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NAVIGATING THE MURKY MIDDLE: UNDERSTANDING HOW CAREER
ASPIRATIONS AND EXPERIENCES INFLUENCE THE CAREER PROGRESSION OF
WOMEN IDENTIFYING, STUDENT AFFAIRS, MIDDLE MANAGERS

by

Lindsey Gilmore

A dissertation submitted to the faculty of

Bellarmino University

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree

Doctor of Philosophy

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BELLARMINE UNIVERSITY

The Undersigned Faculty Committee Approves the

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Navigating the Murky Middle: Understanding How Career Aspirations and Experiences
Influence the Career Progression of Women Identifying, Student Affairs, Middle Managers

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Abstract

Even though women have made tremendous strides in many facets of education, ascending the administrative and leadership ranks within universities at a proportionate ratio to the number of women who peak as middle managers is not one of them. In the past 40 years, the number of women serving as presidents of universities across the nation has increased less than 10% from 21.1% in 1975 to 30.1% in 2016 (ACE, 2018). If a woman does find herself serving at the helm of an institution, it is more than likely at a “private, liberal arts schools rather than at doctoral granting, research, and comprehensive institution” due to the perceived male characteristics required for successful leading such institutions (Collins, 2009, p. 6). Therefore, an examination of those women serving in middle manager roles must be conducted. The purpose of this dissertation research is to dive into the lived experiences of women identifying, student affairs, middle managers in the hopes of gaining an enhanced understanding of their career aspirations and experiences. This phenomenological study is grounded in a modern feminist approach as well as motivational theory related to industrial organizational psychology. The study consists of 15 women identifying, student affairs, middle managers with terminal degrees. One interview lasting from one to two hours was conducted with each participant via Zoom. The interviews were recorded with permission and then transcribed. Two phases of coding emerged from the transcription data in order for themes to emerge. The hope is for this study to assist universities as well as senior level administrators in creating a more supportive environment and individually encouraging middle manager women, especially those with such aspirations, to seek advancement within the field.

(Keywords: Women, Career Progression, Middle Manager, Family Planning, Student Affairs, Leadership)

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me, making me laugh, and being an amazing role model of what it means to be a mom and have a career. NB, thank you for allowing me to have my big emotions, for writing days in my living room with banana bread or in the coffee shop, and for being a constant support no matter how ugly it gets. RC, thank you for believing in me when I did not, for caring about my research and the work I love to do, celebrating with me, and being my editor in chief. I cannot thank you enough.

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To the classes of 2020 and 2021, congratulations. Not only have you successfully graduated but you did so during a global pandemic. For that, we each earn an extra gold star, pat on the back, cookie after dinner, etc., for you have completed what felt like an impossible goal at times.

To all the little girls in my life: Charlotte, Lilly, Nora, and McKenna, this work is for you. May the findings in this study be null and void as you navigate your professional and educational journeys whatever those may be. I hope the world you grow up in embraces you for who you are.

Oh...and guess what? I DID IT!

Dedication

This dissertation is for all the women and little girls alike who have big dreams and big emotions. Always go for it and remember to quiet that internal voice that says, “you are not good enough” for you *are* good enough. You do not need anyone, especially the opposite gender, to affirm your worth. Your emotions do not make you lesser. They make you brave, courageous, and authentic. Never pull other women down, lift each other up and add a seat at the table instead of taking one away. We deserve to be in the circles in which decisions are being made. Furthermore, this work is dedicated to all the giants who have come before as we are standing on the shoulders of the work you have accomplished and the glass of the ceilings you have already shattered. Thank you.

To the men who decided to read this dissertation, thank you. May your voice never be used to harm, but to support those whose voices are dampened. May your privilege be used to create more seats at the table for women and other minorities. In the words of the great late Justice Ruth Bader Ginsberg, “Women will have achieved true equality when men share with them the responsibility of bringing up the next generation.” Will you pick up the banner and march for that responsibility?

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Chapter One: Introduction

“Running the world while we’re cleaning up the kitchen. Making bank, shaking hands, driving 80 tryna get home just to feed the baby. Skipping the bread for the butter. Changing our minds like we change our hair color. Yeah, ever since the beginning we’ve been redesigning women.” – Redesigning Women, The Highwomen

Overview and Statement of the Problem

When viewing the higher education landscape, one cannot help but notice that women are not present at the helm of US colleges and universities. Even though women are equal to and have even surpassed men in the attainment of college degrees, there is still work to be done on closing the gender gap in higher education. While there has been significant improvement in the representation of women in higher education as seen in enrollment numbers as well as graduation rates, the successes seen there have happened over the past 40 years (Allan, 2011). While the aforementioned progress has been slow, the progress of women being represented in administration within the field of higher education is even slower (Diehl & Dzubinski, 2016). From the outside, it would seem that higher education may have found equity by the data that they provide to the public through student data as well as the number of women faculty and staff seen within higher education. However, the equity does not exist within the leadership levels of institutions across the nation. With so many degrees being earned by women, why are there not more women leading these institutions of learning and providing a much-needed perspective and voice? According to a study involving the career paths of women university presidents, none of the participants had the desire or aspiration to become a president (Springer & Clark, 2007), meaning perhaps they stumbled into the role, served initially as an interim, or had no desire until the opportunity presented itself. This is concerning if the majority of senior-level women leaders

did not have those career aspirations. Perhaps this in and of itself is a large reason why there is a lack of representation of women amongst senior level leaders.

With the lack of research in the area of female ascension into senior level leadership in higher education, particularly in student affairs, there is a desire and a need to learn why so few women have been successful in navigating the glass labyrinth and breaking through the glass ceiling in higher education (Jones & Komives, 2001; Yakaboski & Donahoo, 2010). The bulk of the limited research focuses on women who have arrived or currently hold senior level positions within higher education. However, the current study will examine the question through a different lens and focus on middle manager women in Student affairs who could potentially aspire to obtain those senior level positions, as perhaps there is a tipping point or a fork in their career paths and experiences that might lead them more towards those senior level positions.

Paradigm of False Progress for Women

Even though women have made strides to be more represented in education as students, terminal degree holders, and even employment within higher education, women are not adequately represented in senior level leadership positions throughout a myriad of departments in higher education. In the 1980s, women and men were attaining bachelor's and master's degrees at the same rate. Now, women have surpassed men in all levels of degrees including doctoral degrees, but there is still work to do on closing the gender gap in higher education (Diehl & Dzubinski, 2016). In 2003, women held 50.6% of the positions in higher education, which seems promising, however that number dwindles when examining those at the top (Allan, 2011; NCES, 2006). With so many qualified women ready to ascend into leadership positions, something, whether it is internal or external in nature is limiting these women.

One area of higher education that has seen an increase in women administrators and even parity with their male counterparts is the community college sector (Allan, 2011). While this is definitely considered a successful step toward equality for women administrators, it is concerning that this progress is not seen within comprehensive nor research classified intuitions. The increase of the presence of women on higher education campuses as a whole does not speak to women's overall experience nor the campus climate that these women have been exposed to (Townsend & Twombly, 2007). Therefore, the actual equity is unknown. According to King and Gomez, in 2008, 34% of the senior level academic administrators within higher education were women (as cited in Allan, 2011). However, even if a woman does successfully attain a senior level leadership role, the position is more than likely to be in female dominated academic fields such as the social sciences which typically make lower salaries and are not seen as prestigious positions compared to some of the harder sciences (Allan, 2011). Moving away from the academic side of higher education, in 2017 the American Council on Education (ACE) reported through their survey that 30% of those holding the position of president within a college or university were women.

Purpose of the Study

Through the examination of the lived experiences of women identifying, student affairs, middle managers, this study will discover how aspirations and experiences have affected their career progression. Additionally, this study will develop a stronger understanding of how aspirations as well as personal and professional factors may affect these women's career progression. Subsequently, this study will bring to light the barriers that these women have previously and currently experience in the field. Even though most of the bias and barriers that women experience is built into the infrastructure of the institution and therefore unintentional

and not overt in nature, they still need to be brought to light (Bird, 2011; Diehl & Dzubinksi, 2016). With such ingrained gender bias existing, many women many not see themselves as potential leaders, however additional research must be conducted to gain a better understanding on how women view themselves and their leadership through a gendered lens (Ely, Ibarra, & Kolb, 2011; Ibarra, Ely, & Kolb, 2013; Diehl & Dzubinksi, 2016;). Currently, women's voices are not being heard at the senior levels as they do not exist in representative numbers.

Research Questions

The landscape of higher education feels like an accepting one where differences are recognized and celebrated. However, it is an occupational field that is rooted in a patriarchal history with many masculine policies and tendencies still existing and reinforcing the gendered structures that exist (Acker, 1990; Diehl & Dzubinksi, 2016). Therefore, the voices of women found in leadership roles are important to begin to unpack their experiences to understand how to increase their presence at senior level leadership. This would allow leadership at senior levels to become more diversified and bring a different style and perspective to leading our institutions.

In order to better understand the lived experiences of women, student affairs, middle managers this study utilizes a phenomenological qualitative approach to address three questions:

RQ1: How do women identifying, student affairs, middle managers understand and navigate their career progression?

RQ2: What experiences have women identifying, student affairs, middle managers found to be beneficial in their career progression?

RQ3: How do career aspirations, as well as personal and professional factors, impact career progression?

1. Do these aspirations hinder or enhance their ability to overcome barriers?

This study is grounded in modern feminist theory, allowing the research to explore an alternate reality than the patriarchal truth that is more commonly represented in the current literature (Hunter, 2005; Spangler, 2011). The phenomenological approach to this study allows the researcher to gain a better understanding of the lived experience of the participants and their creation of pluralistic realities that are true to each participant and their journey (van Manen, 2015). Most of the current research that exists does not focus on the truth of women in student affairs, but more so about the field of student affairs and women are more of an afterthought if mentioned at all (Jones & Komives, 2001; Yakaboski & Donahoo, 2010). This study begins to bring focus back to a very large subpopulation within the field of student affairs (Collins, 2009). Modern feminist theory is then used as a cradle in which the rest of the study is nestled. From there, the conceptual framework is developed that highlights connections of personal as well as professional factors as well as experiences that affect a woman's career aspirations while dealing with the hidden and overt barriers she may face.

Definition of Key Terms

Language is an important part of someone's lived experience. Therefore, making sure the researcher and the participants are using the same language appropriately is important. Below are some important terms that are used throughout the study.

Campus climate. Campus climate is important when trying to decipher the day-to-day world in which these women live. The term *campus climate* has been something that student affairs and higher education administrators alike use to try and describe the pulse that one experiences if they are a part of the community. At some institutions, the climate may be different for faculty, staff and students. Many times, the words environment or atmosphere can be used in place of climate proving the ambiguity of the definition of campus climate (Hall &

Sandler, 1982). For this study, the definition developed by Peterson and Spencer in 1990 will be used. Peterson and Spencer (1990) defined climate as “the current common patterns of important dimensions of organizational life or its members’ perceptions of and attitudes toward those dimensions” (as cited in Hart & Fellabaum, 2008, p. 223). Peterson and Spencer wrote about how this definition has a small focus on the culture aspect of the organization and a stronger focus on the interpersonal interaction that also occurs as “climate, compared with culture, is more concerned with *current perceptions and attitudes* rather than deeply held meanings, beliefs, and values” (as cited in Hart & Fellabaum, 2008, p. 223).

Career aspirations. Career aspirations represent an individual’s orientation toward a desired career goal under ideal conditions. More simply stated, career aspirations “provide information about an individual’s interests and hopes, unfettered by reality” (Rojewski, 1996; Hellenga, Aber, & Rhodes, 2002; Domenico & Jones, 2006, p. 3).

Chauvinist woman. Chauvinism is generally something that is societally attached to men or masculine ideologies. However, women can be guilty of possessing chauvinism as well. This would essentially be the antithesis of mentorship. Unfortunately, some women feel as if they must behave chauvinistically and “knock others over on their way to the top, promoting a lack of trust and a dog-eat-dog approach” (Redmond, Gutke, Galligan, Howard, & Newman, 2016, p. 335).

Glass labyrinth. This term is similar to the glass ceiling but more accurately describes the experience that many middle manager women experience. The glass labyrinth is essentially the complex route or journey that women experience as they attempt to advance in their careers that can feel like a maze at times (Eagly & Carli, 2007; Foster, 2019). According to McDonagh and Paris (2012), many women feel lost during this journey as, “this challenging maze lacks a

map or directions, so many women feel left to fend for themselves on this pathway or opt to abandon their pursuit of executive level leadership positions” (Foster, 2019, p. 7). The main difference between the labyrinth and the glass ceiling is the labyrinth encompasses the entire journey from beginning to end instead of just the upward motion that is at the core of the glass ceiling phenomenon.

Mentorship. Mentorship is important throughout any individual’s career trajectory but is especially important for women in student affairs. By seeing other women in senior level leadership, middle manager women are able to see themselves in those roles. Mentorship, as defined by Blackhurst and colleagues (1998), includes an individual in a higher role, such as a senior level woman, “role modeling professional values, assisting with career planning, networking, boosting self-esteem and interpreting the campus culture” (Marquez, 2014, p. 48).

Middle manager. Throughout the field of student affairs there are many different iterations of the term middle manager. A lack of a concrete understanding of what or who these positions fully entail begins to tell the tale of woe that many middle-mangers, especially women in student affairs feel and live. In fact, these individuals are generally overlooked. These individuals are the “the academic and non-academic support personnel within the structure of higher education organizations” (Rosser, 2000, p. 5). More specifically, for the current study, middle managers generally fall within three title variations: assistant director, associate director, and director (Young, 1990; Mather, Bryan, & Faulkner, 2009).

Senior-level administrator/leadership. For the purposes of this study, senior-level administrators or leaders will include individuals from both academic focused positions as well as student affairs positions. When analyzing the academic world within higher education, senior-level administrators include academic deans and any position above such as vice provost,

provost, vice presidents, and president (Johnsrud, 2002). Senior student affairs officers for the current study include vice presidents for student affairs or the highest-ranking student affairs officer at the institution (Engstrom, McIntosh, Ridzki, & Kruger, 2006).

Student affairs. The definition of the division or field of student affairs can be a vague one without a consistent definition of its services or officers. According to NASPA (2019), the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators, student affairs, once called student personnel administration, recognizes that learning does not occur just within the microcosm of the classroom. There are opportunities within many different arenas of a student's experience, and it is a student affairs practitioner's job to "seize these moments and promote positive interactions. Encouraging an understanding of and respect for diversity, believing in the worth of individuals, and supporting students in their development are just some of the core concepts of the student affairs profession" (NASPA, 2019). Student affairs consist of any advising, counseling, or management that happens for or with students outside of the context of a classroom (Love & Estanek, 2004). While there are a myriad of functions and departments that typically fall within the division of student affairs, it is important for this study to not limit the offices that can be considered for the study.

Women/woman. For this study, the term woman or women will be used when discussing the participants of the study directly. Female or females will be used when discussing the literature, historical context, or the gender as a whole. The word *female* serves as both an adjective and a noun in the English language. Therefore, female does not hold as much significance as the word *woman* to many that identify as such. This is due to that fact that female is an adjective, meaning an individual can essentially be more or less female, but by using the other term, woman, is simply a woman (Safire, 2007). This has been a debated conundrum

amongst those in the language and writing professions since female has had many negative connotations for hundreds of years (Newton-Small, 2016).

Summary of Methodology

This study utilizes a phenomenological approach to fully understand the lived experiences of the participants of being a woman, middle manager traversing the landscape of student affairs. There are several different ways in which researchers can approach phenomenology; however, for this study I leaned heavily on Moustakas's psychological phenomenology, which is "focused less on the interpretations of the researcher and more on a description of the experiences of the participants" (as cited in Crewsell & Poth, 2017, p. 78). Data collection for this study consists of one semi-structured interviews per participants, results from the participants' completion of the Career Readiness Scale Revised (CASR), as well as an analysis of the participants' current resumes or vitaes. The CASR focuses on three types of aspiration: leadership aspirations, educational aspirations, and achievement aspirations by centering the questions around work saliency, willingness to compromise career for future family, and work family orientation (Gregor & O'Brien, 2016). The interview questions were tailored toward each individual based on their responses to the revised Career Aspirations Scale. Additionally, the participants' resumes were analyzed to gain an additional understanding of the career pathways of these women. The 15 participants were chosen based on their current position, whether or not they held a terminal degree, and if they worked in some sort of middle management type position within student affairs at their institution. For this study, institutional type was not important. Therefore, participants were from a myriad of different institutions. Each individual identified as a woman in addition to a middle manager based on the defined meaning

of middle manager aforementioned. Further details about participants will occur in Chapter Three.

Limitations

It is important to note areas of limitation in order to understand the full scope of the study. For the current study, the participant's willingness to open up and dive deep into her experiences varied from participant to participant. This meant that while it was attempted to spend the same amount of time with each participant, some participants were more willing to share their experiences and dive deep into their journey which led to a longer interview while others are more surface level regardless of the types of questions asked. Another way in which time proved to be a limitation is the amount of time passed between some of these women's experiences and when the interview took place. Some participants could have had a pivotal moment earlier in their career, and the amount of time and other moments in their journey have clouded the details associated with that moment.

Significance of Study

This study will add to the current literature on women in the higher education administration, specifically middle managers within student affairs and career aspirations within the field. There is limited research currently on women administrators' career pathways, journeys, or experiences, specifically within the field of student affairs (Jones & Komives, 2001). Much of the research focuses on women faculty members, their experiences, and the barriers that they experienced through their ascension (Diehl & Dzubinksi, 2016). Through the deeper understanding that will result from the current study, universities and senior level administrators support and encourage middle manager women seeking advancement in the hopes of increasing the number of women in those roles. By understanding career aspirations and what

affects those aspirations have on career trajectory, hopefully more women will ascend up the ladder allowing other women to realize themselves in those roles. The current study also has shed light on the implicit or direct bias that women still experience within higher education and student affairs. Therefore, the current study serves as a springboard for administrators to reevaluate policies and practices to be more equitable for people within and beyond the gender spectrum.

While analyzing the current literature and research existing around the research questions, little empirical research exists around women or middle managers in higher education outside of faculty roles, especially within the field of student affairs. Even though student affairs have been around for over 50 years, it is still a newer sector of higher education, making the research limited specifically in that field. Unfortunately, there is also limited current research around women's overall experience including barriers within student affairs. Much of the research, especially the limited amount not involving faculty, is focused around the time that women began to have a stronger presence in the workforce or when legislation was passed encouraging equity between genders.

