think that it would be wise for Oak and probably many universities throughout the US to pay attention to that position for labor issues, you know, unionizing whether or not they're they're getting compensated for the appropriate amount of work. Whether or not, yeah, just thinking about, just thinking about labor because often hall directors will put in 14, 16-hour days and then they'll also have to work on the weekends and then they don't actually get any overtime pay or extra vacation. And so it just doesn't it doesn't seem like it's a sustainable position and that's true. We usually have two to three years before a person leaves the position here. High burnout. High turnover. Sometimes they even stick around for less time. (Reba)
 - c. I mean, I absolutely respect the hall director. And probably more so seeing the work that they do, seeing the day-to-day demands, seeing the day-to-day work, the after-hours work, There, there are things that, that I like come to understand about the position. There are, so so the position to me feels like it's built on young professionals because it asks a lot more than they're paid to do. So as a laborer-oriented feminist, I am concerned about the position actually and I think that it would be wise for Oak and probably many universities throughout the US to pay attention to that position for labor issues, you know, unionizing whether or not they're they're getting compensated for the appropriate amount of work. Whether or not, yeah, just thinking about, just thinking about labor because often hall directors will put in 14, 16-hour days and then they'll also have to work on the weekends and then they don't actually get any overtime pay or extra vacation. And so it just doesn't it doesn't seem like it's a sustainable position and that's true. We usually have two to three years before a person leaves the position here. High burnout. High turnover. Sometimes they even stick around for less time. (Reba)
 - d. I think, you know that most of them are new professions. They're right out of grad school. My anecdotal impression is that those positions at most universities turn over fairly quickly and so it's not going to be a position somebody's stays in for a real long time. And so I think that that, you know, and if you think about in terms

of developmental certainly, they're at a different stage than I am and so and I think that's probably something that people in my position would do well to remember and reflect upon but yeah, I think that it affects, it can affect the relationship. (Garth)

2. Awareness of student life

- a. But I didn't think about how it impacted what I did as a faculty member. I didn't think about you know... now when I see students in class I go, you know, I hope their roommate situation is okay, or I kinda hope they're getting enough to eat because I know the dining halls were closed and it was a rush on just the one that was open and now there's things I know and that inform what I do and how I teach as a faculty member in a different way. (Waylon)
- b. it also really has a serious impact on the academic environment. Those things are really crucial partners in the holistic development of a student. I think to be honest the real challenge at Oak and probably elsewhere and you might be able to tell me better than I know but it's just faculty just tend to kind of compartmentalize, here's what I'm doing. They don't really care like if a student's late and they seriously like they couldn't sleep all night because their roommate was doing whatever, you know things that we know can happen, they don't really care. The deadline was a deadline and you didn't turn it in. I'm mean, I know faculty who do things that way. And they're like sorry, life happens. You gotta deal with it. Rather than kind of being a little more empathetic and compassionate... okay. Tell me about what went on. Well my roommate's a drug dealer. Okay, let's maybe maybe I'll tell you what, a few more hours is okay to get this paper in and I think, you know things like that that are really things that are happening. (Waylon)
- c. but I think that those types of relationships are incredibly beneficial for sort of understanding the multiple wheels and cogs that are going on that may help a university run because when we are separate from each other we're less effective and even at a university where they are fairly open lines of communication there's still a lot of siloing. Both, I mean academic departments are siloed from each other but particularly sort of, rather than residence life and and faculty, you know classroom life are very siloed. So for me, it was very eye-opening and you know as a person who's pretty open to that anyway, I still feel like I learned a ton and also I feel like my hall director learned a ton because our worlds do not at all look the same. You know, we are not we don't know who's smoking pot in the residence halls, you know, that's not part of our lives but you know, they don't know what our job looks like. You know, there's I remember having really great conversations with my hall director about like, okay, so what is your job look like on a day-to-day basis and you know, what are you doing? Because they know, you know we teach, they may or even may not know that we teach in the classroom for 12 hours a week when that's our regular load. But in addition to that we have office hours. We have publication demands. We have committee work and you know, it doesn't ever stop in some ways, slightly differently than a residence life person's doesn't stop because we're not on call but at the same time whatever we're doing will expand to fit whatever space we give it. So, I think it was really beneficial in that the two different communities could sort of understand the shape of each other's jobs and lives in productive ways that helped think better about how we could each contribute best to student growth. (Dolly)

Analytic Category Development

Research Question	Finding Statement	Outcome/Consequence (Source of Research Problem)	Analytic Category
How do faculty members describe the role of res life professionals?	Faculty became students/HDs informally educated faculty about student life	Faculty weren't familiar with student life. Faculty sought insight from the hall directions with whom they worked and viewed HDs as experts because of their experience and their educational background that prepared them for a career in student life.	Faculty described the HDs as subject matter experts.
	Faculty learned new discipline/ HDs represented a new discipline.	The residence life world was new for participants. Faculty members learned the language and professional norms of residence life that helped them serve as a "bridge" between academic affairs/other faculty members and residence life.	
	Faculty relied on HDs to keep them informed.	Faculty members only lived in the student life world part-time and recognized that with the limited time they had, they couldn't consider themselves subject matter experts. As such, they relied on hall directors to keep them informed about their communities and to monitor the pulse of the neighborhoods or cohorts.	
How do faculty describe the <i>processes of working with</i> res life professionals?	Faculty lived with one foot in academia, one foot in student life.	Although they were expected to co-construct their communities with the hall directors, faculty members only lived in the residence life world part time.	Faculty described the HD role as providing continuity for the neighborhood or cohort.
	HD position provided stability regardless of who filled the position.	Although the faculty role may have lacked clarity, the HD position was clear and defined. This clarity was not linked to a <i>person</i> , but rather the position due to its defined nature. Faculty members could rely on the <i>position</i> to do the day-to-day functions of community development, even during personnel changes/transitions.	

Research Question	Finding Statement	Outcome/Consequence (Source of Research Problem)	Analytic Category
How do faculty describe their <i>relationships</i> with res life professionals?	Relationships varied by couple.	Relationships varied in levels of intimacy and participants connected differently with their HDs than others, but for several participants these relationships went beyond what a normal faculty member would develop with a student affairs staff member.	Faculty described HDs as close partners in student learning.
	A shared goal of student learning established common ground.	Faculty participants and HDs shared interdependent relationships in which they both worked together to positively impact student learning.	
	Faculty viewed HDs as peers.	Faculty members wanted to learn about HDs' day-to-day lives to be able to connect with them on a peer-to-peer/personal level and seemed to genuinely care for the people in the HD roles.	

If/Then/Therefore/Thus Matrix

Findings	How do I know this? What supports this?	Conclusions	Recommendations
<p>HDs informally educated faculty about student life.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Faculty members weren't familiar with student life and sought insight from the hall directions with whom they worked. • Faculty members expressed interest in learning more about what students learned outside of class and how their "outside" lives influenced their classroom/academic performance. • Participants described "teaching moments" in which they witnessed HDs challenging their students to reflect, communicate, confront conflict, and compromise. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HDs need to realize importance of their roles • HDs serve as reputable representatives of the discipline • Faculty participants appeared to value HDs' unique contributions toward student learning and held respect for the HDs' professional norms, even if they didn't fully understand them. • Participants viewed the HDs as experts because of their experience and their educational background that prepared them for a career in student life. • This could indicate that RLCs – and faculty members' relationships with residence life professional staff – can help facilitate a more holistic perspective of students through greater awareness of student life outside of the classroom. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Move from informal to formal: formalize structure for using HDs as educators for faculty; something that happens intentionally and not by accident • Empower HDs to see themselves as educators and as subject matter experts • Engaging in regular professional development • Providing job growth opportunities within the HD role to allow HDs to move up within the position and maintaining long-term relationships with faculty
<p>Faculty members learned a new discipline/ HDs represented a</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Faculty members learned the language and professional norms of residence life that helped them serve as a "bridge" between academic affairs/other faculty 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the more faculty members interact with students in multiple environments, the more faculty members can be 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When recruiting faculty for these roles, residence life professionals should seek faculty members who are willing engage in reciprocal learning

Findings	How do I know this? What supports this?	Conclusions	Recommendations
new discipline.	<p>members and residence life.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Faculty learned how to help develop RLC identity and how to help foster students' intellectual growth in students' residential environment. • Faculty learned more about students' holistic development and expressed a level of familiarity with recognizing students in crises. They recognized their limitations but knew the resources on campus to aid those students. 	<p>involved in several aspects of their students' lives and the bigger the benefit to students. This finding also suggests that if faculty members are more aware of what is going on in their students' lives outside of class, the better they can support them as humans and primarily focus on helping individual students be successful in their classes (Haynes & Janosik, 2012; Sriram et al., 2011).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invite faculty to SA conferences, webinars, etc.
HDs kept faculty members informed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As subject matter experts, HDs were those whose "boots [were] on the ground" and who were in positions to deeply understand the students' environments, how to connect with the residents, and ways in which community was built among the students in the residence halls. • HDs knew how the communities were developing and how their students were doing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Faculty members only lived in the student life world part-time and recognized that with the limited time they had, they couldn't consider themselves subject matter experts. As such, they relied on hall directors to keep them informed about their communities and to monitor the pulse of the neighborhoods or cohorts. • HDs helped guide the faculty members in providing academic enrichment and support opportunities by providing insight into the culture of a 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • place hall directors who are high performers in residential areas expected to foster faculty involvement