Dissertation Overview

Through the conversations with the women who participated in this study, a stronger understanding of what affects their aspirations emerged along with many common barriers and experiences that have also affected those aspirations. This chapter provides an overview of the study in addition to its significance as well as defining key terms used throughout the study. The second chapter provides an analysis of the current literature surrounding the study. This is important as it provides context for the study and an understanding of historical context in addition to what currently exists in regard to women in the field of student affairs. The third

chapter presents the details of the methodology used in this study including positionality of the researcher, measures taken to ensure validity and credibility of the data, as well as the selection criteria for participants. Additionally, the analysis used following data collection is discussed in full detail in chapter three. Chapter Four provides a detailed look at the findings from the study. In this chapter, quotes rich in detail and experience from each participant can be found in addition to a discussion of the themes that emerged from the analysis of the data. Finally, Chapter Five digs deeper into the findings in Chapter Four to present ideas for further research and how the findings of the study have strong implications to the field of student affairs.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

“Cause I’m just a girl, oh little old me. Well, don’t let me out of your sight. Oh, I’m just a girl, all pretty and petite. So, don’t let me have any rights.” -Just a Girl, No Doubt

Overview of the Literature

There are many factors that influence an individual’s career aspirations and advancements. Women identifying, student affairs, middle managers have a complex relationship with personal and professional factors including the enmeshed relationships many of these factors have with each other. Women administrators within the field of higher education is an area of research in which not many have taken the time to delve into nor publish scholarly work. This is due to the fact that while women have played a major role in the evolution of higher education, their story line is much shorter than their male counterparts and these women are rarely recognized for their contributions. Currently, there is not a plethora of scholarly research dedicated to women in higher education outside of faculty. Therefore, in some instances a parallel between women faculty and women in student affairs administration may need to be drawn. Additionally, it is difficult to cull out all of the relevant issues that women in higher education and student affairs face as many of them are complexly intertwined and difficult to parse out and focus on individually.

The literature reviewed for this study focuses on the areas that are believed to be the most impactful to the career advancement of women identifying, student affairs, middle managers. The literature review consists of an overview of women in the overall field of higher education and its sub-section, student affairs. From there the focus will turn to the broad understanding of career aspirations and any literature that focuses on women specifically. Taking the idea of aspirations, a step further, there is an examination of external and internal factors that may affect

a woman's career aspirations and trajectory. Lastly, this section will conclude with a description of modern feminist theory as it is the lens that has informed this study.

Women in Higher Education

Female representation has been increasing over the past 40 years with the passing of key legislation such as Title IX, the Equal Pay Act, and Title VII (ASHE, 2011). These policies were instrumental to the increase in access to education for women as well as representation at universities. However, they have not been necessarily instrumental to the ascension of women into leadership roles. According to the National Center for Education Statistics, in the fall of 2017, women comprised over 11 million of college enrollment across the United States, making up 56.8% of the student population (2017). While the number of women sitting in the seats of our classrooms overshadows the number of male students, that is not mirrored within other arenas of institutions, especially senior level leadership. Women have been surpassing men in the attainment of all levels of degrees including terminal degrees for the past 30 years, yet academia has not created an environment in which women are encouraged to lead (Aleman & Renn, 2002; Diehl & Dzubinski, 2016). In 2003, women held 50.6% of the positions within higher education, but it is unknown at what leadership levels these positions were or how many were housed within academic affairs as opposed to student affairs (NCES, 2006). According to the most recent American Council on Education survey, in 2016, women held 30.1% of the presidencies around the nation (ACE, 2018). Conversely, in 1975 the number of women presidents was 21.1% (Collins, 2009). While this is an increase, it is not a sizeable increase for the amount of time spanned.

When reviewing extant literature involving women in higher education, the current literature focuses on women faculty, especially women faculty who are also parents. While there

has been an increase of women faculty members overall, and within the role of assistant professors, women have achieved parity with men, there is still not a strong structure in place to support these women (West & Curtis, 2006; Pullmann, 2007; Cress & Hart, 2009). As discussed at further length later in this chapter, higher education is a gendered organization that still has practices, policies, and stereotypical views in place that support men over women, especially for women faculty (Cress & Hart, 2009). For example, due to the perceived notion that women faculty members with families may be seen as not taking research seriously (due to their competing roles as mother, wife, or general caregiver), female faculty may not have as many publications as their male counterparts (Cress & Hart, 2009). It follows that resources are then not allocated evenly when inauthentic assumptions are made about women faculty members and their perceived belief of the importance of research. Additionally, women faculty, much like women student affairs practitioners, are employed in softer or more feminine disciplines, such as the social sciences, as well as are more prevalent within community colleges (Cress & Hart, 2009).

Women in Student Affairs

The division and practice of student affairs has been steadily growing over the past several decades as the number of students enrolling in higher education has been increasing. Typically, student affairs divisions provide oversight to the offices that provide services to the students. In the fall of 2017, NCE reported that of the 2.6 million individuals employed at institutions, student affairs positions comprised over 127,000 of those full-time positions. Women have been an important part of the history and the development of higher education and what student affairs has become. The field of student affairs was developed by women who were not allowed to serve as full deans of students but instead served as deans of women.

Historically, student affairs has incorporated women leaders much earlier and more frequently than the academic side of the institution (Hughes, 1989). The field of student affairs is attractive to women professionals as many of the roles are more feminine and nurturing in nature (Yakaboski & Donahoo, 2010). However, even though the field has a high number of women, there has been a significant shift since the 1990s away from research that focuses on the issues and experiences of women in the field to more of a *gender-neutral focus* (Jones & Komives, 2001; Yakaboski & Donahoo, 2010). According to Jones and Komives (2001), this shift is significant as it has turned the “focus away from gender and its relation to the career pathways and contemporary issues of women student affairs officer” (as cited in Yakaboski & Donahoo, 2010, p. 3). The small amount of research that does exist focuses on the historical story of women in student affairs in addition to women faculty members (Yakaboski & Donahoo, 2010).

While there has not been much research about the overall population of women within student affairs, there is some research around the experiences of women of color, specifically Black women, in the field. While the information in these articles does not relate to all women in student affairs dependent upon their identities, there are some important parallels that can be made. The literature that focuses on women of color analyzes their experiences in their roles and what can be done to support them as they navigate the duality of race and gender regardless of whether they have senior-level leadership aspirations. Exclusionary practices occur for women in the field of student affairs as they work through the gendered practices of their universities, however the level of exclusion is stronger for Black women (Burke & Carter, 2015). Howard-Hamilton (2003) brings to light the fact that Black women may be present in the spaces that white men dwell professionally, but their voice is muted as if they were not actually present (as cited in West, 2017). While this is significantly true for women of color, this phenomenon of

being muted in the workplace can also be applied to women in student affairs as they begin to fight through the glass labyrinth toward their career goals. In order to combat this experience, networking that leads to mentorship or sponsorship is an important component for women of color that contributes to their success (Burke & Carter, 2015; West, 2017). Networking and mentoring are important to women who are *career success* and *mobility* oriented, as discussed later in this chapter. These practices are an even more integral portion of the journey for women of color in order to combat the exclusion, discrimination and barriers that they will undoubtedly experience at higher levels than women of other races (Burke & Carter, 2015). However, an analogous issue for women seeking mentorship, yet more arduous issue for women of color, is the lack of individuals to serve as mentors (Clayborne, 2006). According to the NCES, 11.5% of the women serving in leadership or management roles identified as Black and 6.6% identified as Hispanic (2017). Due to the aforementioned limited number of women of color who serve in leadership roles, middle manager women of color may struggle to find someone who identifies similarly to them, leading to many middle manager women of color being mentor-less.

Collins (2009) reported that even though there has been an increase of women entering the field of student affairs, they are unfortunately not advancing. However, if a woman does advance in the field, she is more than likely to be a senior-level administrator at “private, liberal arts schools rather than at doctoral granting, research, and comprehensive institutions” (Collins, 2009, p. 6). This is more than likely due to the masculine qualities that society deems necessary to successfully lead a research focused institution. Generally speaking, entry level in addition to middle manager positions are generally more women-friendly, which could partially be due to the sheer number of women in these positions, compared to Deans, Vice Presidential and Presidential positions (Aleman & Renn, 2002).

Career Aspirations

While career aspirations differ for each individual, they can aid in the understanding between career desires and career pathways and potential progress. Career aspirations can be affected by many things including gender, socioeconomical status, race, educational level, parents' expectations and more with gender proving to be one of the strongest influences on career aspirations (Domenico & Jones, 2006). In Litzky and Greenhaus's study (2007), women were less likely than men to desire a senior level management position. This was partially due to the incongruence between what they identified as needed characteristics for those in senior level management and the characteristics they perceived in themselves (Litzky & Greenhaus, 2007).

Motivational theories. The examination of what influences an individual's career aspirations is an area of literature that does not encompass higher education or student affairs, therefore a general look at what affects career aspirations is discussed in this section. A theory that looks at the motivation behind decisions is the achievement motivation theory or learned needs theory, developed by McClelland in 1961. McClelland believed that when an individual possesses a strong need, that individual performs in a way that motivates them to fulfill that need (Pardee, 1990). McClelland posited that individuals have three different types of needs or motivations in regard to career aspirations: achievement, affiliation, and power (as cited in Pardee, 1990). Even though this theory does not look directly at career aspirations, it helps develop an understanding of the motivations behind decisions. A more recent study by Deci and Ryan (2000) also discovered three needs in their self-determination theory that motivate the career decisions individuals make as well: autonomy, competency, and relatedness (as cited in Burk & Wiese, 2018). Burk and Wiese (2018) then took these two studies, converged them

together and developed a model that consists of extrinsic and intrinsic factors broken down into four broad categories: competence/achievement, relatedness/affiliation, autonomy, and power.

Competence or achievement is considered to be a global factor, meaning that competence or achievement in some form or fashion is a basic need that everyone has (Burke & Wiese, 2018). The need for competence or achievement relates to one's desire to take on challenging tasks and one's responsibility for success at work, which includes seeking out feedback on one's performance (Burk & Wiese, 2018; McClelland, 1988). According to Deci and Ryan (2000), overcoming those challenging tasks helps develop feelings of competence, which can then increase career aspirations. Relatedness or affiliation needs are also seen as a global factor as every individual needs to feel connected to something or someone in some capacity. This need focuses on relationships and feeling connected to others and larger social groups, both as something that the individual needs to receive but also provide as well (Burke & Wiese, 2018). McClelland (1988) stated that individuals with a high need for power want to have positions that provide public influence and recognition, as the level of impact they are able to have is important. However, those with a high need for autonomy need independence and the ability to know their supervisors trust in them and can get work completed (Burke & Wiese, 2018). Whichever need is the highest for an individual provides a better understanding for what type of career aspirations they may seek out during their career journey as their need will drive their career decisions.

Career aspirations scale revised. There is an entire sector of psychology that focuses on the area of career; however, these specialized psychologists are still unable to fully explain why underrepresentation of women unfortunately still exists in certain careers, especially the lack in upper-level leadership (Gregor & O'Brien, 2016). In order to begin to gain a better

understanding of why women's career aspirations were lower than their male counterparts, in 1996 Karen O'Brien developed a Career Readiness Scale, which was generally used by undergraduate and graduate level women that focused on assessing individuals' desire to aspire to leadership positions and to further their education related to their career (Gregor & O'Brien, 2016; O'Brien, 1996). In 2016, a doctoral student took on the difficult task with the author of the original scale to revise the CAS in order gain a better understanding of these young women's aspirations. This new scale was rooted in research that focused on work role saliency which analyzed the importance of one's career as well as looking at one's commitment and how that commitment can affect one's career path (Gregor & O'Brien, 2016; McClintock-Comeaux, 2007).

The revised CAS defined three components of career aspiration: leadership, education, and achievement. Leadership aspirations were defined as desiring leadership roles as well as training and supervising others as a part of the work that was completed; education aspirations include the desire for advanced education or training as well as being identified as being competent in their career; and achievement aspirations are the desire for responsibility, decision making, and recognition for the work that is completed as well as promotions (Gregor & O'Brien, 2016). Gregor and O'Brien (2016) conducted three separate studies using the new instrument on both undergraduate and graduate women and found that undergraduate women felt like they could essentially have it all and not have to change their commitment to their careers, so their aspirations were not altered by their desire to have a family or a partner and a career. The graduate women, more than likely due to the fact they were older and may have been in committed relationships, saw that they may have to make alterations to their commitment to their work, or work saliency, so their aspirations were negatively altered. When it comes to children,

none of their participants had children so the focus was on future children, and there was no negative impact on their commitment to their career or their aspirations due to their choice to focus on their children or becoming a mother (Gregor & O'Brien, 2016).

External Barriers

Regardless of a woman's desired career trajectory, there are many factors and barriers that can hinder that journey. Facing barriers is something that women encounter regularly within their personal and professional lives. Most of the research that exists examining barriers that women face deals with each barrier individually, as opposed to the analysis of the overall influence of the social constructs of gender and leadership. It is important to note however the importance of all types of barriers: societal, organizational, and individual. According to Diehl and Dzubinski (2016) there are 22 external barriers that may affect a woman's career trajectory that are gender-based in a cross section of religious organizations and higher education. These barriers can be identified as macro-, meso-, and micro-level gender-based leadership barriers that women in higher education experience. Macro-level barriers reference the systemic type barriers that women face throughout society that makes it challenging to achieve advancement. Some of these macro-level barriers may include the assumption of gender-based stereotypes in the workplace, hyper scrutiny of a woman's work, or even a lack of awareness that gender has any importance or effect in society let alone the workplace. Meso-level barriers identified in this study are experienced by women within their own organizations. Such barriers include lack of acknowledgement for the work that women contribute to the organization, exclusion from opportunities, lower salaries, and of course blatant discrimination in the workplace. Barriers that women experience at the individual level are considered micro-level barriers by Diehl & Dzubinski. These barriers are a part of their daily experiences and can include conflict in

balancing work with family commitments and women feeling that they need to change their communication style or leadership style to be accepted (Diehl & Dzubinski, 2016). While these barriers were identified by women presidents, provost, and vice presidents, there is a strong likelihood that these barriers are being experienced by women identifying, student affairs, middle managers as well.

Career women and competing responsibilities. The competing responsibility of family obligations may be one of the most influential reasons why women are not holding senior level positions or have the aspirations to hold these positions. Women are more prone to bias avoidance strategies, which are when women find themselves “structuring personal commitments to avoid interfering with work requirements to avoid damaging their professional reputations” (Drago et al., 2005; Lewis, 2012, p. 11). These strategies can include tactics such as not feeling as if she can be as forthcoming in regard to her familial commitments as those may interfere with work commitments. Some women may choose different bias avoidance strategies, such as staying single, delaying the decision to have children or not even having children, missing children and family events for work commitments, and even coming back from maternity leave earlier than their original return date (Drago et al., 2005). In fact, when looking at women presidents, the American College on Education (ACE) in their 2016 survey found that 75% of women presidents were married compared to their 90% male counterparts. Additionally, other relationship statuses that support the literature around bias avoidance strategies are those women presidents who are divorced, separated, or never married. In 2016, women presidents had higher rates of divorce as well as higher rates of never being married compared to male presidents. (ACE, 2016).

Since the feminism movement several decades prior to today and more women entering the workforce, there has been an increase in interest and research into how the multiple roles that a woman partakes in interact not only with each other, but with the woman herself. Women essentially have three *shifts* in their daily lives. The first shift is their career, what they do from every day during their standard work hours. The idea of the *second shift* began with research conducted in the late 80s by sociologist Arlie Russell Hochschild. Her research focused on the second shift that occurs after a woman has worked and comes home to her second responsibilities of a family and other relationships and the struggle between the balancing act that occurs between those two roles (Hochschild, 1989; Spangler, 2011). While Hochschild brought to light the difficulty in the balancing act between those two roles, there was not much insight into the psychological internal battle that many women were facing. Women may feel as if they are unable to be good at both of these roles, causing them to question their worth, validity, and ability in all of their roles (Spangler, 2011). This struggle of the psyche is called the *third shift*, and many women may not vocalize that internal conflict as they may be assessing the perceived smoothness of a fellow woman's ability to balance it all, when in reality, her colleague is probably struggling as well.

Family planning and caregiving. Similarly, to the relationship status of women senior-level leaders, there are fewer that have children than their male counterparts (Eckel, Cook, & King, 2009). This may be in part due to the societal parental norms that have been placed on women. Male leaders are more than likely to have a partner or spouse who works in a less competitive or time-consuming job than higher education, so they do not have to generally choose between family and work (LeBlanc, 1993; Williams, 2000a). Some women, especially those who are in the academic realm, may even attempt to time births with academic breaks or

lulls in the year (Ward & Wolf-Wendel, 2003). Not only do women generally not have the luxury to rely on a stay-at-home partner, but it is also challenging to be an ideal employee who is vying for promotions and senior level leadership positions and a present and successful parent, partner, and caregiver. This bias avoidance can be seen in a study where over 60% of respondents who were women student affairs administrators did not have children, but those that did felt neglectful behaviors toward their family (Collins, 2009; Matzat, 1992). These emotions of guilt that are rooted in bias avoidance strategies can be best described as a conflict between her identities and roles. Bolton wrote about this psychological phenomenon and deemed it the third shift (Bolton, 2000). Women administrators in higher education find themselves working three shifts: the first shift being their career, the second shift being their responsibilities outside of the job such as a partner, child, or other family members, and the third shift is a woman's ability to have self-awareness and self-doubt simultaneously regarding her ability to balance her first and second shifts successfully (Bolton, 2000; Spangler, 2011). It is important to note that although researchers identify that fulfilling both shifts and roles successfully is challenging, it does not mean that it cannot be done (Williams, 2000a; Drago et al., 2006). However, most of the work in student affairs happens outside of the standard eight-hour workday, causing work to bleed into family time and potentially causing a rift in a family's dynamic (Bailyn, 1993; Maranto & Griffin, 2011). This unintentional bleeding of work life boundaries could mean that sometimes women have to alter their career path for their family or their partner. Women are generally willing to put their career on hold or alter their career paths due to their commitment to their family, partner, or even alter their path in anticipation of the needs of future children or romantic partners which could lead to lower career aspirations by women (O'Brien et al., 2000; Mark & Houston, 2002; Gregor & O'Brien, 2016).

Gender Discrimination

Unfortunately, “the examination of gender and feminism in higher education scholarship is rather limited” (Hart, 2006, p. 42). Gender discrimination is generally not blatant, but subtle, and systemically seen through policies, procedures and practices. Salary discrepancies, especially for faculty, can be a strong starting point when examining gender discrimination within higher education. The National Center for Education Statistics reports in their Fall 2017 survey of a nearly \$20,000 gap between men and women at four-year public institutions, with a much smaller gap at two-year public institutions. Specifically, full-time male faculty members at four-year public institutions made on average \$124,000 while full-time women faculty members’ salaries were approximately \$109,000 (NCES, 2017). Male faculty members at two-year public institutions averaged \$76,900 while women averaged a salary of \$74,400 making the gap between male and women faculty members more palatable (NCES, 2017).

Even though women are proving to be more qualified than their male counterparts, they are not found serving in those senior level roles (ACE, 2018). This could be due to that fact that women leaders are generally more nurturing in nature and are found to be peaking at positions within Student Affairs that require those characteristics and skillsets (Collins, 2009). Those positions in which women find themselves peaking in are generally lower-level positions within the field (Yakaboski & Donaboo, 2010). Currently, since men hold the bulk of the senior level leadership positions within higher education, they are more inclined to lead employment searches when they become available. This can prove to be problematic in the hopes of increasing the number of women who are holding senior level leadership positions. A study that analyzed women’s mobility in their career trajectory showed that the individual who is in charge of the hiring tends to hire someone who is similar to themselves leading to homogenous hiring

practices (Yakaboski & Donaboo, 2010). If men generally serve as hiring managers, more men may be promoted over their female counterparts.