Findings	How do I know this? What supports this?	Conclusions	Recommendations
		<p>specific community, which faculty felt was critical to their success as RLC faculty affiliates.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trusting HDs to have this knowledge, faculty could focus their attention on the academic enrichment of their communities and develop opportunities that would attract students. 	
<p>Faculty lived with one foot in academia, one foot in student life.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • These worlds differed in many aspects including expectations, pedagogical philosophies, university commitments, educational backgrounds, and professional norms. • Faculty participants translated the language of residence life and served as the “bridge” between academic affairs and other faculty members. • Faculty members were busy with responsibilities across campus, including their full-time faculty responsibilities. The time commitment that residence life professionals expected of faculty members in RLC roles may have been unrealistic considering faculty members’ various responsibilities elsewhere on campus. • Faculty participants indicated that they did not necessarily have the 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Although they were expected to co-construct their communities with the hall directors, faculty members only lived in the residence life world part time. This left limited resources to dedicate to their residential communities and their relationships with their hall directors. • Faculty had limited time to dedicate to community, but invested in other ways • Boundary spanning • The participants did not indicate that the HDs were at fault for this, but rather recognized it as a professional norm in residence life. This could have been highlighted because 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • relationship between the faculty member and the hall director cannot lie within the periphery of either the faculty affiliate’s or the HD’s job descriptions. Building the relationship must be an intentional effort on both parts. • Provide clear expectations • Have candid conversations about professional norms and realistic expectations – ex: 6 hours per week: faculty and res life may interpret that differently

Findings	How do I know this? What supports this?	Conclusions	Recommendations
	<p>time to commit, so instead they invested by sharing their expertise, putting forth their best efforts to be partners, and showing interest in hall directors' perspectives and day-to-day tasks.</p>	<p>faculty members tend to work more independently and do not work in collaborations as often with other departments on campus. This culture of meetings is common in the residence life world, perhaps because many of these organizations are expected to collaborate across campus, thus creating a need for everyone to meet regularly to discuss progress. Although academic affairs-student affairs collaboration literature identifies bureaucratic barriers that impede success, these barriers often allude to the general, traditional higher education environment, rather than administrative barriers specifically within departments like residence life (Arcelus, 2011; Kezar, 2001).</p>	
<p>HD position provided stability regardless of who filled the position.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Faculty associate role lacked defined expectations, processes, and procedures. • Although the faculty role may have lacked clarity, the HD position was clear and defined. This clarity was not linked to a <i>person</i>, but rather the 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The hall director's ability to perform his or her job was an aspect that was mentioned several times during faculty participants' interviews. This suggests that it is important for 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • place hall directors who are high performers in residential areas expected to foster faculty involvement • Consider how long HDs serve in roles in specific communities and if department's staffing model supports and/or

Findings	How do I know this? What supports this?	Conclusions	Recommendations
	<p>position due to its defined nature. Faculty members could rely on the <i>position</i> to do the day-to-day functions of community development, even during personnel changes/transitions.</p>	<p>residence life administrators to be deliberate about who is placed in residential areas (e.g. HD roles) where faculty are expected to be involved. Because residence life is not the faculty's world, they must trust that the HD knows the job and can perform it well.</p>	<p>facilitates long-term relationship development with faculty</p>
<p>Relationships varied by couple.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • These varied in levels of intimacy and participants connected differently with their HDs than others, but for several participants these relationships went beyond what a normal faculty member would develop with a student affairs staff member. • Relationship influenced by personalities, job performance, trust, peer-to-peer support, reciprocal learning, professional experience, individual characteristics, and duration of time spent in roles associated w/ RLC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This level of intimacy may have been heightened because of the faculty worked and lived alongside HDs. • In this study, both structural support and individual characteristics seemed to play a critical role in the strength of the relationships between faculty participants and their hall directors. This suggests that there is no silver bullet to achieving a successful collaboration between faculty members and residence life professionals. That hall directors perform well in their jobs and take the time to know their faculty partners as humans seemed to be foundational for the 	

Findings	How do I know this? What supports this?	Conclusions	Recommendations
		<p>relationships, but it could not flourish unless the structural support was present, too.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • faculty director role in an RLC has a greater potential for developing stronger collaborations with residence life professional staff, as they are expected to regularly spend time and work with their HD to develop their communities, whereas cohort advisors did not have that expectation. 	
<p>A shared goal of student learning established common ground.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Faculty participants considered themselves as partners in building their communities' identities and climates. • For many participants, they viewed their role as fostering academic and intellectual enrichment among students in their communities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Faculty participants and HDs shared interdependent relationships in which they both worked together to positively impact student learning. • As they worked with their hall directors, faculty members gained an expanded idea of ways in which students learn in the collegiate environment • Faculty members and HDs both contribute to the residential community, but sometimes in different ways. • Depending upon the strength of their relationship with the HD, this co-construction could be 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • seek faculty involvement in their RLCs <i>as an avenue by which to improve student learning</i> – not faculty involvement as an end unto itself nor to merely “check a box.” • Explicitly state student learning outcomes - increase level of rapport w/ faculty if they can translate into language; borrowing from academic principals to foster student learning in the halls, like assessment of student learning

Findings	How do I know this? What supports this?	Conclusions	Recommendations
		<p>considered a collaboration, a critical component to the success of a residential learning community program.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participants cited examples of how they believed their HDs were the experts in college student psychosocial and cognitive development. They also discussed the programs and educational efforts created by their HDs to address the psychosocial, moral, and cognitive growth of their residents, including conflict management during disciplinary hearings. This is significant because the student development community of practice indicates that student affairs professionals are contributors to students' educational processes. As established in the early considerations of faculty-student affairs collaborations work of Reger and Hyman (1988), when faculty members view HDs as having roles in student development, rather than just administration of student services, 	

Findings	How do I know this? What supports this?	Conclusions	Recommendations
		<p>faculty members may feel more favorably about developing collaborations.</p>	
<p>Faculty viewed HDs as peers.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Faculty members wanted to learn about HDs’ day-to-day lives to be able to connect with them on a peer-to-peer/personal level and seemed to genuinely care for the people in the HD roles. • They respected the expertise the HDs brought to student development and sought feedback from their HDs concerning strategies to engage students differently in co-curricular learning. • Faculty respected skills that res life pros demonstrated when helping students navigate college • Faculty viewed res life pros as serving important roles on campus • Participants acknowledged that the HD position is more than their original, surface-level understanding of the position. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • that the faculty participants and the HDs could benefit from being a support system for each other because of their shared experiences as live-in professionals who had to navigate the work-life balance and the world of student cocurricular life. • according to Loretta, the key informant, the HDs appeared intimidated by the faculty members because of stereotypes about faculty or because faculty often have PhDs in their disciplines. Faculty participants indicated, however, that they viewed the relationship as one between peers and they viewed their HDs as colleagues. This difference in perceptions is important and presented a potential disruptor in the working relationship that, at minimum, faculty may desire. Faculty in RLCs may want to be equals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It may be that seasoned faculty members who are familiar with the RLC and residence life processes can better assist a new hall director transition to heightened professional expectations, translate the language of faculty, and develop confidence in an area of expertise. • Encourage HDs to use their graduate educations to provide sound research and best practices to justify their work and to help faculty understand student life and development outside of class. • Encourage hall directors to show interest in faculty members’ roles and research interests outside of their affiliation with residence life; • Encourage both faculty members and hall director to participate in “job shadowing,” in which HDs attend faculty members’ classes, committee meetings, and research sites and faculty members attend HDs’ conduct hearings,

Findings	How do I know this? What supports this?	Conclusions	Recommendations
		<p>with their HDs, but their hall directors, as young and less experienced professionals, may not reciprocate that view.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • both faculty member and hall directors must practice reciprocal learning: while the faculty member may be open to learning about the HD role to appreciate and understand the HD perspective, a hall director must be interested in and willing to learn about the faculty member's discipline, research interests, and the day-to-day responsibilities of teaching in the collegiate environment. The faculty participants wanted to be contributors to the residence life staff and to share their expertise. They wanted to share their research and their experiences as full-time faculty members with their HDs. HDs can find an avenue by which to build stronger relationships with their faculty members by simply showing an interest in their collaborators' 	<p>professional staff meetings, and student staff one-on-ones. Although this may challenge the traditional structure of higher education, both faculty and HDs must create space to learn more about how the "other" approaches and relates to his or her work. This provides different perspectives from which to approach the relationship and, ultimately, the collaboration that will enhance student learning.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage in shared research, make shared contributions to the field of higher ed, SA, and faculty's area of expertise • Engaging in a review and analysis of the residence department culture and how it inhibits and/or promotes partnerships with faculty members

Findings	How do I know this? What supports this?	Conclusions	Recommendations
		“other world” as faculty members.	