Even though society calls for equality for women, it is the same society that holds very gendered expectations for women in leadership and allows gender discrimination to continue into the 21st century. Unfortunately, there are still cultural and societal expectations that leaders be male or display male characteristics, therefore discounting women automatically due to their gender, even in academia (Yakaboski & Donahoo, 2010). This is perpetuated by administrators in the field, as several studies have shown both men and women administrators within higher education tend to favor more masculine traits (Street, Kimmel, & Kromery, 1996; Street & Kimmel, 1999; Yakaboski & Donahoo, 2010). While higher education is known as being a place of higher learning and acceptance, it is also a breeding ground for overtly masculine thought, policies, and gendered leadership practices. Most organizations, including higher education, are gendered even if it seems that gender is not at the forefront of the organization as it is “hard to see when only masculine is present” (Acker, 1990, p. 142). This means that the male system of success has not changed through in any of the feminist movements, including what we are seeing as a gap in higher education research as mentioned earlier (Jones & Komives, 2001; Yakaboski & Donahoo, 2010).

Experiential Factors

Many things that women experience in their day-to-day career work will affect what they aspire to, in addition to the reality of those aspirations. Experiences can either be a catalyst for upward momentum or a stalling point. This can be seen with a phenomenon called the *cooling out* factor. The term cooling out was brought to higher education in 1960 by Burton Clark and was identified as the “wide gap found in many democratic institutions between culturally

encouraged aspirations and institutionally provided means of achievement” (Clark, 1960, p. 560). This is seen through the encouragement that women are given very loudly in society and even through professional organizations, however the means in which women are encouraged or given the opportunities at the institutional level is bleak and does not support the encouragement felt in other arenas. Cooling out can then cause women to gradually disengage from their career aspirations and even the field of student affairs (Collins, 2009). There are many things that can cause that disengagement including lack of mentorship, a chilly campus climate, chauvinistic women, as well as strains on relationships, the pressure of family planning, and much more.

Mentorship. A relationship with a mentor is a common experience shared by successful senior-level leaders in higher education. These relationships provide an additional support for a woman who aspires to senior leadership positions, as a mentor can not only encourage experiences that will lead to senior level leadership but can also lead to connections to these positions. In a 2010 study of women community college presidents, five out of six women said that their mentor relationships were key to their advancement to their presidency (Campbell, Mueller, & Souza, 2010; Lewis, 2012). For many women, having a fellow woman serve as their mentor makes sense, as she can share ways in which she overcame barriers and share her general experiences in general, as they are vastly different from men’s experiences in higher education. Additionally, it can be argued that while a woman can successfully be mentored by a male, women may feel that in order to be successful they have to perpetuate the stereotype and behave in a more masculine manner (Bower, 1993). However, since there is a deficit in the number of women serving in senior level positions, mentors are few and difficult to find depending on one’s location and network. Therefore, even if a middle manager woman did not currently have the

aspirations for senior level leadership, she most definitely would not develop those aspirations if she herself does not see herself reflected in those upper ranking positions.

Sometimes, mentorship is not conducted in the most traditional path. A middle manager woman may not be able to develop a strong one-on-one relationship with a senior level woman, but she may be able to be a part of groups, institutes, and conferences that focus on developing women into senior level leaders. Many national organizations such as the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA) or the Association of College Personnel Administrators (ACPA) have standing groups for women and host special institutes and conferences. The Alice Manicur Women's Symposium is one such opportunity that welcomes "student affairs professionals who identify as women or outside the gender binary and who are at the middle management level and considering a move to become vice presidents for student affairs" (NASPA, 2019). This symposium is an application-based opportunity that focuses on the participants' goals and aspirations and gives participants the opportunity to meet directly with women vice presidents.

Sponsorship. Sponsorship is slightly different from mentorship, as it can be a little more active in career momentum than mentorship. Mentorship can be seen more as a process in which a woman is guided along by someone who is further in the field, but not necessarily a senior-level leader. Through this process a relationship is developed, advice is given, and experiences reflected upon. However, sponsorship can be seen as almost a *grooming* process, where a senior-level leader provides opportunities for the woman being sponsored that allows for exposure and experiences. In Diehl and Dzubinski's 2016 study, all of the women in one sample of the study had male sponsors. Most senior level positions are held by men, and men would need to take on the role of sponsor if more women were to attain those leadership

positions. Men can sometimes be seen as gatekeepers through a negative lens, a barrier at times. However, men serving in sponsorship roles is encouraging and pushes the men to address their own biases and stereotypes. One of the women in the study reflected that, “the primary promoters, the people who nominated me again and again for positions, were all men” (Diehl & Dzubinski, 2016, p. 193). Not surprisingly, this person was the first woman president and provost in her state education system, so the male sponsor was necessary as there were no women to serve that role (Diehl & Dzubinski, 2016). Not only do sponsors promote the individual and provide opportunities, but they also can also help instill and strengthen feelings of worth and competency. Some women achieved senior level status because their sponsors recommended them for senior-level positions, even though the women themselves had not thought of the prospect. In a study conducted to analyze the women’s path to university presidencies one participant stated, “[they] encourage[d] me to think about being a president, encourage[d] me to think or to see that I had more potential than I had recognized. This, I never in a million years dreamed of being a president of a university, ever” (Klotz, 2014, p. 99).

Sponsorship for women in corporate America is much more understood, prevalent, and encouraged in more of a widespread effort. This understanding is seen at a senior-level and encouraged throughout the company. In a 2010 publication, Time Warner’s Executive Vice President of Administration recognized how the sponsorship relationship can truly make or break a career, especially when middle manager women are not generally in the spaces to advocate for themselves. Patricia Fili-Krushel from Time Warner understood the relational capital of sponsorship and portrayed this in a 2012 *Harvard Business Review* publication, saying “[the sponsors] in a position to attend those roundtable discussions that can make or break your career. Their authority allows them to speak to your strengths, make a case for your

advancement, and be heard in your absence” (Hewlett, Peraino, Sherbin, & Sumberg, 2010, p. 5). Not only are the attitudes of executives generally more progressive than those in higher education, but they also have stronger organizational programs in place to support sponsorship. For example, in 2008 American Express established a program to encourage relationships for women across different levels in the organization (Hewlett, et al., 2010). The hope for this program was that the talented women within their organization would have several individuals, especially at the higher levels, supporting them and advocating for them within the company (Hewlett, et al., 2010).

Campus climate. Campus climate can play an extremely important variable in a woman’s aspirations and ability to have upward momentum. The campus climate consists of the culture within the organization as well as the attitudes individuals have within the university toward that culture and each other (Peterson & Spencer, 1990; Hart & Fellabaum, 2008). Most of the research surrounding campus climate involving women has focused on the climate of learning for female students within the classroom or the general climate for female students and not the way in which campus climate holistically affects women who work at the institution. While campus climate can arguably be important for female students as their experience with a campus’s climate can affect their aspirations, this study will focus on the campus climate that is experienced by women staff.

The few studies that exist outside of student-focused studies focus on female faculty. While this literature does not directly involve women administrators in higher education or even student affairs, a direct parallel can be drawn. Many studies have clung to the term *chilly climate* (Hart & Fellabaum, 2008; Maranto & Griffin, 2011; Sandler & Hall, 1986). This term speaks to the formal and informal exclusion that women experience on their campuses from all aspects of

the campus (Maranto & Griffin, 2011). A *chilly climate* also includes feelings of devaluation and feeling marginalized; this was seen in a study conducted of women faculty who were involved in several important processes in academia but did not feel as if their voice was truly considered or heard (Hopkins, Bailyn, Gibson, & Hammonds, 2002; Maranto & Griffin, 2011). This lack of being involved in the inner circle can cause harm professionally by not being present and thought of for important decision making, as well as personally through the feelings that exclusion can exude.

With virtually no literature surrounding the campus climate experienced by women administrators, this study will begin to fill that research gap. The experiences that these women in the current study have had based on their campuses' climates is imperative to their aspirations and ability to move upward within their institutions.

Chauvinistic women. While mentorship and having strong women as role models in women's work lives are seen as strategies that can encourage upward mobility, there are things that women do that have the adverse effect. Some women feel that males make better leaders due to complications that these women experience when they work with chauvinistic women who go against the notion of *sisterhood* amongst women colleagues (Vognalis-Macrow, 2016). This is a topic that most individuals, especially women in the field, do not want to speak about, as it has the potential to devalue women even further and make them less likely to be considered competent leaders. This especially seems to be the case in the United States, as the bulk of the research has been conducted in countries that are similar to the United States and even perhaps even further along in the fight for gender equality. It appears that these countries are attempting to aid in the ascension of women into senior level leadership positions by examining all barriers that may be causing women to be stifled, while the United States has little to no research on this

topic. Based on the experiences of the women in this study, we know that this phenomenon happens within the institutions of our own nation, so light must be shed on the topic.

Another form of this behavior can be called the *queen bee syndrome*. This phenomenon is not as blatant as chauvinism but is still not supportive of fellow women. Women who display characteristics of being a queen bee want to ensure that they stay at the top of their organization. Some will display very outwardly hostile behavior while others will have more subtle forms of aggressive behavior towards women who are interested in senior level leadership positions (Brock, 2008, 2010; Hurst, Leberman, & Edwards, 2018; Mavin, Grandy, & Williams, 2014). While this type of behavior can have impediments for women middle managers regardless of the relationship, they have with the offending women, it is more impactful if the queen bee behavior comes from a supervisor (Hurst, Leberman & Edwards, 2018). Therefore, the individuals from whom these behaviors are experienced are important to analyze in this study.

Career Pathways in Student Affairs

In many aspects of higher education there is a fairly clear path to follow if one would like to be in administration. This is especially true for faculty who desire to become department chairs or even deans of their discipline. Women faculty members still experience frustration and difficulty when attempting to ascend the ladder into academic administration, as they generally do not progress as fast as their male counterparts because of the barriers and hurdles they must face along that sluggish path (Wilson, 2004; Spangler, 2011). The fact that the field of student affairs presents such wide-ranging jobs, responsibilities, and titles varying at each institution causes much pause for any practitioner who is wanting to ascend into leadership ranks, especially women. Due to this ambiguity, determining the most likely path to senior level leadership is already next to impossible, as the field has its own labyrinth of sorts with no true

path to senior level leadership. The lack of research to help define any sort of path of mobility toward senior level leadership makes it even more difficult for women to obtain these leadership positions.

Sandeen (2001) conducted a study that examined career trajectories as well as factors that successfully led 15 senior level student affairs administrators to the attainment of their current position. Unfortunately, 12 of the participants were men with only three women. However, it begins to paint a picture that leads to a stronger understanding of possible pathways to senior leadership. Even though Sandeen's study identified some similarities between the 15 participants, no single path or formula was identified (Sandeen, 2001). In Sandeen's study, several similarities were found in characteristics that the participants possessed in addition to their service back to the field. While characteristics and service back to the field are very important in a practitioner's wholistic journey and ultimately success, the current study will focus on chosen career and professional opportunities, positive experiences, and barriers that these the participants have experienced. Additionally, the current study will focus on involvement within professional associations through the participants' experience with mentorship and sponsorship. Chenoweth (2003) built upon Sandeen's findings and found that the following factors to be extremely influential in the success of senior level leaders: education level, years of experience in the field, and affiliation and involvement with professional associations (as cited in Biddix, 2011). Unfortunately, all of these factors are influenced by the barriers that women experience.

Biddix (2011) conducted a study that looked at the trajectories of senior student affairs officers (SSAOs) in schools categorized by the highest types of degrees that were offered (doctoral, master's, and baccalaureate). SSAOs who worked at doctoral granting institutions had

an average of 22.5 years of experience, master's granting institutions an average of 20 years, and baccalaureate granting institutions an average of 17 years (Biddix, 2011). Additionally, these individuals moved overall an average of six times and changed their jobs every three to four years. There was no indication of any gender difference regarding moves, job changes or years of experience (Biddix, 2011). While Biddix's study looked at positions as different steppingstones to becoming an SSAO, he also discussed skills that the participants sought out if they were not serving in a directorship role by their mid-career point, including budgeting and personnel management, specialized student support services, compliance, and campus and community outreach. Gaining these competencies allowed the participants to hone their leadership skills as well as demonstrate a stronger holistic knowledge of institutions and their innerworkings (Biddix, 2011).

Glass labyrinth. The *glass ceiling* is terminology that is very familiar to the workforce in the United States, as it has been used for decades in describing what women experience in the workforce when attempting upward mobility in their career aspirations. However, this term does not provide an accurate description of what career women, especially in higher education, experience. There is not just a glass ceiling creating an invisible barrier impeding upward movement for women at the top. Many women have to navigate their entire careers much like a labyrinth in order to get anywhere near the top (Peterson, 2016). The use of the term *glass labyrinth* to describe a woman's career journey looks at her journey in its entirety as opposed to solely the end, as is insinuated by the term glass ceiling (Eagly & Carli 2016; Foster, 2019). The imagery that is conjured when thinking about a labyrinth reminds women that the journey consists of more than one successful path, and that path may be fraught with obstacles, barriers, and potentially some dead ends. Recognizing these challenges allows women to understand that

their experiences may not be as easy as their male counterparts and to prepare for the potentially arduous journey ahead. The use of this terminology allows practitioners, researchers, and women in the field to abandon the current practice of not openly discussing the issues at hand, including the lack of research on this topic in the field.

While telling the story of their experiences, women can begin to help each other navigate their own personal labyrinth. But it is important to note that each woman's career journey is unique, therefore her labyrinth is also unique to her and her journey. There is a no clear career pathway for women in student affairs and no clear rank or promotion system, but rather a labyrinth that intensely twists and turns for many women. This winding and sometimes long journey leaves most middle managers in an interesting intersection. These women must make a decision: whether they leave their current institution and continue the winding journey at a new institution, where any work a woman has done to break down barriers at their current institution is null and void, or whether to continue where they are in the hopes they will advance eventually (Barr, 1990). This process can be extremely frustrating causing women to look at their career and make difficult decisions. This frustration can be manifested through the cooling down phenomenon, which leads to women gradually disengage and eventually take a nontraditional path or possibly leave the field altogether (Clark, 1960; Collins, 2009). Collins (2009) speaks to this even further by discussing the women interviewed in their study on work-life balance of women middle managers in higher education. All of the women in Collins's study had aspirations to become senior level leadership within student affairs. However, all but one woman ended up *cooling out* and relinquishing that dream due to the complexity of the labyrinth they found themselves having to navigate to attain that success (Collins, 2009). Some women consciously decide to *cool out* or disengage, and others end up making decisions and moves over

time within their own labyrinth subconsciously that lead to the cooling out. The multiple life roles and responsibilities that women bring to their labyrinth provides an additional layer with additional twists, turns, and obstacles which are important to identify and discuss as well. The current study aims to identify how these life roles are enmeshed within the labyrinth of the participants' career journeys.

Similarly, to the cooling out phenomenon, there is also the *opt-out* phenomenon that some women in other fields have been experiencing. The question, similarly, to this current research study, is why do women not rule the world in whatever vocational areas they chose to be in and some wonder if it is because they are perhaps choosing not to continue moving up the ladder due to potential disenchantment with their work (Hoobler, Lemmon, & Wayne, 2011). Hoobler, Lemmon, and Wayne (2011) conducted research to provide an alternative answer to why women are opting out of ascension to the top. Instead of focusing on overt discrimination or the fact that perhaps women actually do aspire to be in those roles, the focus lies instead on whether the organizations of which they are a part do not do their part to provide the opportunities. Instead, women experience subtle inequities and discrimination, meaning that they are not given the opportunities and experiences to aspire to those positions (Cortina, 2008; Hoobler, Lemmon, & Wayne, 2011). This means that women are not necessarily choosing to opt out but that their managers are choosing for them. While this can be seen during day-to-day interactions, it could potentially be seen through their performance evaluations as well. In one study that focused on potential gender bias by managers through performance evaluations and how that could deter potential promotions within the organization, Lyness and Heilman (2006) focused on already senior-level women managers but found that gender bias can in fact negatively impact even those women who are already on an upward trajectory. The researchers

found that while the women's performance ratings were directly linked to promotions, many women, depending on if they held a more masculine position or not, were rated lower than their male counterparts which lead to less promotions for the women (Lyness & Heilamn, 2006).

Theoretical Framework - Modern Feminist Theory

It is important to identify the theories that inform the current study and provide a lens for the researcher to conduct the study. Theoretical frameworks inform conceptual frameworks, which explains how theories and research support the study being conducted.

The current study is rooted in modern feminist theory to articulate a different way of thinking about the participants of the study and the research questions at hand (Hunter, 2005; Spangler 2011). Modern feminist theory allows research to be conducted through a lens that is different than the societal and cultural norm of patriarchy and masculine tendencies, allowing space for studies to focus on the experiences of women and give voice to an underrepresented group. This is crucial as the current literature in student affairs has taken a turn toward not representing that voice (Jones & Komives, 2001; Yakaboski & Donahoo, 2010). Through the discussions that occurred during interviews with the participants for the current study, these women were able to assign meaning to their experiences in the field. Through the utilization of modern feminist theory, the femineity of the women's voices and experiences as well as their true authentic voice and experiences were able to be recognized, appreciated, and celebrated. The researcher then was able to recognize how different their experiences are, proving that through discussion the realization exists that there are multiple meanings of the reality of being a woman middle manager in student affairs (Hooks, 2000; Hunter, 2005; Spangler, 2011). In our own lives, we would not accept the fixed state of our being therefore the same exists for this study. The current study focuses on lived experiences and the multiple realities that exist in

order to create a fluid body of knowledge that is ever evolving. According to Hooks, “just as our lives are not fixed or static but ever changing, our theory must remain fluid, open, response to new information” (as cited in Spangler, 2011, p. 15). New knowledge is then constructed through each individual’s experience allowing for a fluidity that would not be seen with other theoretical approaches (Kellner & Best, 1991; Spangler, 2011).

There are several different branches of thought that exist within modern feminist theory which tend to overlap with each other. Several of these subsections of feminist theory are supported in the current study. According to Zalewski (2000) and Lorber (2001), liberal feminism theory pursues equal “rights, opportunities, and treatment for women” (as cited in, Beddoes & Borrego, 2011, p.284). The goal of the current study is rooted in liberal feminism theory as the hope is that this study shines a stronger light onto the issues that women experience in their journey to the top so that more opportunities are afforded to more women. Lorber (2001) discusses how standpoint feminist theory looks at how the patriarchy permeates Western culture’s “values, ideologies, and institutions” (as cited in Beddoes & Borrego, 2011, p.285). Our institutions of higher learning are patriarchal in nature, including their structure, policies, and practices. Therefore, standpoint feminism theory recognizes that women’s experiences in higher education have been sidelined in many cases with a significant lack of research allowing for their voice to be heard (Beddoes & Borrego, 2011). The current study focuses on that voice through these women’s experiences and is encouraging that voice to become more prominent. The last branch of modern feminist theory is interactional feminist theory, which examines the day-to-day experiences that either reinforce the current gender norms or even the recreation of those norms (Beddoes & Borrego, 2011). This is important in the current study as these aid in

the examination of gender discrimination in the workplace based on tasks being given based on gender roles.

Chapter Three: Methodology

“You would think that I would deserve a fat promotion. Want to move ahead but the boss won't seem to let me. I swear sometimes that man is out to get me” – Nine to Five, Dolly Parton

Overview of Chapter Three

This chapter serves as not only a rationale for the decision to utilize qualitative research but also as an overview to the research design used specifically for this study. First, this chapter looks at the conceptual framework used to guide this study, and that framework is followed by an in-depth rationale for the use of qualitative methods—specifically a hermeneutic and descriptive phenomenological approach (Hatch, 2002). The third section of this chapter explores the researcher as the instrument in this study and the importance of the reflexivity of the researcher during this process. The fourth section provides a detailed description of each participant in both narrative and table form, the data collection method using interviews and document collection, and analysis of all data. The last section of this chapter presents trustworthiness and limitations of the research.

Research Questions

In order to better understand the lived experiences of women, student affairs, middle managers this study utilizes a phenomenological qualitative approach to address three questions:

RQ1: How do women identifying, student affairs, middle managers understand and navigate their career progression?

RQ2: What experiences have women identifying, student affairs, middle managers found to be beneficial in their career progression?

RQ3: How do career aspirations, as well as personal and professional factors, impact career progression?

1. Do these aspirations hinder or enhance their ability to overcome barriers?

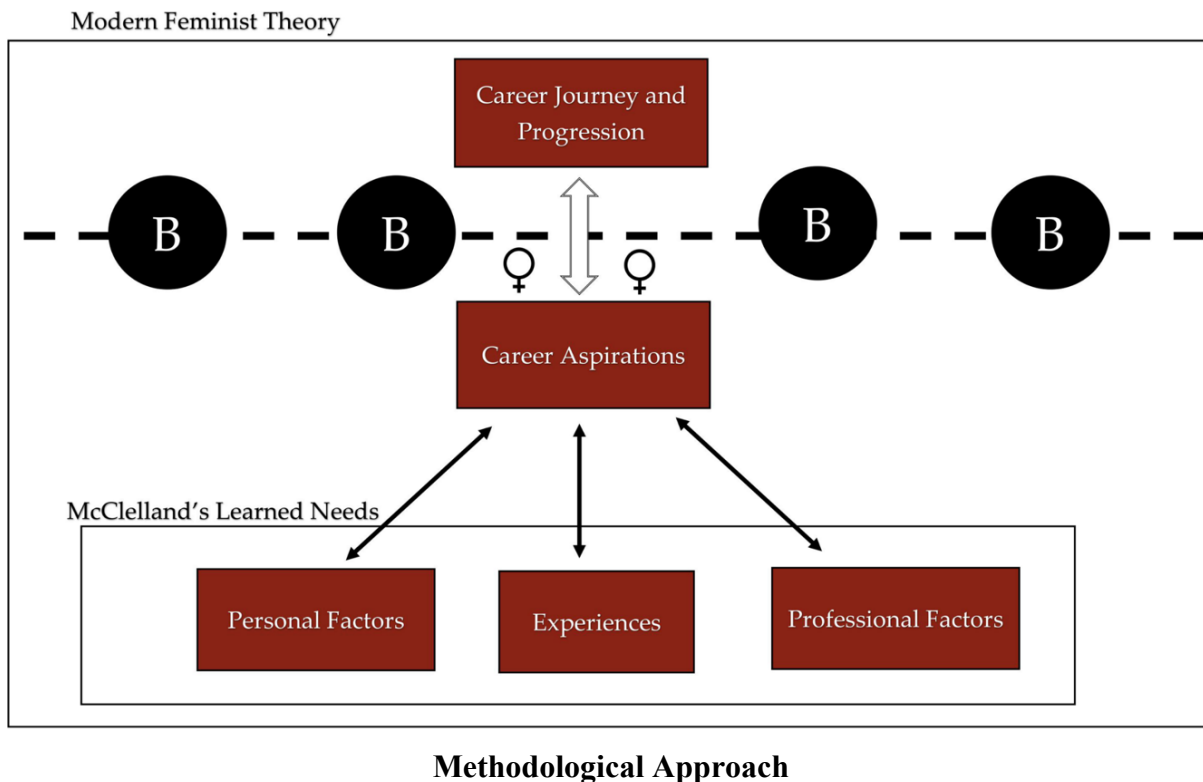
Conceptual Framework

A conceptual framework is an important part of the research as it links abstract ideas and concepts to relevant empirical research that is presented in Chapter Two (Leshem & Trafford, 2007; Rudestam & Newton, 1992). According to Maxwell, the conceptual framework helps the researcher, and the readers have a visual representation of what is being studied as well as what the researcher believes is happening within that phenomenon (1996). This framework then helps the researcher link theory to actual practice (Leshem & Trafford, 2007). As seen in Figure 3.1, the conceptual framework in the current study highlights key components of the research found during the literature review that grounds the study within specific concepts (Blaxter, Hughes, & Tight, 1996). In the current study, the conceptual framework is grounded in modern feminist theory (Hunter, 2005; Spangler 2011) and utilizes components of both career aspiration theories and motivational theories (Burke & Wiese, 2018; Litzky & Greenhaus, 2007; McClelland, 1988) that were discussed at greater length in Chapter Two. The current study assumes that women identifying middle managers in student affairs have career related experiences as well as both personal and professional factors that have affected and currently affect their career aspirations. Those career aspirations in turn can also affect personal and professional factors. The presence and interplay of these factors and career aspirations signal the importance of examining the role barriers may play in this complex interaction.

Barriers. Impediments. Obstacles. These words tend to be synonymous when we think of challenges, and they are an important facet of this study. When asked to visualize a barrier, many would produce the image of an impenetrable obstacle such as a wall, concrete barricade or other such fixed item. For the current study, the idea of a barrier becomes more penetrable based

on the participants’ experiences, professional and personal factors, as well as career aspirations as seen in Figure 3.1 below. However, despite the proverbial wall of barriers existence, there are motivations created by the participants’ experiences as well as personal and professional factors that allow that wall to become permeable, thus allowing women middle managers in student affairs to achieve their career aspirations or steps in an upward momentum if they so choose.

Figure 3.1 Conceptual Framework



Designing a research study is an arduous task that presents many different paths the researcher can choose to explore. It is imperative to examine the research question or multiple questions and choose the method that is most appropriate based on the problem the researcher is hoping to better understand (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Qualitative research allows for the examination of participants’ experiences in order to discover and describe the common thread of meaning for the participants’ lived experiences in order to transform the world (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Phenomenology positions the researcher as an observer of the world around themselves

and the participants in the study. It is important to note that this understanding comes from a specific experience during a particular point in time (Merriam, 2002). In the case of the current study, the lived experiences of the women as well as certain personal and professional factors in conjunction with their career aspirations were examined in order to develop an understanding of the essence of the phenomenon of their career progression. As discussed in previous chapters, the voices of women within student affairs have been quelled; therefore, qualitative research allows for the voices of the participants to be heard and hopefully transform the field of student affairs (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Qualitative research is inductive in nature, lending itself to new postulations around the research question at hand (Merriam, 2002), which is imperative due to the voices of women being silenced and the vast gap in current literature.

Phenomenology

While qualitative research is a vast discipline in which there are many different modalities to approach the research questions, frame the study and collect the data, for the current study, a phenomenological approach was utilized. Phenomenology, or the study of “what comes to light” throughout the research process, or more plainly put what is the ‘thing’ we are researching, allows for the generation of new knowledge, through the understanding of essences and experiences of the participants (Moustakas, 1994, p. 26). There is record of phenomenology being used as far back as the late 1700s. However, it was not until the 1930s when scientific research began to recognize the work of phenomenological researcher, Edmund Husserl as a body of true knowledge (Moustakas, 1994). Social science researchers from that point forward based their work off the seminal teachings from Husserl. Several different phenomenological researchers such as Max van Manen (2001), Clark Moustakas (1994), and Mark Vagel (2014) were utilized by the greater research community in order to garner a robust understanding of

phenomenology. This method of research allows the researcher to “gain a deeper understanding of the nature or meaning of our everyday experiences,” and to encounter the phenomena with the participants (van Manen 2001, p. 9).

The word *essence* is derived from the Greek word *ousi* which means the “true being of a thing” and from the Latin word *essential* which means “to be (van Manen, 2001 p. 177).

Essence, therefore, in a phenomenological study is what makes something what it is (Moustakas, 1994; van Manen, 2015). The essence of the experience is universal in nature while the reality of the experience is extremely individual and varies from person to person (Moustakas, 1994; van Manen, 2015). This means that phenomenology does not necessarily exist to prove that these experiences happened to the participants but focuses on the essence of the experience in order to systemically understand the phenomenon in addition to how each individual interpreted the reality of that experience (van Manen, 2015). Phenomenological studies create a space in which the researcher encourages participants to reflect on their lived experiences, which helps the researcher to begin to understand the essence of the phenomena being studied (van Manen, 2015). The phenomenological approach can be viewed through the collection of data via semi-structured interviews and document analysis of participants’ resumes or vitae. Additionally, the phenomenological approach is additionally seen through the way in which the data was analyzed in order to understand the essence of the participants’ experiences.

Research Positionality

Qualitative research cannot be done in a sterile lab within a vacuum tube where climate and outside factors can be controlled, nor should it be. The beauty but also critique of qualitative research is the researcher truly is the instrument in which the data is collected (Merriam, 2002). Bias is present in all forms of research and therefore it is important that as the instrument, I

identified any biases and experiences that I brought into the research and monitored them through reflexive memo-ing during the data collection and analysis. The experiences that I have with the phenomena being researched according to Peshkin (1988) can in fact be seen as “virtuous, for it is the basis of researchers making a distinctive contribution, one that results from the unique configuration of their personal qualities joined to the data they have collected” (as cited in Merriam, 2002, p. 5). The hope from this research is that it provides a glimpse into the world these women live and lead in through the lens of my experiences and wanting to make a *distinct contribution* to the realm of academia. Without the experiences that I bring, the lens through which I crafted the interview protocol or analyzed the data would have been vastly different leading to a different outcome in the study.

With the lack of research in the area of women middle managers in student affairs and even less about their ascension into senior level leadership, I was called to learn why so few women were successful in breaking through the glass ceiling of higher education or why so many stayed in middle management roles. This desire was partly due to wanting to discover ways to support my colleagues who identify as women, but also to find what path was ahead of me as I worked through what it means to be a woman middle manager myself and to progress toward a senior level administrator position.

Background and Biases

Growing up, I was always encouraged to participate in anything I wanted to as long as I could explain why I wanted to participate in an activity, run for a leadership position, or even study in my field of choice in college. I grew up in a home and an educational environment that encouraged strong female leadership and being a woman has been something that has resonated more with me than any other identity that I carry, but it was not until I was a young professional

that I truly began reflecting on what it meant to be a woman administrator in student affairs. Throughout my career I have actively sought out promotions and leadership positions but did not actively see discrimination or genderism occurring directly to me or around me until after obtaining my master's degree. I also noticed so many talented women capping out at middle manager levels which frustrated me greatly and emblazoned a fire within me to analyze the problem and ascend the ranks myself.

I realized, while contemplating the nature of this research, that as the researcher I must move beyond identifying the experiences I have with this research and recognize that those experiences have allowed me to develop certain biases. Biases are important to identify and address in order to ensure credibility of myself as the researcher. The experiences and biases that I bring to the table, while they affect the research, are impossible to eliminate; therefore, a mediation method (i.e., reflexive memo-ing) was put into place to acknowledge the relationship I had to the research and how I interacted with the data (Merriam, 2002). Due to my relationship to the phenomena, I am unable to step outside my role as a woman middle manager within student affairs, in addition to the other identities that I bring to the table. Being a white, cisgender, middleclass, female who is able bodied means I also bring bias and privilege to this study. My identities, especially identifying as a woman, are identities that I reflect on frequently and inform many of my interactions, experiences, and even career aspirations. Education and leadership are values that I hold core and are concepts that have been engrained in me from childhood. By focusing on the barriers these women have experienced, their mentorship experience, along with specific personal and professional factors the women work through on a daily basis, I also decided to focus on the biases I have from my experiences. I have experienced discrimination from male senior level administrators and therefore am hesitant in believing and

trusting that male leaders have a desire to help women breach the glass ceiling or even successfully navigate the glass labyrinth. Additionally, I have experienced less than helpful and at times destructive or chauvinistic women who I feel have belittled me and attempted to hinder my success as an administrator and leader. Therefore, I am also assuming that many of my female colleagues in similar roles have faced discrimination based on gender as well little help from their male counterparts. Additionally, I assume that many women do not have the desire to help propel or support other women in the field. The question of whether this lack of help is manifested through chauvinistic beliefs or the idea of personally going through something and the expectation that others should do the same along the way led me to dive into minimal research in this area as well. I also have strong beliefs around relationships and family planning. I believe that a woman should not have to put their career on hold in order to have a family or maintain a relationship and struggle to fully understand the experiences of women that decide to put a placeholder on their career while starting or maintaining a family.

Biases and Reflexivity

As a qualitative researcher, I cannot be distant from the research as I am myself, part of the inquiry (Creswell & Poth, 2018). After identifying the biases mentioned above, I knew that the reflexive process would be critical in my qualitative research in order to demonstrate the credibility of the data collection and analysis. However, I was able to monitor my biases and be reflective while keeping a research journal in which I reflected after each interview in addition to participating in reflexive memo-ing during the analysis process. I made sure during this reflexive process that I analyzed how I was relating to the participants in addition to any frustrations or concerns that arose around the biases aforementioned in addition to any new biases emerging throughout the process. This process is sometimes called bracketing, where the

researcher ensures that they are not removing the knowledge that their relationship to the research and past experiences garnered but are in fact “rendering it non-influential” throughout the study (Vagle, 2014, p. 74). However, bracketing can feel that it reduces the experiences too much so the term ‘bridling,’ such as what an equestrian does with a horse, seems to fit better. This term was coined by Dahlberg (2003) due to her experience living on a horse ranch and it encourages the essence of bracketing but notes that it is a continuous process throughout the study with a forward-thinking lens (Dahlberg & Dahlberg, 2003; Vagle, 2014). An example of the bridling process occurred when I discovered that one of my biases was not necessarily a bias against women who pressed pause on their career for their children or significant others but rather was a lack of understanding on my part due to not having experienced this phenomenon myself. My internal reflection and discovery of this unknown bias toward women with families in turn created a deep respect for those women who were able to balance a family and a career and the ways in which I saw some of the manifestations of that differently from others will be discussed in Chapter Four. By simply bracketing, and not bridling my understanding of the phenomena of women middle managers, I found that I may have been trying to understand too quickly and entering the research process with too rigid beliefs and perceptions allowing myself to arrive too quickly to that of a conclusion (Vagle, 2014).

Participant Overview and Selection

Purposive sampling is the method utilized by qualitative researchers to gather participants for a study as this allows the researcher to deliberately choose individuals who make the most sense for the research being conducted (Creswell & Poth, 2018). For the current study in particular, since a set criterion for selection existed, maximum variation was used as it is the specific type of purposive sampling strategy that lends itself nicely to phenomenological research

designs (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Snowball sampling, a strategy in which already confirmed participants recruit others to join the study was also used as the invitation to participate in the study was forwarded on by participants (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The preferred number of participants needed for a successful phenomenological study varies from researcher to researcher. However, the sample size should be determined by the overall research problem and the complexity of the problem (Vagle, 2014). For the current study, the goal was to have 10-15 participants complete the study for the complete duration until saturation was met. This number felt like a strong number to discover the essence of the phenomena, and it would allow for a myriad of different institutions, races and ethnicities, titles, geographical regions, and experiences to be representative.

Criterion for Selecting Participants

For the current study there each individual who was interested in becoming a part of the study had to meet the following criteria:

- Self-identify as a woman
- Currently serve in the role as a middle manager
- Currently work in a student affairs department/area
- Hold a terminal degree (PhD or EdD)

Once IRB approved the study, in order to solicit participants for this study, a post was placed on professional groups that exist throughout social media including ACUHO-I Women in Housing Network, Student Affairs Professionals, and NASPA Women in Student Affairs (WISA) Knowledge Community. Additionally, I reached out to my community of colleagues who shared the invitation to join the study. Once participants self-identified, an official invitation letter with an informed consent (Appendix A and B) was sent to them. When the signed informed consent

was returned, an alias was assigned to each individual in order to maintain anonymity throughout the study. This alias is used to refer to each participant in the current study and no identifying factors were included.

Participant Demographics

Fifteen individuals from a myriad of institutions and backgrounds completed all aspects of the study. All demographic aspects of the participants can be fully seen in Table 3.1. As seen in this table, over half of the participants are in the age range of 40-44 with no one being over 49 years of age or under 35 years of age. Even though there are participants from the east and the west coast, there are no participants from the Midwestern region of the United States, and a larger concentration of participants are from the Southeast and the Northeast. Unfortunately, there are two areas that are not as representative in this study which are race and ethnicity as well as institution type. The current study only has two non-White participants and all, but one participant works at a four-year institution. This puts about 13% of the participants being non-white which is slightly representative of the field. According to a 2018 article published on *Inside Higher Education's* website, approximately 8% of student affairs practitioners, regardless of gender, were Hispanic and 3% identified as Asian (Bauer-Wolf, 2018). However, there is good representation of public, private, research orientation and types of degrees awarded at each institution. Table 3.1 provides a holistic snapshot of the demographics of all participants. The participants are listed in alphabetical order by first names of their aliases.

Table 3.1 Demographics of Participants

Participant Alias*	Age Range	Race/Ethnicity	Geographical Region	Institution Type
Anita Boston	40-44	White	Southeast	Public, 4-year; Doctoral R1
Barbara Jackson	35-39	White	Northeast	Private, 4-year; Master's
Birdie Chandlerson	40-44	Hispanic, Latina, or Spanish Origin and White	Southeast	Public, 4-year; Doctoral R1
Claire Lee	45-49	White	Northeast	Private, 4-year; Doctoral
Darlene Dennis	40-44	White	Southeast	Public, 4-year; Doctoral
Hannah Smith	40-44	White	Pacific	Public, 4-year; Doctoral R1
Jessica James	40-44	White	Southeast	Public, 4-year; Master's
Joanne Dyres	40-44	White	Southwest	Public, 4-year; Master's
Kathy Jones	40-44	Asian and White	Southeast	Public, 4-year; Doctoral R1
Liza Knoppe	35-39	White	Southeast	Public, 4-year; Doctoral R1
Norma Lawson	35-39	White	Northeast	Private, 4-year; Doctoral R1
Penelope Perez	40-44	White	Rocky Mountain	Public, 4-year; Doctoral R1
Roberta Daleson	35-39	White	Southeast	Public, 2-year; Associate's
Ruth Jensen	45-49	White	Northeast	Public, 4-year; Doctoral
Stacie Patterson	35-39	White	Southeast	Public, 4-year; Doctoral R1

**Each participant was assigned an alias in order to ensure anonymity during the study.*

Additionally, due to the nature of this study and the focus on family and relationship status it is important to describe this personal information. Family and relationship status can be seen in Table 3.2. This is important as there is a relationship between marital and parental status and career aspirations and progression that is discussed at length in Chapter Four.