Findings Situated in Literature

Finding	Literature	Situated	Source(s)
HDs informally educated faculty about student life.	Philpott and Strange (2003) showed that student affairs professionals' perceptions of faculty were, generally, that faculty are quite removed from students' day-to-day experiences	In Philpott and Strange's (2003) case study of faculty and student affairs collaborations, researchers found evidence that student affairs professionals' perceptions of faculty were that they seemed detached from students' daily experiences. Faculty participants did not necessarily consider students' lives outside of the classroom as a piece that could impact their academic performance, so in some ways these faculty members were removed from students' daily experiences at Oak.	Philpott & Strange (2003): Case study of faculty and SA collaboration; examined dynamics and progress of a committee of faculty and SA pros as they collaborated on planning and implementation of a residential college
HDs informally educated faculty about student life.	Decisions regarding curriculum, choice of instruction method, subject matter, standards of student competence, and aspects of student life that relate to educational processes are often driven by the powerful voices of faculty members (AAUP, 1966).	In some ways, faculty members have a strong voice in the aspects of student life that related to educational processes, yet their world often lacks a connection to students' lives outside of the classroom that could impact their educational processes	AAUP (1966): Statement on government of colleges and universities; foster constructive thought and action among universities representatives to share responsibility and action among components of the academic institution
Faculty members learned a new discipline/ HDs represented a new discipline.	Faculty uninformed as to what, specifically, student affairs units do (Browne et al., 2009; Peltier, 2014).	Prior to involvement in the RLC program, many faculty participants were not aware of what student affairs did.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Browne et al (2009): Insights gained from five-year experience of two senior faculty who lived in residence hall to encourage greater academic presence in res hall programming • Peltier (2014): Dissertation; single-site case study that explores faculty perceptions of the

Finding	Literature	Situated	Source(s)
			<p>roles and functions of SA personnel; examines scope and nature of relationship b/t AA and SA</p>
<p>Faculty members learned a new discipline/ HDs represented a new discipline.</p>	<p>Faculty appear to be interested in learning more about the work of residence life and seem to be open to dialogue about student learning outcomes (Peltier, 2014; Philpott & Strange, 2003; Reger & Hyman, 1988).</p>	<p>Faculty respected the work performed by the hall directors and expressed interest in learning more about their educational backgrounds and their knowledge about students' holistic development.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peltier (2014): Dissertation; single-site case study that explores faculty perceptions of the roles and functions of SA personnel; examines scope and nature of relationship b/t AA and SA • Philpott & Strange (2003): Case study of faculty and SA collaboration; examined dynamics and progress of a committee of faculty and SA pros as they collaborated on planning and implementation of a residential college
<p>Faculty members learned a new discipline/ HDs represented a new discipline.</p>	<p>Infrequent contact between faculty and student affairs professionals, competition for student time and institutional resources, and lack of interest or knowledge about the functions of the other are well cited in the literature (Arcelus, 2011; Brown et al., 2009; Kezar, 2001; Philpott & Strange, 2003)</p>	<p>That contact was more frequent between faculty members and hall directors led faculty members to learn more about residence life functions. There was no evidence that faculty members “competed” with the HDs for students’ time. In fact, faculty members relied on HDs to keep a pulse on the community and to help faculty members develop strategies to engage with students in their communities. This could suggest that because the HDs and the faculty members were working</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arcelus (2011): Challenges SA pros to engage faculty in partnerships where student learning is at the forefront • Browne et al (2009): Insights gained from five-year experience of two senior faculty who lived in residence hall to encourage greater academic presence in res hall programming • Kezar (2001): Results of national study of academic and student affairs that examines reasons for

Finding	Literature	Situating	Source(s)
		<p>together, they did not feel as though they were competing for students' time. Additionally, creating opportunities where faculty members can interact more frequently with residence life staff could increase interest and knowledge in about the functions of each other.</p>	<p>collaboration, number of institutions engaged in partnerships and types of collaboration, successful approaches, and barrier to and facilitators of collaboration</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Philpott & Strange (2003): Case study of faculty and SA collaboration; examined dynamics and progress of a committee of faculty and SA pros as they collaborated on planning and implementation of a residential college
<p>HDs kept faculty members informed.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When faculty members and student affairs professionals coordinate their resources, they can personally observe what research shows about the impact of college – that students' intellectual development cannot be distinguished from their personal development (Browne et al., 2009; Sandeen, 2004; Umbach & Wawrzynski, 2005) • By creating better relationships across campus, faculty and student affairs professionals can improve retention and academic performance by helping undergraduate students acclimate to the institution, assisting 	<p>Faculty participants had front-row seats to students' experiences at Oak, both inside and outside the classroom. They witnessed how students' intellectual development and academic performance can be deeply impacted by circumstances or events in their lives. They worked with their HDs to ensure students were supported in all aspects of their experience at Oak.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Umbach & Wawrzynski (2005): Study using 2 national data sets to explore relationship b/t faculty practices and student engagement. • Frost et al. (2010): Review of proven partnerships supporting collaboration; investigation of how each partnership area contributes to the academic success of community college students. • Kuh (1996): Principles to guide institutional efforts to enhance student learning and personal development by purposefully integrating curricular goals and outcomes with students'