Table 3.2 Family and Relationship Status

Participant Alias*	Marital Status	Parental Status	Family Expansion
Anita Boston	Married	2	Wanted more children
Barbara Jackson	Married	2	Does not want more children
Birdie Chandlerson	Single	0	Does not want children
Claire Lee	Remarried	2	Does not want more children
Darlene Dennis	Married	1	Does not want more children
Hannah Smith	Divorced	0	Cannot have children
Jessica James	Married	1	Does not want more children
Joanne Dyres	Single	0	Does not want children
Kathy Jones	Married	2	Does not want more children
Liza Knoppe	Married	2	Does not want more children
Norma Lawson	Married	0	Does not want children
Penelope Perez	Partnered	0	Wants children; has tried
Roberta Daleson	Married	0	Does not want children
Ruth Jensen	Remarried	2	Does not want more children
Stacie Patterson	Married	1	Would need to adopt

**Each participant was assigned an alias in order to ensure anonymity during the study.*

Most individuals in the study were married or had been married with only two individuals who identified as being single. Additionally, most individuals had children or wanted to have children with only four participants actively identifying that they did not want children. This information will be important as these relationships are unpacked further in Chapter Four. The varying demographic information reemphasizes the idea that phenomenology focuses on the essence but also recognizes that the reality that each person experiences around the phenomena is unique to them (van Manen, 2015).

Individual Participant Profiles

Anita Boston. Dr. Anita Boston has worked at the University of Stantsville, which is located in the Southeastern United States where she has worked for almost 12 years. During her time there, she has served in two positions, both within the College of Business working with international programs where currently she serves in a director role. She recently earned her

PhD from the same institution. Prior to that, Anita worked in the functional areas of housing and admissions as in a GEARUP Program and for a brief period of time, outside of student affairs and higher education. All of these positions were located outside of the Southeast. Prior to Anita working on her PhD she was heavily involved in her state student affairs association and is currently a member several professional organizations (A. Boston, personal communication, February 20, 2020).

Barbara Jackson. Atlas College has been the professional home for Barbara Jackson for the past seven years where she has had two different positions, currently serving as a director of an orientation type office and before that of housing. Prior to that, she worked at one other institution for 10 years where she worked in the functional areas of housing and transfer student programs. Barbara has been teaching since she joined the field almost seventeen years ago. Barbara earned her EdD eight years ago at one of her previous institutions. All of Barbara's professional experience has been located in the Northeastern region of the United States (B. Jackson, personal communication, February 6, 2020).

Birdie Chandlerson. Dr. Birdie Chandlerson currently serves as an associate director within a student leadership office at Stateside University where she has worked for the past nine years; however, she has been in her current role for less than a year. During her tenure at Stateside, she has worked in various positions within the student leadership office. Prior to that, she started her career in the Southwest working in Greek life before she transitioned across the country to work in the Southeast in fraternity and sorority life and the dean of students office prior to transitioning to the school where she currently works. Birdie recently earned her PhD from Stateside within the past year. Her professional development focus has mainly been fraternity and sorority life with some additional experience in leading and facilitating sessions

for a national student leadership organization (B. Chandlerson, personal communication, February 25, 2020).

Claire Lee. Dr. Claire Lee has a slightly different path than most of the other women in this study as she is one of two individuals that started their career as faculty. Claire earned her degree in biomedical sciences eleven years ago with the intent to teach and run a research lab at the university level. Currently, she serves in an assistant dean role within a professional school at Leadville University where she serves as a student affairs officer. Prior to that, all of her roles were faculty at various institutions in the Northeast. She has been in her current role for seven months and her current institution for three years (C. Lee, personal communication, February 20, 2020).

Darlene Dennis. Serving as the Director of the Counseling Center at Rockmoor State University, Dr. Darlene Dennis is in an unusual role as she is not a licensed clinician. Darlene has called Rockmoor her professional home for over 20 years. She began her career at Rockmoor's housing department, serving in various positions within that department before accepting her current directorship role. Darlene has had a heavy presence within a national student affairs organization at the regional level. Darlene earned her PhD nine years ago from a top ranked higher education program (D. Dennis, personal communication, March 5, 2020).

Hannah Smith. Cliffsdale University, Waterview is where Dr. Hannah Smith currently serves in a director role within residence life and has for almost three years. Prior to that, Hannah worked in the functional area of housing and residence life at another institution within the Cliffsdale state system for 16 years. Hannah earned her EdD from the Cliffsdale state system almost five years ago and has been involved in housing professional associations since the beginning of her career (H. Smith, personal communication, February 24, 2020).

Jessica James. Dr. Jessica James has served in the role of an associate director within the functional area of housing at Hillside State University for the past five years. Her journey at Hillside State University began 15 years ago with various positions within housing. Jessica earned her EdD from Hillside almost two years ago. Prior to that, she served in two other housing roles at two other institutions, beginning her career almost 20 years ago. Jessica has taught several different courses during her career, mainly focusing around resident assistant and student leadership type courses. Additionally, Jessica is heavily involved in her regional and national housing professional associations (J. James, personal communication, March 4, 2020).

Joanne Dyres. Working in the field of student affairs for almost 15 years, Dr. Joanne Dyres currently serves as a director within a campus life office at Bratcher University. Joanne has worked at Bratcher University for seven years. Prior to this she worked in the student activities office as well as at two other institutions focusing on student activities, specifically working with student involvement and Greek life. Joanne earned her PhD a little over a year ago and is not involved in any professional associations (J. Dyres, personal communication, February 18, 2020).

Kathy Jones. Serving in a unique role at University of Harborville, Dr. Kathy Jones in her directorship focuses on law, policy and compliance for several areas of student affairs that oversees risk management. Prior to her current position, Kathy has worked at the University of Harborville for 10 years in various roles within housing and residence education and earned her PhD from the same institution three years ago, not in a higher education related discipline. Kathy teaches several different courses at her current institution. Prior to that she worked at two other institutions in the functional areas of admissions and housing and has been fairly involved

in a national housing professional association and an overarching national student affairs organization (K. Jones, personal communication, February 11, 2020).

Liza Knoppe. Dr. Liza Knoppe has served in her associate director role within residence life for a little over a year at the University of Southern Longsdale. Prior to that she worked at three other institutions in the areas of housing, residence life, and academic support services for fifteen years. Liza earned her EdD three years ago from one of her previous institutions. She has experience developing and teaching courses specifically in leadership and has been minimally involved in regional and national housing professional associations (L. Knoppe, personal communication, February 11, 2020).

Norma Lawson. Leaving academia to become an administrator in student affairs, Dr. Norma Lawson has served in a directorship role for the past four years within a health services related office at Lords University. However, her role at Lords University was not her first role within student affairs. Norma worked in health promotion at another university in the Northeast. Prior to that, she served in faculty positions at two other institutions focusing on disciplines in health sciences and focusing her research on human sexuality. She also worked at a community health center as well. Norma earned her PhD in Health Behavior nine years ago and is slowly venturing into professional associations within student affairs (N. Lawson, personal communication, February 19, 2020).

Penelope Perez. Dr. Penelope Perez's experience in student affairs has been unique with very few typical student affairs experiences and positions. She currently serves as an assistant dean and director and her role focuses on student success within the College of Health and Education at Cactus State University where she has been for four years. In fact, her entire professional experience has been at Cactus State University aside from her time sailing with

Semester at Sea. During her time at Cactus State she has worked in housing and student conduct in addition to policy analysis and program management. She is not currently engaged in any professional associations for student affairs. She earned her EdD almost two years ago from Cactus State (P. Perez, personal communication, February 7, 2020).

Roberta Daleson. Working at Calypso Art and Technical School makes Dr. Roberta Daleson unique in this study as she is the only participant that does not work at a four-year institution. Roberta has worked at Calypso for almost two years where she serves in a Coordinator role that focuses on student support and retention. Prior to that she worked at two different four-year institutions in student success and housing. Roberta earned her PhD from one of those institutions two years ago. She is not currently actively involved in any professional associations for student affairs (R. Daleson, personal communication, February 25, 2020).

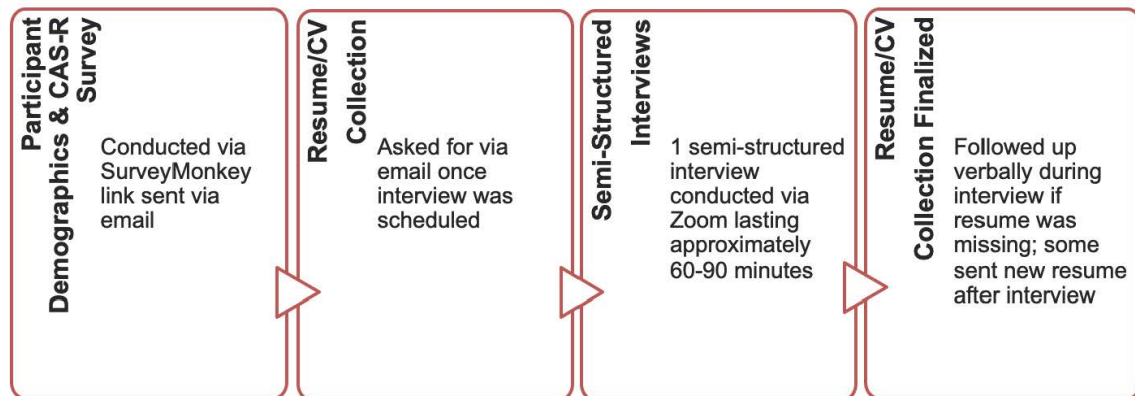
Ruth Jensen. Serving her entire professional career at one institution, for a total of 20 years, Dr. Ruth Jensen currently serves as a director in a student conduct office at Narwhal University. She is the only participant in the study that has not had any other institutional experiences. Her EdD earned almost 15 years ago is also from Narwhal University. During her tenure at Narwhal she has had four other positions in the areas of housing and residence life and career development. She is not currently active in any professional associations (R. Jensen, personal communication, February 14, 2020).

Stacie Patterson. Dr. Stacie Patterson has served in her directorship role in the student leadership office for almost two years. Directly prior to that, Stacie was working in the non-profit profession taking a brief hiatus from student affairs and higher education. Before stepping outside of higher education briefly she worked at two other institutions in the dean of students office and office of student leadership. She earned her EdD two years ago and has been teaching

several different courses around leadership. She is not currently active in any professional associations (S. Patterson, personal communication, March 3, 2020).

Data Collection

The types of data collected in this study are important as they speak to a phenomenological approach and are part of the research study design. According to Vagle (2014), phenomenological researchers are not limited to certain types of data collection and in fact any type of phenomenological material can be used, especially those that are “found in everyday life and in other research approaches” (Dahlberg, Dahlberg & Nystrom, p. 171). In the current study, Career Aspirations Scale-Revised (CASR) results were the first phase of data collection, with one semi-structured interview being the second, and respondents’ resumes or vitaes being the third and final round of data collection. Figure 3.2 shows how the data for this study was collected that began in January of 2020 and ended in March of 2020. The CASR results were obtained through a 36-question survey hosted in a secure SurveyMonkey account and took the participants less than 30 minutes to complete. The questions addressed the participants’ desire to become a leader in their field, actively seek out promotion, wanting recognition for their work, seeking out professional development opportunities and more. A full list of the questions can be found in the appendices. The CASR results were then used to inform some of the questions that occurred during the semi-structured interview. Additionally, the results were sent to each participant individually via email. In the email, there was additional information about the CASR and how to interpret results. Participants also had the opportunity to ask follow-up questions via email or during the interview process.

Figure 3.2 Data Collection Process

The second phase of the data collection process consisted of semi-structured interviews and was the most demanding of all the phases as it was the most time consuming in nature during set-up and facilitation. Interviews are essentially social interactions between the researcher and the participants that are based fully on a conversation and allow for the generation of knowledge through that interaction (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The goal of an interview is to try and understand the phenomena from the view of the participants (Creswell & Poth, 2018). While many phenomenological researchers prefer an unstructured interview as it tends to provide the most open and revealing dialogue between the participant and researcher, I opted for a semi-structured so I could ensure each participant received similar questions in order to better understand the essence of the lived experience (Vagle, 2014). The semi-structured interview protocol can be seen in the interview protocol found in Appendix C. The interview protocol is comprised of a range of questions with the goal of gaining the participant's comfort with the topic and the researcher as the conversation unfolds (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The interview protocol focused on several different themes that I believed had some effect on the phenomena of the career journey that women middle managers in student affairs experience based on existing literature: family; mentorship, sponsorship, and chauvinistic women; gender

discrimination; career aspirations; CASR results. Since participants were from all over the contiguous United States, conducting interviews face to face was not feasible; therefore, Zoom video conference software was used to conduct and record all interviews. All participants were able to schedule their interviews during times that worked for them, and interviews lasted from a little over an hour to about an hour and a half long as seen below in Table 3.3. Overall, the interviews took just over 21 hours to complete.

Table 3.3 Interview Duration

Participant Alias	Date	Duration	Format
Anita Boston	Feb. 20, 2020	86:33	Zoom Video Call
Barbara Jackson	Feb. 6, 2020	86:16	Zoom Video Call
Birdie Chandlerson	Feb. 25, 2020	60:45	Zoom Video Call
Claire Lee	Feb. 20, 2020	87:30	Zoom Video Call
Darlene Dennis	March 5, 2020	90:00	Zoom Video Call
Hannah Smith	Feb. 24, 2020	68:37	Zoom Video Call
Jessica James	March 4, 2020	95:56	Zoom Video Call
Joanne Dyres	Feb. 18, 2020	70:18	Zoom Video Call
Kathy Jones	Feb. 11, 2020	61:17	Zoom Video Call
Liza Knoppe	Feb. 11, 2020	97:40	Zoom Video Call
Norma Lawson	Feb. 19, 2020	79:22	Zoom Audio Call
Penelope Perez	Feb. 7, 2020	88:25	Zoom Video Call
Roberta Daleson	Feb. 25, 2020	90:17	Zoom Video Call
Ruth Jensen	Feb. 14, 2020	92:32	Zoom Video Call
Stacie Patterson	March 3, 2020	108:01	Zoom Video Call

The last phase of the data collection process consisted of collecting resumes or vitaes from each participant in order to conduct a document analysis. Vitaes were asked for prior to the participants' interview so that their professional pathways could be referenced during the interview and any questions asked.

Data Analysis

The data analysis for this study occurred in two phases, one occurring during the interview process and the second after interviews had occurred. The first phase of data analysis

was informal and happened through the process of reflecting and documenting those thoughts while the interviews occurred. The second phase was more formal in nature and influenced by Saldaña's (2016) *The Qualitative Coding Manual for Qualitative Researchers*. During each cycle of the second phase of analysis, reflexive memo-ing occurred as well so there was another layer of analysis ensuing. However, the interviews had to be transcribed first. NVivo's transcription services were utilized for each transcript and then in order to stay informed on what each participant said, I went through and edited each transcript for accuracy. Resumes or vitae were collected from each participant; however, there was no pattern that emerged from those documents. However, they were helpful in the summation of the participants' career journey thus far.

Phase One: First Cycle

Holistic coding. After editing the transcripts, I noticed that coding line by line would more than likely not be beneficial to understand the experiences of the participants nor would it be a good use of my time as I had 15 interviews that were anywhere from 60-108 minutes in length. Saldaña (2016) identifies the coder as a *lumper* over a *splitter* when this type of approach is being used. Therefore, I went with holistic coding in order to lump the participants' experiences together based on my research questions first instead of segmenting them and then having to reconstruct the puzzle later (Saldaña, 2016). This also allowed me to determine the bigger picture that the participants were describing through their interviews. In some cases, an entire answer to a question was coded in other situations, leading an answer to potentially have been coded into a few separate codes. I was able to use the NVivo coding software for this phase of coding which allowed for a quick coding process and the seamless organization of all transcripts, cases (participants), and codes. From this process, 23 codes were identified. This

style of coding laid the groundwork for a deeper dive into the analysis of the data and it created a more robust first impression of the data, allowing the data to be essentially prepped for a second cycle of coding (Saldaña, 2016). Additionally, holistic coding was utilized when analyzing the participants' resumes or vitae in order to lump their experiences together. However, there was little to discern from resume or vitae analysis as there seemed to be no commonalities between experiences and progression, which will be discussed further in Chapter Four.

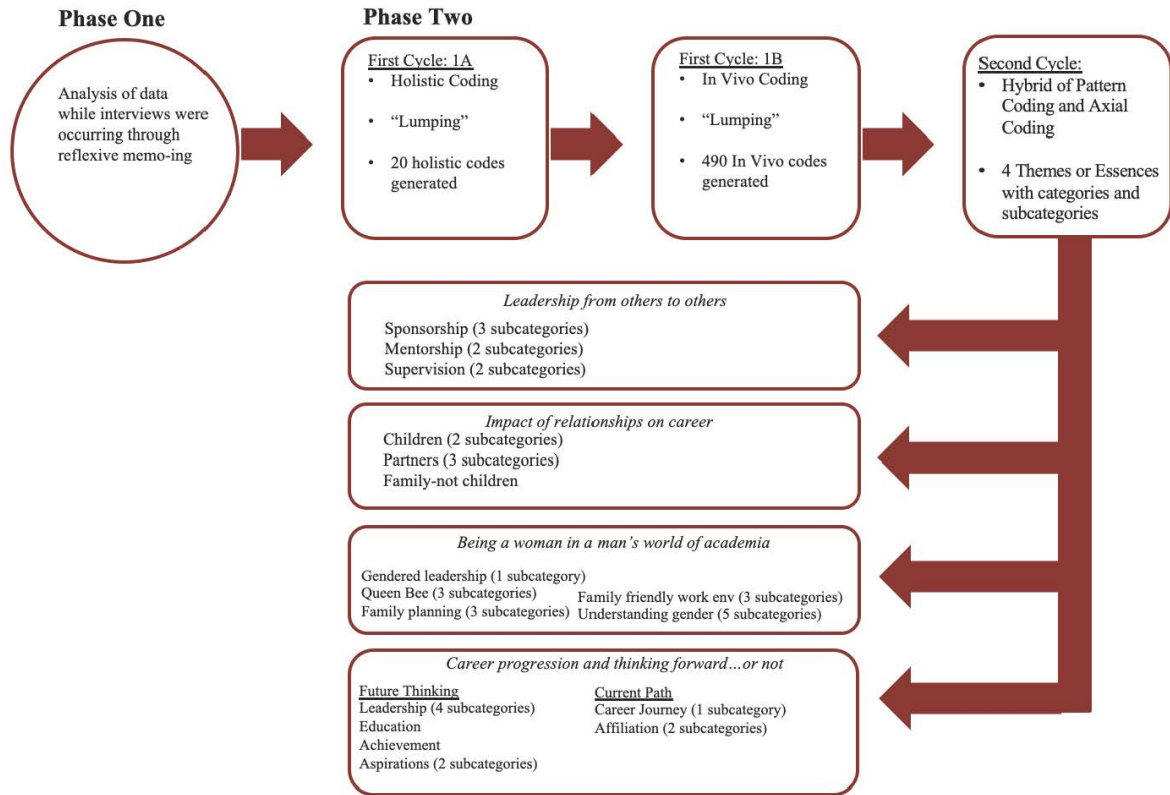
In vivo coding. After conducting holistic coding, I needed to dive more into the granular level through an additional round of first cycle coding. Therefore, a second round of first cycle coding occurred. In Vivo coding was used within each of the 20 codes that were discovered during phase one. In Vivo coding is also called *literal coding*, *verbatim coding*, or *inductive coding*, and comes from the root meaning of “in that which is alive” which lends itself beautifully to phenomenology (Saldaña, p. 105). This coding process allowed me to begin to see the essence of what the participants experienced by using their exact verbiage, but the coding still could not happen line by line as it would not lend itself to the phenomenological approach (Saldaña, 2016). Therefore, the lumpers over splitter approach was utilized once again. I selected the most impactful part of what the participant was saying and then pulled the rich quote from the transcript to use the participant's voice to represent what the participants was experiencing. During this phase I found that some of my initial coding was not as simple as I originally thought. For example, if a section is coded under *Relationships*, there may be some pieces of that response that fit into multiple first round codes. I also discovered that some larger overarching codes did not exist and needed to be added to gain a better holistic understanding; therefore three holistic codes were added. During this process 490 pieces from the 15 transcripts were coded. This process was also done in the NVivo coding software which seamlessly

allowed the ability to see which in vivo codes were nestled within each holistic category. From there I was able to see which transcript had which holistic codes which was beneficial to ensure I had not missed any content.