Finding	Literature	Situated	Source(s)
	<p>them in transitioning to social and academic demands of college rigor, fostering a sense of personal identity and community, and encouraging persistence in college (Frost et al., 2010; Kezar, 2001; Kuh, 1996; Love & Love, 1995; Nesheim, et al., 2007)</p>		<p>experiences outside the classroom.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Love & Love (1995): Report examines necessity for holistic learning; review and evaluation of research findings, theoretical models, and relationship and interdependency of these developmental areas.
<p>Faculty lived with one foot in academia, one foot in student life.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Matthews et al., 2012 – Structural barriers • Jessup-Anger et al., 2011 – Barriers to faculty involvement • They interact with constituents outside their organization, represent perceptions and expectations of each side to the other, and negotiate norms to achieve mutual objectives (Weerts & Sandmann, 2010). • Valuation of research: Golde & Pribbenow, 2000; Pearson & Bowman, 2000 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Structural barriers: Office spaces (faculty office and RLC office), ambiguous processes, procedures, and expectations, time to dedicate to HD relationship and RLC, learning to navigate new world, working within the professional norms of residence life • Faculty act as bridge between residence life and other faculty members. They are the RLCs’ connections to faculty members: they invite faculty, they encourage faculty to get involved, they communicate with other faculty about the work that HDs/res life does 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jessup-Anger et al. (2011): Case study that explored how faculty made meaning of their experiences in a newly developed residential college. Findings revealed that faculty focused on determining how to prioritize the numerous opportunities for involvement while also working to define their unconventional roles as teaching-focused faculty. • Weerts & Sandmann (2010): Multi-case study design that examined boundary spanning practices of research universities that have adopted a community engagement agenda. • Pearson & Bowman (2000): Overview of the faculty role on campus in terms of specific work activities and reward systems. Discusses barriers to

Finding	Literature	Situated	Source(s)
Faculty lived with one foot in academia, one foot in student life.	As faculty members at research-intensive universities seek promotion, they are encouraged to prioritize research activities and to avoid pursuits that distract from scholarly work, including opportunities to interact with students outside of class. This faculty-student disconnect can negatively impact student learning and retention (Kuh, 1995; Mayhew, Rockenbach et al., 2016). Faculty members' agendas may necessarily focus on tenure and research activities, thus influencing their priorities and the time they allocate to their various work responsibilities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most participants were already tenured, so they were not as focused on the tenure process and could instead focus on their involvement within the RLCs. • Because of their involvement in the RLCs, they built relationships with their students in classes differently than they did prior to working and/or living in the RLC environment. They had a fuller awareness of student life. • Research and other faculty responsibilities kept them rooted in the world of academia, but their connection and commitment to the RLC influenced their priorities, too. 	<p>collaboration b/t faculty and SA.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kuh (1995): Interviewed college seniors about out-of-class experiences associated w/ learning and personal development. Respondents attributed wide range of desirable outcomes to life outside the classroom. • Mayhew, Rockenbach et al. (2016): Synthesis of over 1800 individual research investigations to provide deeper understanding of how the undergraduate experience affects student populations.
Faculty lived with one foot in academia, one foot in student life.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Faculty who are involved in RLCs do so for a variety of reasons. Some are personally or professionally motivated, seeking to develop closer relationships with students or to experiment with interdisciplinary and innovative pedagogy (Golde & Pribbenow, 2000; Haynes & Janosik, 2012; Kennedy & Townsend, 2005) 	Various reasons why faculty participants got involved in RLCs. Patsy enjoyed her experience on a study tour and wanted other opportunities to build deeper, more meaningful and student-driven relationships with students. Pam was tapped by her department chair. (?) Garth found an opportunity to combine his interest in student development with his passion of teaching about social justice.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Golde & Pribbenow (2000): Through interviews, explored experiences and motivations of 15 faculty members involved in residential learning communities. Shed light on role that academic culture plays in RLC involvement. Also explored implications for collaborative efforts b/t SA and AA. • Haynes & Janosik (2012): Quantitative exploration that identified the benefits