Phase Two: Second Cycle

The second cycle of coding utilized a blend of pattern coding and axial coding. This coding cycle was the reduction cycle and making meaning out of what the participants experienced in each holistic code. Pattern coding allowed for the grouping of the in vivo codes into smaller numbers of themes while axial coding allowed for the determination of which categories were dominant and others were nestled within the more dominant themes (Saldaña, 2016). Axial coding also allowed for the linkage to occur between categories and sub-categories which were prevalent in many themes. This part of the coding process was done by hand after each in vivo code was exported from the NVivo software system. From there each holistic code was analyzed for themes by looking for reoccurrences of similar experiences or information in the in vivo codes. The research questions of the study guided the reduction process and led to four themes, which I am labeling essences, emerging from the codes with several categories and subcategories within each essence. Figure 3.3 provides a pictorial depiction of the analysis process that occurred in this study.

Figure 3.3 Data Analysis Overview



Trustworthiness and Validity

This interpretation of data was artfully and carefully facilitated, leading to an understanding of the phenomena that went beyond the codes (Creswell & Poth, 2018). These interpretations of the essences challenged me personally and some of the preconceived notions I had about the phenomena prior to conducting this research, which is why it was imperative for me to discuss my findings with a colleague who is a qualitative researcher before feeling comfortable documenting the interpretation. This also led to diagramming the interconnectedness of each essence and also to diagramming how some pieces in certain essences connect with others as well, in order to easily understand the phenomena of women middle managers in Student Affairs.

Phenomenological researchers utilize a specific analysis and representation of the data that allows for the experiences that the participants have with the phenomena to remain the crucial aspect of the findings. I utilized a version of the method after my coding cycles were complete, that is a modification by Moustakas of the Stevick-Colaizzi-Keen method (Moustakas, 1994; Creswell & Poth, 2018). I looked at each essence that emerged, which is the *what*, then looked for *how* the participants experienced the essence (Creswell & Poth, 2018). However, van Manen's approach of a *phenomenological reflection* was also utilized through the entire analysis process as well (van Manen, 2014; Creswell & Poth, 2018). I struggled to find one approach that fit my study appropriately, so I utilized a blended analysis approach.

Solid qualitative research addresses the validity and the reliability of the data due to the fact that we are unable to rely on pure statistical numbers to back up our data (Merriam, 2002; Creswell & Poth, 2018). Therefore, it is imperative to share with the larger research community techniques and strategies that the researcher has utilized to establish credibility. This is done throughout the entire process with intention from the design of the research study all the way through to the analysis and presentation of the findings (Creswell & Poth, 2018). According to Creswell and Poth validation can occur through three different lenses: (1) researcher's lens, (2) participants' lens, and (3) reader's or reviewer's lens and it is recommended that "the researcher engage in at least two of the validation strategies in any given study" (p.259). In this study, I have decided to utilize at least one strategy in each of the lenses: (1) clarifying and addressing researcher bias by engaging in reflexive memo-ing, (2) member checking and seeking participant feedback, and (3) generating a rich, thick description in the presentation of analysis and debriefing the data and research process with a scholarly colleague (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Reflexivity has already been addressed in this chapter; however, the other strategies have not.

Member checking occurs when the researcher invites the participants to view the data and the analysis of the data for accuracy and is seen as one of the most important ways to establish credibility in qualitative research (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Creswell & Poth, 2018). This was conducted by sending the participants an electronic copy of their transcript as well as a summary of the key findings from their interview. Participants had the opportunity to edit anything in the transcript and provide any additional insights into the analysis of the data. This was particularly interesting as the COVID-19 virus was just beginning to emerge in the United States at the beginning of the data collection stage and was later identified as a full global pandemic around the time I sent the transcripts for review. Several participants reflected via email about how it was beneficial to reflect on their career journey and womanhood amidst having to work from home and the challenges that higher education is experiencing right now. Most individuals did not respond or indicated there was nothing to change; however, some wanted to ensure anonymity would happen or wanted to make sure I truly understood certain key takeaways.

Another strategy employed is providing a rich, thick description that can be seen in Chapter Four with a detailed description of each participant and the direct quotes taken directly from the coded interviews. This strategy allows the reader of the study to determine if the results of the study are transferable or not due to any *shared characteristics* (Erlandson et al., 1993; Creswell & Poth, 2018). Additionally, I talked through my first two rounds of first cycle coding with a colleague who is familiar with qualitative research and phenomenological work. This person has been utilized from the design of the research study but was heavily utilized during the coding process. The colleague was able to look at the data through a neutral lens, ask difficult questions, and allowed me to work through my feelings around the data and what was emerging

from the data (Creswell & Poth, 2018). These four strategies combined show the validity and trustworthiness of not only the data, but of the study and of me as a qualitative researcher.

Chapter Four: Findings

“I’m so sick of running as fast as I can. Wondering if I’d get there quicker if I was a man. And I’m so sick of them coming at me again. ‘Cause if I was a man, then I’d be the man.” – The Man, Taylor Swift

Overview of Findings and Themes

The datum that informed these findings are semi-structured interviews with each participant. The analysis, which was talked about at length in Chapter Three and can be seen in Figure 3.3, led to interpretations of the data that led to four main essences or themes that emerged from the data: (1) Leading from Other to Others, (2) Women Cannot Have it All: The Impact of Relationships on Career, (3) Being a Woman in a Man’s World of Academia, and (4) Career Progression and Thinking Forward...or Not. Each of those essences answered one of the following three research questions that guided the study:

RQ1: How do women identifying, student affairs, middle managers understand and navigate their career progression?

RQ2: What experiences have women identifying, student affairs, middle managers found to be beneficial in their career progression?

RQ3: How do career aspirations, as well as personal and professional factors, impact career progression?

1. Do these aspirations hinder or enhance their ability to overcome barriers?

Table 4.1 displays each essence and the research question with which the essence is aligned.

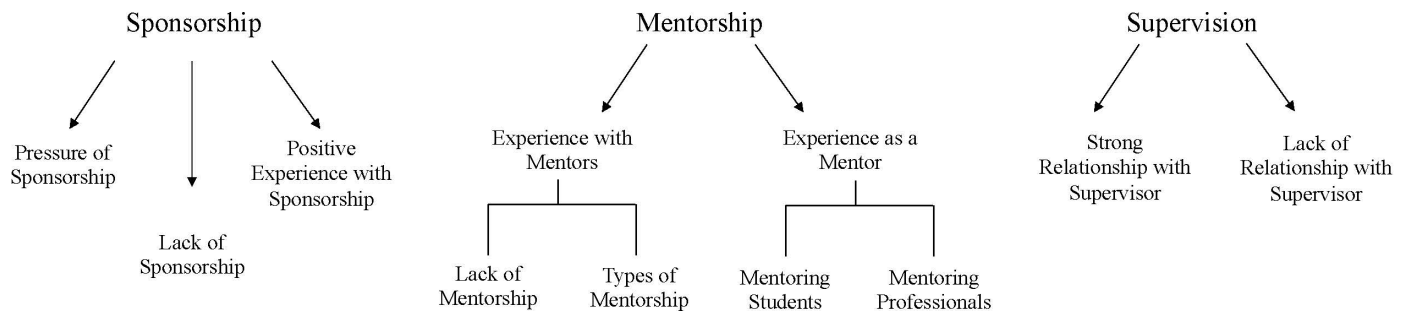
Table 4.1 Findings Related to Research Questions

Essence	Research Question
Leadership from Others to Others	RQ 2, RQ 3
Women Cannot Have It All: The Impact of Relationships on Career	RQ 1, RQ 2, RQ 3
Being a Woman in a Man's World of Academia	RQ 1, RQ 3
Career Progression and Thinking Forward...or Not	RQ 3

What follows is a detailed description into each essence that in part explains the main essence of the lived experiences of women, middle managers. Figures 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.5A and B are each essence mapped out to understand how they ebb and flow together.

Essence One: Leadership from Others to Others

The findings from this study suggest that there were several professional factors that impacted career progression. Overarchingly, each participant shared about some sort of relationship with a leader, specifically a mentor, sponsor or a supervisor that impacted their journey and progression thus far. These experiences began to answer the research questions two and three. If a participant did not necessarily have an experience with a mentor or sponsor, they had an experience with a supervisor and vice versa. Some participants have had multiple experiences, while others may have had one or minimal experiences. These relationships are important to their experience as a woman, middle manager and emerge through the participants' experiences with sponsorship, mentorship and strong supervision. Figure 4.1 maps out the components of the first essence.

*Figure 4.1: Illustrative Representation of Essence One***Essence One: Leadership From Others to Others**

Sponsorship. While sponsorship was defined for the participants, Kathy had a very practical and applicable definition of sponsorship that she used when she thought of what it meant to have or to even be a sponsor:

Sponsorship means that they're going to be that person that is going to rally for you and recommend you for this job. They're going to be the one to make a personal call to say, hey, this is the person that you need, because...here is their skill sets...before that job even posts or before that application even goes out like this is that person that you need to really take a second look at. (K. Jones, personal communication, February 11, 2020)

Kathy's definition takes the given definition a step further and identified tangible ways in which she has either seen sponsorship manifest itself or ways in which she hoped sponsorship would manifest itself. Sponsorship is the least experienced relationship in regard to leadership relationships that the participants experienced. Eight of the participants did not feel like they were currently being groomed for a senior-level position and two of those eight, said they had

been groomed in the past. Others talked about hoping or thinking that they are being groomed for that next step, but very few were able to definitively affirm that sponsorship was occurring.

Lack of sponsorship. As mentioned, most participants experienced a lack of sponsorship while serving in their current role. Some of that is due to institutional culture or the political climate of the institution. For example, Ruth, who works at a large state institution, talked about how there is not much turn over at her institution, therefore, the idea of a senior level leader sponsoring a middle manager or even entry level professional, was not a reality that many at the university experience. Ruth (R. Jensen, personal communication, February 14, 2020) also talked about how her colleagues have been at the institution for a substantial period of time and she does not necessarily see them leaving the institution as she stated, “when you have been in the same role for a very long time, I think others have a hard time envisioning you doing other things, and I... that’s true for me, too.” With Ruth also identifying that she does not see herself leaving the institution any time soon, advancement will be less likely, therefore sponsorship could be seen as not needed by the senior level leaders. Liza (L. Knoppe, personal communication, February 11, 2020), who is also at a large state institution, spoke about her experience with her colleagues being extremely good at their jobs, and that “it’s not a question of like needing to identify groom with certain individual. It’s that everybody’s equally qualified to step up to the plate.” Norma did not speak to any type of campus climate or culture concern, but she spoke to the lack of any sort of career path or progression that exists at her current institution. Kathy on the other hand spoke about feeling like her upper administration may not have the capacity to provide any type of sponsorship to her due to some political issues that are going on at her institution due to restructuring and the fact that there has been some turn over. Jessica also spoke about her experiences with the politics at her institution, however those

politics have created an insider and outsider group. According to Jessica, “you're either part of the family or you're not.” (J. James, personal communication, March 4, 2020)

Some participants are experiencing a lack of sponsorship due to specific individuals at their institutions. Anita has not felt any type of grooming or true support from the dean at her institution, which has led her to feeling as if she is grooming herself by asking for the experiences that she feels are necessary to move onto the next step. While Jessica has felt like her institutional climate does not support sponsorship for all, she has also had some experience with a vice chancellor who specifically does not support strong women which would mean sponsorship for her is nonexistent from this administrator. This experience also speaks to another category that is part of this complex phenomena, the queen bee syndrome. Therefore, a lack of sponsorship in for these women is due partially to the place they work, the systems in which they exist has not allowed for that sponsorship to occur.

Positive experience with sponsorship. Seven of the participants felt that they were currently being groomed or sponsored for what that next step might be for them. Penelope has had a strong interaction with the president of her institution where they asked Penelope what she would like to do next for her career, so the president is aware of her aspirations to be a dean of students and sent her specifically to a leadership program to represent her institution. She also has a relationship with the current dean of students who recommends different experiences to her so that she will be ready for the role when it becomes available. Barbara talks about the leadership team of her institution being new but developing a strong relationship with them and she still believes that many of them respect the work that she does which she believes leads them to sponsoring her with whatever that next step may be for her. Several individuals have had experiences with being sponsored previously that got them the position they are currently in due

to restructuring or being appointed to a vacant role that created a promotion for them. Darlene for example, was appointed to her directorship role and thinks that her promotion was due to the upper administration believe in the work that she had been doing for the institution for so many years. When her appointment recommendation was sent to the president's office, it was no question about him approving and endorsing her appointment as they had a relationship and had worked together in the classroom and indirectly through her work in housing.

Pressure of sponsorship. Several of the participants explained this pressure that existed if they had felt like sponsorship was occurring. This idea that they were always having to perform and be ready for whatever the sponsor threw at them. Birdie (B. Chandlerson, personal communication, February 25, 2020) talked about being hopeful of sponsorship, but in the same breath said, "Yeah I think I mean; everything is always a test, and everything's always like you have to [pause] you have to perform." Hannah (H. Smith, personal communication, February 24, 2020) when she was discussing what her next steps might look like mentioned the reality that she may be asked to serve in her supervisor's role as an interim, meaning she is being groomed for that role as she stated, "you've got to be ready for when those things are taking place and having the confidence to do so." So not only does she feel like she needs to be ready at all times, but that others need to see that she has the confidence to step into a role. Other women talk about not necessarily wanting that pressure or even not feeling ready for the sponsorship for the next level or even wanting a position at the next level. Joanne discussed her experience with this pressure when her supervisor mentioned her stepping into their role if or when they left. While Joanne (J. Dyers, personal communication, February 18, 2020) does not necessarily know if she wants that position, she reflected on the expectation that is coming from that sponsorship, "I think everybody expects that that'll be that I'll be the next dean of students if we hire internally."

Hannah (H. Smith, personal communication, February 24, 2020) had similar sentiments during her interview of not feeling that she was in “no way, shape or form” ready for that next step, in fact she even questioned if that next step is something that she is interested in regardless of sponsorship. This idea of not desiring to ascend to senior-level leadership is something that was experienced by several participants and discussed at more length in essence two and four.

However, this shows that sponsorship and the lack of desire to ascend the leadership ladder may be complexly linked.

Mentorship. Mentorship looks slightly different for each of the participants; however it seems to be the most impactful of all relationships with 101 in vivo codes found throughout the participants’ interviews. The current research shows how impactful mentorship is to women and their career journey, especially if it is mentorship by another woman. All but two participants had experiences with mentors serving in an impactful role in their career journey, several had mentors during the beginning of their career but currently do not, and all but one has served as a mentor in some sort of formal or informal capacity. Supervision additionally plays an important part in any professionals’ development. Most individuals look to their supervisors or higher up administrators to develop their skills and guide their experience to a degree. Therefore, it is no surprise that these women talked about their experience with strong supervisors, most in fact identifying their supervisor as a mentor. Some participants also spoke of a lack of supervision when discussing mentoring. Additionally, several of the women that were appointed to their current roles, were done so because their supervisor saw their potential and advocated for them proving that supervisory relationship can be important to these women’s career progression.

Experiences with mentors. In this section a deeper dive will be provided into the experiences of the women that have experience with mentors or those that currently do not have

mentors but have had some previously in their career progression. Even though these women had unique experiences with their mentors, there was an underlying tone of helpfulness and care for them as a person and for their career. Roberta touched on that idea very directly in her interview:

When I think of a mentor, I think of somebody that's not only going to help with job skill, but looking to the future of being able to help you anticipate or develop the skills that you need in order to be able to do whatever it is that you want to do next. (R. Daleson, personal communication, February 25, 2020)

However, for some of the participants, mentorship was never a large part of their development or professional journey.

Lack of mentorship. Joanne and Jessica are the two women whose experience with mentors has never resonated with them or been important to them. Joanne spoke to the fact that she wished that she had those mentors to lean on throughout their career journey, but Jessica on the other hand has not necessarily felt a need for those individuals. Joanne spoke about her introverted nature and how that is at the crux of her inability to form and maintain those relationships. This is something though that Joanne (J. Dyers, personal communication, February 18, 2020) desires as she struggled to identify any mentors and described attending a session at a national conference geared toward mentorship when asked how many mentors she has had in her career, "I don't I'm not sure. I have friends. I don't...and I went to a session on this at the last ACPA, because I was thinking about that and going, I don't know if I have a mentor per se that I could call." Joanne spoke at length about her relationship building skills, her introverted nature, and her desire to have a small group of people in her life that she is close with. She identified that she struggles to say in touch with people once she moves on from a

position and does not really know how to maintain those relationships. A really interesting takeaway was that she does not enjoy small talk, so her communication exchange is mainly transactional. However, with a mentor relationship there has to be some sort of foundation that is built through rituals such as small talk and getting to know the person, so this could also be why she has struggled with these types of relationships in the past.

Jessica, like Joanne, has a different view on mentorship, but it is mainly due to her inability to ask for help which happens to be of the main roles that a mentor serves in. Jessica identified that she has individuals, that she calls mentors, that she can call to serve as a reference from graduate school and a former supervisor that she still has lunch with occasionally but that seems to be more of a friendship than a mentorship. This different view of mentorship is probably due to the fact that Jessica was raised by a single mom. Jessica (J. James, personal communication, March 4, 2020) shared, “my frame of reference is that women are in charge because that is how I grew up” so she found that she did not need a mentor to encourage her to move forward in her career. However, she did reflect on her appreciation for having a faculty member in grad school help her navigate receiving harsh feedback from a male supervisor and navigating the humanity of her role. Jessica explained that relationship in more detail:

And so, I guess that's part of the reason that I've always seen her in that mentor position, because it wasn't just about here's your next job search. But here is how you exist in the world, as you know, as a person and how that can affect your job search and what you're looking at there. (J. James, personal communication, March 4, 2020)

Listening to her recount her mom raising her into the strong woman that she is, in addition to what she has appreciated out of her limited experience with mentorship, it made sense why mentorship never evolved into an important component in her journey.

The two participants that were prior faculty, Norma and Claire, both had amazing faculty mentors but do not currently have any mentors within the field of student affairs. Both of those women identified wanting to have a mentor as they feel like it would help them immensely with the learning curve to a new field and networking in that new field. This is also later reflected when they both discussed their lack of affiliation to the field in the fourth essence. Claire is newer in her transition than Norma and is looking specifically for feedback as well as how other institutions facilitate the things her area is responsible for. Norma on the other hand, has been on the lookout for a mentor in the field but has not really found someone that she meshes well with and would also help her in her career journey. Interestingly, Norma also specifically identified navigating gender as something she was hoping a mentor in student affairs could help her out with:

Tell me how better to, like, evade some gender traps that that women can fall into when I'm being too nice or too polite or too reserved or something like that And I in so I haven't...I feel like I would be looking for mentors who would help with that kind of thing, like someone who has really helped me. You're a really good manager or someone who would help me be better at asserting myself. I haven't necessarily found like someone who would be like they'd be a great mentor for the area that I'm in. Like they'll help me be able to figure out my job trajectory. I don't know what my job trajectory is.

(N. Lawson, personal communication, February 19, 2020)

In Norma's case, it was easy to see that this lack of current mentorship affected her potential career progression as she was in a field that was new to her with no real idea how to navigate her potential and leadership aspirations. Anita's desire for a current mentor is similar to Claire and Norma, but her career has been steadfastly in the field of student affairs. Anita had mentors

earlier on in her career, but with the shift to her current position and especially after earning her doctorate, she did not feel as if she has any mentors she can currently rely on. Mentorship is even more imperative for her as she does not have a strong relationship with her supervisor which will be unpacked later in this essence. Anita not only talked about craving the relationships in order to talk about things going on in her work life, but also to discuss what it means to be a working mother:

I do feel that that is an area where I am sorely lacking. I have many times thought and just like I really wish I had somebody like a mentor, a mentor who I could meet with coffee with regularly to talk about some of the things that I'm experiencing as a woman trying to advance her career as a mother. (A. Boston, personal communication, February 20, 2020)

With Anita, here is yet another example of how many of these experiences are enmeshed within each other and are not necessarily easily parsed out to stand alone.

Types of mentorship. Each participant had a unique experience with the level of mentorship that they experienced. Most stated that their mentor relationships were informal in nature and developed due to proximity, meaning they worked together, or they were faculty members in their graduate or doctoral work. Darlene (D. Dennis, personal communication, March 5, 2020) spoke about how her mentor relationships are not formal but are “organic and fluid” and has “ebbed and flowed and evolves over time.” Many participants also talked about how their relationships were not defined as mentor and mentee, but perhaps colleague, or friend, even though the participant placed them in the role of mentorship when asked to identify mentors. For several of the women, they connected with mentors that were the type of professional they aspired to be as they viewed those individuals as role models. Roberta (R.

Daleson, personal communication, February 25, 2020) talked about one of her mentors as someone that was “absolutely somebody that I aspired to be and would use for conversations to figure out what I was doing with my life.” Penelope (P. Perez, personal communication, February 7, 2020) shared similar sentiments regarding one of her mentors as someone who she described as “a person that I aspire to be like.” Birdie also spoke about how she viewed her mentors as role models and individuals that she looks up to both personally and professionally.

Others had experience with formal mentor relationships where the relationship was defined, or it occurred through a professional network. Kathy is a great example of this, her mentor relationships are clearly defined, and she has put in a lot of work to facilitate and maintain those relationships. She also has also attended the National Housing Training Institute (NTI) and received strong mentorship through that experience. Roberta has had formal mentorship experiences through the Alice Manicur Symposium, which is a national symposium. Darlene also spoke about her experience with formalized mentoring through her involvement in NASPA. However, even though these women participated in these programs, the informal mentor relationships seemed to have the most impact on them during their career.

Gift of mentorship. The question posed to participants was to talk about the impact that those mentorships had on their career progression. The participants that had solid experiences with their mentors have felt the long-lasting effects of those relationships and shared those experiences during that portion of their interview. Five participants spoke about how their mentors taught them about balancing their personal lives with their professional lives including being a strong role model as a working mom. This is important to note as motherhood and family planning is a crucial component of essence two and three. Ruth, Anita, Darlene, and Liza all specifically talked about how their mentors were great role models to learn lessons from in

motherhood; many of those lessons in retrospect. Ruth recounted how one of her mentors was helpful role modelling not only how to be a mom, but the different demands on women specifically around gender in the workplace. Darlene on the other hand spoke about a current mentor who is the same age as her, but she views her as a mentor not only for her professional mentorship in the professional organization they are both a part of, but how this woman handles her role as a mother. Both Liza and Anita saw motherhood role modeled for them before they even became a mother, but those actions stayed with both of them and they lean on those experiences to this day:

She was one of the first women in housing I encountered who was married, had children, and again would take time off to do things with her family. Like she showed me one example of what balancing work and personal life with family could look like, and that it was possible because most of the people I interacted with prior to that were women were single or had no children or were divorced. And again, not that any of those things are specifically problematic, but I didn't feel a connection to those things. And she represented that for me. (L. Knoppe, personal communication, February 11, 2020)

There's a lot of things that she said to me at the time that I thought were really poignant, that I still remember when I when I engage with how I parent. Things that she, you know, like I was talking about, I cannot understand how could you work when you have babies? And she's like working when you have babies, it's emotional, but it's much easier than when they're teenagers...So there's a lot of things that she talked to me a lot about that I realize now I retained a lot. (A. Boston, personal communication, February 20, 2020)

Experiences with mentees. All of the women in this study discussed mentoring students or professionals in some capacity through either informal, formal, or supervisory relationships. Hannah (H. Smith, personal communication, February 24, 2020) spoke about how mentoring is not only beneficial for those that she mentors, but also for herself, “I appreciate being a mentor. It’s one of the things that I don’t think a lot of people realize is when you’re mentoring, it is developing you as much as its developing other people.” This appreciation for serving as a mentor is seen in several other participants as well as they talk about how it is a humbling experience:

So I kind of laugh about it because it’s quite an honor for someone to call or take time at a professional conference to seek you out to talk to you. I mean [mentoring] it is important because a lot of people did that for me and still do. I feel like that’s honoring them by doing the same thing that they did for me. (D. Dennis, personal communication, March 5, 2020)

While the experience is rewarding and beneficial to all parties involved, several women spoke about how some of their mentees may not have asked for the relationship, but the participant actively serves as the role of a mentor anyway. Jessica (J. James, personal communication, March 4, 2020) specifically talked about how, “they may not name you as a mentor, but it doesn’t mean you’re not going to make sure they have a good experience.” The interesting piece here is how these women understand the importance of giving back to the field through mentorship, but do not necessarily take mentorship for themselves the same way in which they provide it.

Mentoring students. About half of the participants spoke about their experience mentoring students, both graduate and undergraduate students, especially ones that they had

significant contact with through supervision or advising relationships. For Penelope, that meant former Resident Assistants from when she worked in housing. Birdie mentioned that students in Student Government were the ones she developed mentoring type relationships due to the work she did daily with those students. While Stacie mentioned serving as a mentor in the Honors program and Anita discussed her work with college student personnel graduate interns throughout the years. Three participants spoke about how their mentoring relationship with students has focused heavily on career discernment and their next steps after college. Claire briefly recalled a student that she worked with ten years ago who still calls her and writes her for guidance while Birdie and Anita went into a little more detail:

And so now that she went into student affairs for a master's program, I've taken to taking her to lunch and kind of giving her advice on what her next steps may be or what summer assistantships look like. (B. Chandlerson, personal communication, February 25, 2020)

I do have a lot of students who come to me like trying to navigate the 'what's after plan', you know, what happens after college, what do I want to do? I think because I have a counseling background, I have this more like, you know, talk to me more about this...kind of conversation with students. (A. Boston, personal communication, February 20, 2020)

The participants who did mentor students found that their mentees were more women than men. However, the participants did not go into great detail discussing their experience serving as a mentor to students. This could be due to the very informal nature that the participants alluded to in their mentoring relationships with students.

Mentoring professionals. Similarly, to what the participants experienced regarding student mentoring, most participants discussed having informal mentoring relationships with

professionals and that they connected most with those that either they worked with as a supervisee or worked closely with. Six of the women spoke specifically about their obligation to mentor young women professionals, as well as what that relationship looked like. Each of the women take a very unique approach to their mentoring, but the underlying message is that they all care about giving back to women in the field. Liza talked about how she is always willing to take on a mentee and provide guidance with all of her mentees being women:

I probably have four newer professionals who we either again chat once a month or video conference or I mean, they'll call me sometimes, you know, or text me and say, hey, can we talk later tonight, you know, so. But I always put myself out there to any of the staff that I work with. What is interesting to me is that mentorship wise, only female staff I've ever worked with take me up on that. So, I guess the people I can look back on and feel like I like that I would claim like a mentor role or think they would say that about me.

They all women identify as women. (L. Knoppe, personal communication, February 11, 2020)

Hannah talked about her mentees and how one woman specifically showed her how she can impact the career of other women in the field. This led to her belief in the importance of giving back which is also why most of her mentees are women. Hannah's role as a mentor is slightly different as well as she talked about her role as a professional mentor through her regional Housing association making her the only participant to discuss a formal type of mentorship role with professionals:

She was she really made me realize that like one person can have a huge impact on somebody's career. And so I willingly or not willingly, I tend to have a lot of folks that will look to me as a mentor. But I have several professionals that will look to me as a

mentor. The past couple of years, until I got to a point where I'm like, my bandwidth is kind of done, I used to volunteer for the women of my regional housing mentorship program and I would take on a younger professional. But I did that for so many years that now I have four or five people that are under that stay connected to through that program. And in addition to other people that have seen me as a mentor. (H. Smith, personal communication, February 24, 2020)

Norma also talked about the importance of mentoring women in the field, especially those she works very closely with in her office. She talked about not only her obligation to simply mentor the women, but what she hopes to help them achieve:

But I definitely I feel a really strong obligation to be a mentor to two of the younger professionals in my office and in my department, one who just came out of a postdoc. So this is her first job after finishing her doctorate and then one year and another who's been, you know, out in the field for a few years, but still a newer professional. And so I try to spend a lot of time talking with them about what skills are you interested in gaining? Where do you want to go next? I want to keep you here forever, but I know that's not possible. You know, sort of where do you picture yourself and what do you need to get there? I actually think they're both pretty happy. So sometimes when I ask like one of them, she's just like, I don't know. I think she could go run her own department probably if she wanted. But I don't think she's ready for that. She's kind of an introverted person. The second she's just one year out of her postdoc. And so she's very starry eyed. And so she's like, I want to be here forever. I love this, this is great. But I think she's also someone who's got the potential to go on to lead a department on her own. And hopefully in a few years she will. (N. Lawson, personal communication, February 19, 2020)

While all of these women wanted to be able to give back to the field and help their fellow women, Hannah also touched on a very important aspect of mentoring as well, knowing when you as a mentor have hit your capacity to give back. This is extremely important as the number of women leaders diminish as they ascend the ranks meaning mentoring is something important for each woman in administration make a priority, but also only if it can be a meaningful experience. Hannah also talked about how the relationship must be authentic in order for it to be impactful:

And you just start to realize that you just only have so much space on your calendar to be meeting and checking in with folks, because my opinion is if I'm going to be a mentor, then I need to be true about it. And how do I establish those connections without it only being whenever they need something is when I reach out. So how do I stay truly, genuinely connected? (H. Smith, personal communication, February 24, 2020)

During her interview, Jessica specifically addressed that her role as a mentor has developed more with her female staff than her male staff members as well as the depth of the relationship being very different between genders. Jessica (J. James, personal communication, March 4, 2020) discussed that her male supervisees and mentors would say things like, “oh, you know, [she’s] a great boss or something like that.” The women that she worked with however would “say there has been an impact in this [specific] way.” She spoke in more detail about this difference:

I think as a female I have had a bigger role as a mentor to other females, supervisees than I maybe have to my male supervisees. To them I am a reference. To some of the women that I've supervised I have been more of a mentor. [The relationship happens] before they need the reference, they need to know that their thinking about this in the right way and

making good decision for what they're doing and why they are looking at doing it. (J. James, personal communication, March 4, 2020)

Supervision. It was clear while analyzing the participants' experience with mentorship and sponsorship that supervision was heavily enmeshed with both of those experiences. Some of the women experienced their supervisors providing mentorship or sponsorship to them through that relationship. Regardless, many of the women in the study alluded to the important role their supervisors have played during their career journey.

Strong supervisory relationship. Over half of the women identified a supervisor as a current or former mentor and their experiences with these individuals are interspersed throughout the earlier section on mentorship. However, the difference between their relationships with other mentors was the holistic approach these specific individuals took to the mentoring, sponsorship, and general supervisory relationship. Birdie spoke of her relationship with her senior vice president and how she felt that this individual took the time to learn things about her and felt even as if she liked Birdie, "But she truly shows she's a human. And so, I think that makes me feel good about knowing that she respects me, and I respect her" (B. Chandlerson, personal communication, February 25, 2020). While Birdie acknowledged that she did not necessarily need her supervisor to like her, that it made the relationship more beneficial to her and more enjoyable as well. The respect component is also crucial to their relationship, especially when her supervisor had to hold her accountable. Birdie talked about how her boss spoke to her about accountability, "I'm calling you into my office. It means that I may be scolding you, but if you're doing your job, there should be no need for me to really, like, have to call you in. I may check in on you" (B. Chandlerson, personal communication, February 25, 2020). Barbara also spoke about the level of care that her supervisor has for her as well, "She completely looks out for me. I

love our relationship. She cares about me as a person” (B. Jackson, personal communication, February 6, 2020). While Barbara mentioned that her and her supervisor generally have a work-focused relationship, she has no doubt in her mind the level of care her supervisor has for her and the intention she takes on developing her for the next step. Barbara also spoke about how those relationships carry on once she has left a position, “I do think I've had, for the most part, really good supervisors who. Have stayed in my life that check in from time to time” (B. Jackson, personal communication, February 6, 2020).

Lack of supervisory relationship. While many of the women spoke about their positive relationship with their supervisors, some of the women had negative interactions or little to no interaction with their supervisors. One of the participants, Anita, spoke at length about her lack of a relationship with her dean which led to his lack of support for her growth and development as well as her ability to complete work related initiatives. During her interview, Anita mentioned her supervisor was so non-existent that she could essentially not show up to work and no one would know, “My office is in the lowest level of the building my bosses are always on the top level and honest to goodness, they wouldn't they wouldn't know if I wasn't here. They wouldn't know if I die” (A. Boston, personal communication, February 20, 2020). While Anita had a jesting demeanor while talking about her boss having no idea if she was in the office or even alive for that matter, for her there were implications for her work, “So I can't get any initiatives or any thing I want to get going with in a business school because I can't get this steady supervision and somebody who sees the work I do” (A. Boston, personal communication, February 20, 2020). This difficulty in trying to get new initiatives started or current initiatives completed was exasperated by her inability to schedule a meeting with her supervisor for

months. Barbara also had a supervisor where she had no relationship and was unable to receive support or any feedback on her work:

I actually had a supervisor before my current one who was the associate director. He gave me virtually no support and no critique. Like, I was just like, I'm thinking about doing this and he's like, sounds pretty good. I'm like, oh, my God. Like, I want to like banter in like a problem solving and thinking with dialogue. (B. Jackson, personal communication, February 6, 2020)

Barbara talked about how she craved the partnership she had with previous supervisors and felt more supported and successful when that relationship existed. In fact, Barbara talked about how she felt like that relationship with her current supervisor is what helped her obtain her current position. Stacie also spoke about how important the supervisory role is for women especially as she reflected on her experience with a former supervisor:

I reported to a woman and she's probably one of the only supervisors I've had that is not a mentor. That's a whole different situation. She went a little crazy. It happens. But I think I think it's important to have women in our field, whether they're supervisors or not. To continue to push us and to continue to advocate for us and especially like appreciating the, because we stand and achieve on the mountains of struggles of all the women before us. (S. Patterson, personal communication, March 3, 2020)

All three types of leadership these women experienced: sponsorship, mentorship, and supervision had an impact on career progression and their career aspirations. It is important to note that this leadership could be their experience receiving sponsorship, mentorship, and supervision or it could have been their experience giving one or all of those types of leadership. This essence answered research question two and three by bringing light to the fact that

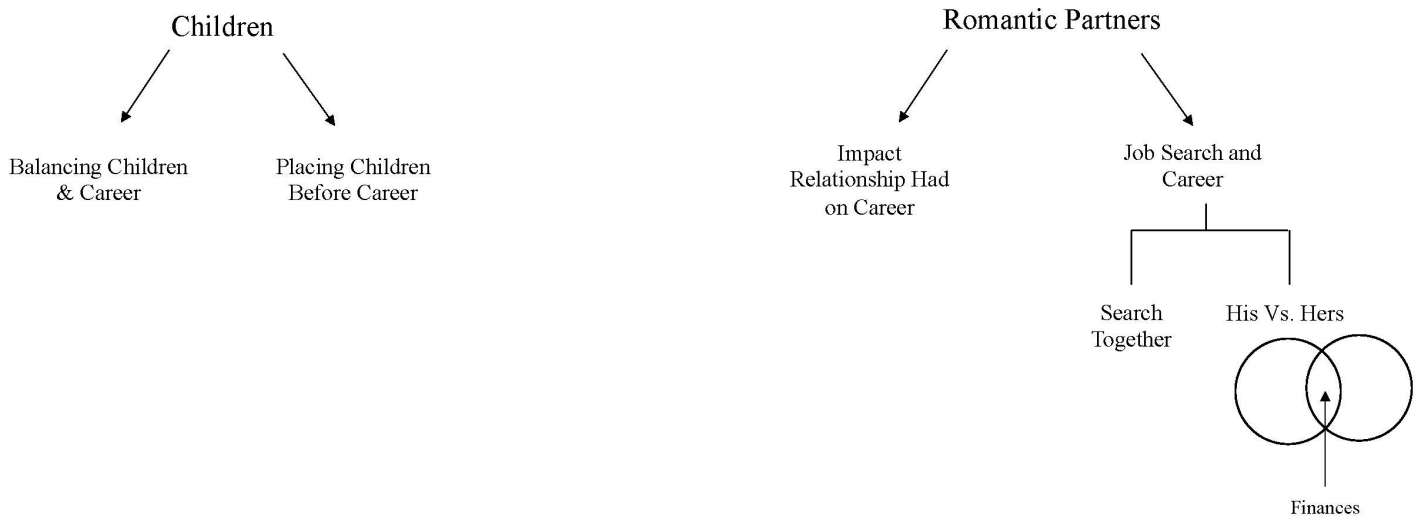
sponsorship, strong mentorship, and solid and supportive supervision are experiences that positively have impacted their experience and career progression as well as those same experiences are professional factors that these women found to propel them forward in their progression.