Finding	Literature	Situated	Source(s)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some have also reported that their RLC involvement provided them opportunities to know undergraduate students on a deeper level and to connect with them in more meaningful ways (Haynes & Janosik, 2012; Sriram et al., 2011) 		<p>that faculty and SA staff gain from being involved in RLCs, explored differences between two groups. Faculty and SA report gaining intrinsic benefits more often than extrinsic benefits</p>
<p>Relationships varied by couple.</p>	<p>Much of the literature cites structural changes, planning, and senior administrative support as significant to creating successful collaborations (Brower & Inkelas, 2010; Golde & Pribbenow, 2000; Inkelas, Jessup-Anger, Benjamin, & Wawrzynski, 2018; Inkelas & Associates, 2007; Kennedy, 2011; Schuh, 1999). However, studies conducted by LoParco (1991) and Kezar (2001) emphasized individual characteristics of the stakeholders</p>	<p>Faculty participants cited many things to the strength of their relationships with their HDs, including: personality, job performance, intelligence, proximity to office, peer-to-peer support, willingness to educate faculty on student development/student life, shared interests, mutual respect, having support of Loretta, input in strategic vision of the RLC</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inkelas & Associates (2007): Comprehensive report of findings that presents results from a survey of over 22,000 undergraduates representing over 40 American postsecondary institutions. Examines the contributions of participation in LLPs on undergrad student outcomes. Kennedy (2011): Qualitative exploration of what motivated tenured and tenure-track faculty at 3 research-intensive institutions to participate or not participate in RLCs. LoParco (1991): Case study approach. How key institutional leaders work together; 15 institutional members including faculty, administrators, and students.
<p>A shared goal of student learning established</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Faculty supported learning goals that included encouraging critical thinking skills, 	<p>Faculty and HDs worked together on the strategic development of their communities. They worked</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hardwick (2001): Examined faculty perceptions of SA staff roles in student

Finding	Literature	Situated	Source(s)
common ground.	enhancing students' self-understanding, developing moral character, helping students develop personal values, and providing for students' emotional development, all of which enhance students' holistic development. (Hardwick, 2001)	together to achieve learning outcomes for the students in their communities and ensured intellectual development was represented in programs and activities. Helping students learn the "real world" stuff <i>outside</i> the classroom so students can focus on learning <i>in</i> the classroom	learning; 300 participants from 20 institutions
A shared goal of student learning established common ground.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reger and Hyman (1988) found evidence to suggest that student affairs staff members who viewed themselves primarily as administrators and whose sole responsibilities were to deliver student services were less likely to initiate collaborations with faculty. On the other hand, staff who took an educational, student development-oriented approach to their work were perceived more favorably by faculty when it came to fostering collaborations. 	Faculty members viewed HDs as partners in student learning and respected the expertise they brought to the relationship. Faculty admired the way the HDs worked with their students and challenged them to learn from their experiences in their living environments, like through roommate conflicts and student conduct meetings. Faculty and HDs framed their partnerships using student learning outcomes, which was another attempt to focus on student learning. It was also an expectation of the faculty role that the person collaborate with the hall director to create a learning-centered environment within the RLC.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blimling (2001): Summary of reform initiatives influencing SA. Proposes that SA has matured as a field and can't be regarded as having a single, coherent purpose. • Reger & Hyman (1988): Survey of chief student affairs officers on collaboration efforts in delivering student development programs • Blimling & Whitt (1998): Based on findings of a group of administrators in NASPA and ACPA, identifies best practices in SA, presents research used to define the practices, and gives examples of how to use these principles in the field.
A shared goal of student learning established common ground.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • evidence indicates that student affairs professionals can create more collaborative relationships with faculty by setting aside predetermined notions 	Faculty learned more about hall directors and how they related to their work. However, faculty participants also felt as though this interest and/or effort was not reciprocated – hall directors and other	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Golde & Pribbenow (2000): Through interviews, explored experiences and motivations of 15 faculty members involved in residential learning communities.

Finding	Literature	Situated	Source(s)
	<p>of faculty involvement and the roles faculty will be expected to fill in cross-divisional collaborations (Golde & Pribbenow, 2000). Limiting the perception of how valuable faculty members can be for student engagement can also limit the potential of a successful collaboration. Barriers are amplified when faculty members and student affairs professionals focus only on their differences rather than on working together to help students achieve gains in learning (Arcelus, 2011).</p>	<p>residence life staff members did not know what the faculty world was like. Sometimes, expectations (including time) were communicated without regard for faculty members' full time roles at Oak.</p>	<p>Shed light on role that academic culture plays in RLC involvement. Also explored implications for collaborative efforts b/t SA and AA.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arcelus (2011): Challenges SA pros to engage faculty in partnerships where student learning is at the forefront
<p>A shared goal of student learning established common ground.</p>	<p>Student affairs professionals felt that faculty had unrealistic, projected visions of academic learning and appeared to be selective in the tradition of academic elitism and rigor (Philpott & Strange, 2003).</p>	<p>Faculty participants sometimes challenged their hall directors to ensure that students' intellectual development was being addressed, but they also recognized that it wasn't necessary for everything. Faculty members found new ways to incorporate academics into their programming and student engagement strategies. Expressed humility when speaking in terms of learning from their HD and in recognizing the hard work the HDs put in.</p>	<p>Philpott & Strange (2003): Case study of faculty and SA collaboration; examined dynamics and progress of a committee of faculty and SA pros as they collaborated on planning and implementation of a residential college</p>
<p>A shared goal of student learning established common ground.</p>	<p>These collaborations become more powerful when they are intentional and driven by a higher purpose – rather than solely to achieve</p>	<p>Even as faculty members and HDs were figuring out how to work with one another, they worked toward student learning. The destination was the</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arcelus (2011): Challenges SA pros to engage faculty in partnerships where student learning is at the forefront

Finding	Literature	Situated	Source(s)
	goals – and can improve the overall environment of an institution (Arcelus, 2011; Ellett & Schmidt, 2011; Magolda, 2005).	same, even if the road looked different.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ellett & Schmidt (2011): Explores perceptions that faculty members of have community development in RLCs. • Magolda (2005): Collaborations b/t SA and faculty are typically viewed as essential to creating successful student learning environments, but they are more complicated than they may appear.
A shared goal of student learning established common ground.	By collaborating on initiatives and interventions, faculty members and student affairs professionals can save time and resources, can see student learning from multiple perspectives, and can coordinate practices that are more effective (Frost et al., 2010; Kezar, 2001).	Both brought different perspectives to the relationship and to the student learning goals they had for the RLC. They worked together to create community climates conducive to student learning, including intellectual challenge and personal safety.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Frost et al. (2010): Review of proven partnerships supporting collaboration; investigation of how each partnership area contributes to the academic • Kezar (2001): Results of national study of academic and student affairs that examines reasons for collaboration, number of institutions engaged in partnerships and types of collaboration, successful approaches, and barrier to and facilitators of collaboration
Faculty viewed HDs as peers.	Campus climates are complex and, traditionally, professionals in academic affairs and student affairs are entrenched in institutional cultures that discourage	Sometimes the relationship can be difficult to develop based on meetings, time, proximity, and competing professional obligations.	Schroeder (1999): Explores the significance of forging partnerships b/t AA and SA – partnerships that advance student learning, foster educational attainment, and reinvigorate

Finding	Literature	Situated	Source(s)
Faculty viewed HDs as peers.	<p>collaborations (Schroeder, 1999).</p> <p>Perceptions of the “other”: Golde & Pribbenow, 2000; Peltier, 2014; Philpott & Strange, 2003</p>	<p>Before their roles in RLCs, faculty members didn’t have a perception of HDs. They didn’t really even know they existed.</p>	<p>undergraduate education.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Golde & Pribbenow (2000): Through interviews, explored experiences and motivations of 15 faculty members involved in residential learning communities. Shed light on role that academic culture plays in RLC involvement. Also explored implications for collaborative efforts b/t SA and AA. • Peltier (2014): Dissertation; single-site case study that explores faculty perceptions of the roles and functions of SA personnel; examines scope and nature of relationship b/t AA and SA
Faculty viewed HDs as peers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Faculty do not consider residence life professionals as potential collaborators in meeting student learning goals (Arcelus, 2011; Golde & Pribbenow, 2000; Jessup-Anger et al., 2011). • all stakeholders – RLC students, faculty, and student affairs staff – should be considered equal contributors in building successful living learning communities (Ellet & Schmidt, 2011) 	<p>Faculty members viewed HDs as partners in student learning and respected the expertise they brought to the relationship. Faculty admired the way the HDs worked with their students and challenged them to learn from their experiences in their living environments, like through roommate conflicts and student conduct meetings.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arcelus (2011): Challenges SA pros to engage faculty in partnerships where student learning is at the forefront • Jessup-Anger et al. (2011): Case study that explored how faculty made meaning of their experiences in a newly developed residential college. Findings revealed that faculty focused on determining how to prioritize the numerous opportunities for involvement while also working to define

Finding	Literature	Situated	Source(s)
			<p>their unconventional roles as teaching-focused faculty.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ellet & Schmidt (2011): Ellett & Schmidt (2011): Explores perceptions that faculty members of have community development in RLCs.

VITA

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Dissertation: RESIDENTIAL LEARNING COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS:
FACULTY PERCEPTIONS OF HALL DIRECTORS' ROLES IN STUDENT
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