Essence Two: Women Cannot Have It All: The Impact of Relationships on Career

Many women strive to have it all: a successful career, a loving partner, children, and healthy relationships across the board. But, the women in this study showed how it truthfully is not possible to fully have it all. One area of these women’s lives always suffers, personal or professional. For example, if a woman has children, she may not be present for evening commitments making her seem like she is not devoted to work and perhaps passed by for advancement. Or, she may spend more time at work than at home, trying to advance up the ladder, causing her partner to become frustrated. This section provides a deeper dive into how each relationship can impact their career advancement and answers all three research questions in some capacity. Figure 4.2 below maps out the components of the first essence.

Figure 4.2: Illustrative Representation of Essence Two

Essence Two: Women Can’t Have It All: The Impact of Relationships on Career



Children. The women in this study spoke very candidly about the challenges and rewards of being a working mom. They each have varying degrees in which their career ranks in importance, but there is a common thread between them all that recognizes the challenges that it takes to have children and a career. Nine of the 15 participants have children of varying ages. In this section their experiences surrounding the guilt many of them have when they would place importance on their career as well as those that have put their children first ahead of their careers will be explored. This causes pause and the question to be asked if their male counterparts experience the same thing, which is briefly discussed by the participants. Stacie talked about how education is saturated with women, but only to a certain level and how that alongside having children is impactful to work life balance:

Because even though education is highly a women's field, in the upper levels, it's not. And you're having to sit at a table that wasn't meant for you and you have to work like you don't have children and parent like you don't work. And so, I think it's just really given me and it's given me a whole new perspective of work life balance, because I'm a three and I'm a workaholic and very defined by my career. (S. Patterson, personal communication, March 3, 2020)

Stacie brought up the idea mentioned earlier that women truly cannot have a career and family as she talked about working like one is not a parent and parenting like one does not have work. This inability to strike a balance makes it difficult to even think about career progression. Ruth also touched on this idea of inadequacies between women and their male counterparts in rearing children and balancing parenthood and a career:

And sure, I'm willing to miss my kids, whatever, because I will come in here and manage whatever the need of the day happens to be. I mean, I think that it can be gendered because it's more often women who make those choices, but certainly not completely. You know, there are men who could make similar decisions, but I think men are often rewarded for that. You know, like oh what an exceptional dad, you know? Or actually maybe just a dad, you know, like these are the sacrifices that many women make every day. And they're not necessarily regarded as value added for doing so. (R. Jensen, personal communication, February 14, 2020)

The fact that women are experiencing gendering in even their parenting, it is understandable why these participants have felt like they had to make a choice between parenting and a career. For some of these women, their experiences vary greatly due to when they had their children in their career. For example, Ruth was a single young mother who was navigating the first part of her career while having a young child. This led her to take certain positions for practicality, not advancement necessarily. Additionally, for Ruth (R. Jensen, personal communication, February 14, 2020), “career has never come first, my kids always have” and she attributed that to becoming a mother so young. Darlene on the other hand became a mother later in life where she had already advanced to just below a Director role when she had her son. This meant that any career decisions she made up until recently were not influenced by a child. The timeliness of when motherhood occurred is important for their career journey.

Third shift: Balancing children and a career. The third shift, discussed in Chapter Two, is the psychological internal battle that many women face, feeling as if they were unable to be good at both of their roles causing them to question their worth, validity, and ability in all of their roles (Spangler, 2011). This is something that several women spoke of by naming it as a feeling

of guilt or the inability to truly feel as if they could balance being a parent and having a career. Even with supportive and present partners, it seems as if being the main caretaker is something that women experience over their partners which in turn effects the ability to balance career and motherhood. Jessica talked about she appreciated her husband who is a supportive partner and father, but a lot of things still ended up falling on her as she has the role of not only a mother but keeper of her household as well:

...but the whole multitasking mom mind thing is always a thing and rarely a thing for my husband. Right? He doesn't think about we're almost out of milk, I'll need to stop on my way home. We live in the middle of the woods on top of a mountain. So, if you don't get it before you go home like going back out is a big deal. So, like thinking ahead, you know, sign-ups for summer camp is the only way to have childcare here in the summer and they fill up very quickly. Having it on your calendar and having a deposit ready and having all the paperwork filled out. He would think about summer camps on the first June, and by then it would be too late. And so, I think the responsibility from a family standpoint, we split time really well in managing our schedules and our child's schedule. But when all else fails, it generally falls to me. (J. James, personal communication, March 4, 2020)

This means that Jessica is constantly having to process all of her roles in her head simultaneously ensuring that she is staying on top of each role and responsibility individually. Anita similarly also talked about while she has a supportive partner that shares the parenting load as well as managing a household, a lot of things still fall to her:

I have a partner that does housework and vacuums and laundry. I and I still do more. I still do a lot of the kin part of being a family, you know, and making sure the kids

schedule, you know, signing the folders, making sure they get where they need to be, all that stuff. I do that. (A. Boston, personal communication, February 20, 2020)

Anita also experienced that feeling of constantly having to stay on top of everything and constantly performing in all aspects of her life. However, even if the inability to truly balance everything exists, several women want to be present and available for their children in a traditional motherly role. Anita talked about how her upbringing in a very traditional family where her mother stayed at home and her father worked, made her feel a certain level of guilt for her two children's experience not being the same as hers as they attend after school programs while she works. This means that Anita tries even harder to be involved in their school life in ways that she can while balancing her career and other responsibilities:

But, a few things, though, I try very hard to be involved. I'm like a class liaison for their little class PTA. I can't get to PTA meetings, but this way I can like coordinate the parties and then U of S has like a community service leave. You get eight hours a year. So, you know, I divide that up for their little classroom parties for the holidays so I can be present and be there for them. I'll take vacation days to go to field trips and that kind of stuff, because I do prioritize. It's important to me. It's important to them. They like it. (A. Boston, personal communication, February 20, 2020)

Regardless if the women spoke in detail of their experiences as a mother, they all spoke about how it was beneficial to have a supervisor or department that understood the demands both roles had on them individually but also how each role can impact the other. This plays into the family-friendly work environment that the participants spoke about but it discussed in more detail in essence three.

Unfortunately, there is only so much time in the day and week to complete all the things that expected out of these women and their roles. Anita, who spoke about her desire to fit the typical mother stereotype of working with the PTA, providing snacks for sports teams, being present at games and volunteering at the school can lead to potentially unhealthy behavior such as staying up late to catch up on household work, work, or just personal time. Anita has found herself in that unhealthy cycle of staying up late to get everything done, spend time with her children, partner, and find time for herself as well. She reflected on a typical school night for her and her family:

But I tend to stay up very late at night because by the...now that my kids are also getting older, they don't go to bed as early. So it's by the time my oldest has lights out with my oldest. By the time we finish reading, it's usually 9 or 9:15. And so when we get to that point and then I put them down and I and we have bedrooms upstairs. And so I usually sit upstairs for about 10 or 15 minutes because when they were babies, they used to cry for me a little bit. And so out of habit, I still do that. They don't call me anymore. But so from then on, you know, I piddle I change a load of laundry. I make sure the dishwasher, I feed the dog, I feed the cats, I make sure everybody's got water. I go through the folders and sign the agendas and, you know, look at homework. And I kind of do all those little things. And so, it might be 10:15, 10:30. And then my partner is like, how come you aren't sitting down with me? So then I spend some time with him and then he'll go to bed. I'm an extrovert. I'm a huge extrovert. But you still just need that time for yourself. And so sometimes it's starting at 11:30pm was when I finally just get to be. And then, you know, it's you know it'll be one 1:00 or it'll be 12:15. And then, you know, you're getting up at 6:00 the next morning or, you know, every time I'm like I'm going to

set my alarm to workout. And it doesn't happen. But, you know, I'm tired and then, you know, every two weeks I crash because I've been getting four hours, five hours of sleep. And it's just so it also perpetuates kind of an unhealthy cycle in terms of having just that quiet space for yourself at the end of the day. (A. Boston, personal communication, February 20, 2020)

Not only is the lack of sleep unhealthy, but the practice of staying continuously busy puts continual stress on one's body. Anita also reflected about how her husband and mother are continuously worried about her and her stress levels and health.

Placing children before career. There are various reasons that these women have decided to place their children before their career. For some individuals, placing children before their career has manifested itself by being geographically bound due to having extended family in the area, moving to be closer to family, or even waiting to make a career move until children are out of the educational system. Claire talked about her experience looking for a post doc position knowing she wanted to start a family and in doing so wanted to be close to her and her husband's family as well. Darlene also talked about how she would not want to take a new job now and move as her son is still in school and she would not want to remove him from his school district. She talked about the complex nature of placing children and family before her career aspirations:

But we have a family. We like where we live. We like the school system here and we're both in the same division at the same institution. It's just not easy. So it's just complicated. And sometimes, I think, but why? You have a lot to you know, that's just internal woman dialogue, mom dialogue. Is it keeping me back? That it's just a part of my life now. So, I have different decisions to think about. And I can't just say, oh, I'm going

to go apply for that because there's big implications for that. (D. Dennis, personal communication, March 5, 2020)

Ruth reflected on her decision to work at 75% her capacity as opposed to full time. She realized that this more than likely had an effect on her career progression, but because she had her first child so young, her career has never truly been first for her:

I knew when I made the choice to go to .75, that I was missing some things or I was choosing not to come into the late-night program or the you know, and I knew at the time that would have implications for me in terms of who gets tapped for what things. And I was okay with that because that was...I think because I became a parent at such a young age, my career has never been first in my life. My kids always have been. My family always has been. My career is very important to me for sure. But not to the degree where I felt like I was willing to sacrifice a lot of family time. So, I feel very confident that that has had implications for my career progression. But I'm at peace with that. (R. Jensen, personal communication, February 14, 2020)

Ruth understood the impact this decision had on her career progression and had come to terms with that impact. However, Liza on the other hand discussed her decision to recently place her children and family before her career which was a major shift for her, and she has yet to see any issue that may cause with her career progression.

So up until the point that I was the director of the academic success center, my career had always come first. And so being honest that while I enjoy my job right now, the people are amazing and I'm starting to settle in and finding things again that are challenging for me, my last job was my dream job. And like that's still sometimes been in the last eight months has been hard for me to come to terms with that. It's the first time in my career

that I made a decision for my family solely. And it was in some ways a step back career wise, not completely. And again, like I know there are many opportunities that I have here that will come to me in the future. But there I felt purposeful career wise, like going to work every day. So, my focus growing up and going through all the education and all of those things like my goal was always about career aspirations for me. And that's something that has taken me a long time to be able to say that comfortably, that until the last few years I felt like, well, you're not supposed to. You know, again, as a woman, like you're not supposed to want those things. And finding out that deep down, I really did. And I wasn't 'gonna apologize for it. (L. Knoppe, personal communication, February 11, 2020)

Liza is a great example of how priorities change and where one's career ranks in their life can ebb and flow depending on the other aspects and responsibilities in their life. Anita is another great example of this. She was very career driven prior to getting married and having children, then the focus shifted some to her children, and now that her children are getting older, she can feel her ambition for progressing her career coming back:

And I do feel like when I first got married and first started having kids, that I really put the ambition on the backburner. And now that my children are both in school and are getting, you know, I don't have to dress them and brush their teeth every day. You know, they're getting more independent. And actually, now that I finish the doctorate, I can feel that fire just wanting to, like blaze again. And so, I'm trying to take some different routes with it to just kind of build some different experiences. I think that is reflective of me being a parent and putting a lot of things on the backburner while my kids were like itty bitties. (A. Boston, personal communication, February 20, 2020)

Partners. Having a relationship with a romantic partner is another area that can cause stress on a woman's career but also in turn on the relationship. This experience can parallel some of the stress and balance concerns that women who have children experienced. Overall, it does not seem like the women's careers had a negative impact on the relationships with their partners to the point where the relationship may end or has ended. Hannah is divorced and while she discussed her ex-husband's lack of understanding of her position, there were other issues with their relationship that led to divorce. Ruth and Barbara are both remarried; however, their divorce was not a result of their focus on their career. Out of the fifteen participants, eleven are married and one is partnered. All but two of the men that are in these women's lives have their own careers and interestingly, four of the partners work in higher education with two of them working in student affairs specifically. Having a partner that works in higher education, especially student affairs can add a unique and challenging layer to the balance of their relationship and job searches explicitly. However, having a partner in the same field as the participants seemed to make the understanding of potentially odd hours or long days more prevalent, which could be necessary to career progression. But, having a partner working in higher education does have some drawbacks, the career progression component including the job search process seems to be the main point of possible contention for these women that had partners in the field.

Two of the women, Penelope and Anita, talked about being workaholics and how their relationship has caused them to step out of that identity and have more of a balance between personal life and their work life. Anita (A. Boston, personal communication, February 20, 2020) talked about how her husband tells her that, he was the first one to cure her of her workaholic lifestyle prior to their children being born and that "he's very proud of that because I did work a

lot. Prior to being with him. And I enjoyed working a lot.” But Anita also talked about how that was not necessarily the default when they first got married. She was still working a lot of hours at times, especially while working on her dissertation and working full time. She reflected on a conversation she had with her husband where the concern for the amount of work bled into her health as well:

He said, ‘do you remember that at times you were prioritizing your career?’ I couldn't stop. I had to do my work. And even my partner got like at times, like when the children were a little younger and also doing the dissertation and I was doing graduate school and working. And he used to say, ‘I need you not to have a heart attack. I need this to not happen.’ (A. Boston, personal communication, February 20, 2020)

Knowing that her husband was worried about her and the impact her amount of work had on her family, made her feel guilty. However, it seemed as if her guilt was self-imposed as she did not talk about her husband doing anything specifically to make her feel that way, just his care for her well-being. Penelope reflected on her shift from being a workaholic to having more balance once her partner came along almost as if there was a shift in desire to spend her time differently:

And now Adam has taken so much space in such a positive way, but in a way that I've had to I'm not used to going home and not working. I'm not used to not going to things that night. I'm not used to not hanging out with colleagues or friends across the university. And so, I've had to adjust to kind of that because he is family now. And, and so that's been a transition for sure, in that I've stepped away from work more than I'm used to. (P. Perez, personal communication, February 7, 2020)

Job search and career progression. Barbara and Liza's partners are stay at home fathers so there is no concern around negotiating competing job searches. However, for the rest of the

participants, navigating two careers within a household can have its challenges. There were two themes that stood out after talking to these nine women: either they search with their partners together or one of their careers takes precedent over the other's. However, the main reason for one person's career taking precedent over the other was purely due to financial circumstances in all relationships minus one. This meant one of two things financially, that the individual that is the breadwinner is the individual that is more career focused and determined when career progression or moves happened, or it meant that there were other financial considerations such as a home being owned or a retirement almost secured by the other partner. For both Anita and Ruth, their partners are very close to retirement, so at this point, it does not make sense for them to look for career advancement outside of their current location and risk losing any type of financial investment in retirement. Anita, however did mention that recently she wanted to apply for a job after earning her doctorate that would require them to move, and her husband told her he could not leave, making Anita feel that if the tables were turned, he may not have supported her wanting to stay:

I've just finished this doctorate and it's, you know, what am I 'gonna do? Where am I going to go? And he's in the K12 system. And he's like, 'I can't leave. I'm too far into my retirement for us to leave the state'. And so all along, he's always said, 'I'll go well, I'll go wherever you want to go. We can go wherever you want'. He's like, I would prefer these locations and not these. You know, he's always given me input and I finally put his feet to the fire. I was like, there's an opportunity I want to pursue. And he goes, 'I can't...I can't leave'. You know and I was like I needed you to be honest with me. But you've always told me we could. And now you're telling me we can't. He tried to put his tail between his legs with it. Then realized, you know, he kind of messed up with it. But it's the thing like

I think if there was a really phenomenal opportunity for him and I was like, well, I can't leave because of this, I don't know if he would have had that same consideration. You know, kind of thing. (A. Boston, personal communication, February 20, 2020)

However, while that was difficult for her, it made her, and her husband truly analyze their situation to see how many years he truly did have left to retire to see if it made sense financially for her to potentially pursue other opportunities. They spoke about it shortly after he met with an individual at work that was able to give him the exact date he can retire, and he has only around five years left before he can retire, making him leaving his position not a sound financial decision as he would lose out on that retirement. This helps them make decisions based on practicality as mentioned earlier and not emotionally place one individual's career ahead of another. Ruth's situation is slightly different as her and her partner got married about five years ago, so a little later in life and he is significantly older than her, meaning he has progressed further in his career. She talked about them being very happy with where they are, but that he is very close to retirement, so she would stay at least until he retired then possible look at advancement opportunities if she so desired.

For many of the women, their partners are the breadwinners, even if they work in higher education together. This makes sense as even in higher education, women are generally not paid the same as their male counterparts, thus fulfilling the perpetual cycle of women truly not being able to have full career advancement if financial considerations are a major deciding factor on whose career takes priority. That being said, that does not automatically mean that if the woman is the breadwinner that their partners are supportive, or that the women would not be willing to let their partner's career take the lead, however each participant in this study has a supportive partner regardless of the situation. Norma's partner, even though she is the breadwinner is very

supportive of her and her career and she is willing to let that pendulum swing if he ever found an opportunity that made sense for them financially and that he desired:

But we've moved because of my jobs, like he's been flexible enough that like that we move based on the opportunities that I've had. Right now, I make a lot more money than he does. And so, you know, I think that that would change you know, sort of change our lifestyle. I've mentioned to him that if he found something that he really wanted to do that was even part time, like we could do that. So I actually see, I see less likelihood that we would move because of an opportunity for him. But I would be willing to do it if it came up. (N. Lawson, personal communication, February 19, 2020)

The situation is very similarly for Kathy as well as she is also willing to support her partner over her career:

Yeah, I'm definitely the breadwinner currently. So, he would have to be making substantially more money, which in an ideal world, his goal after getting his master's would be a remote position with the government and making a substantial amount of money so he could work wherever. That's what his end goal is. And then I can kind of proceed with my career and he would be able to support as necessary. So that's great. (K. Jones, personal communication, February 11, 2020)

Overall, these women show that it is complex to navigate two careers regardless of what the driving force is behind the decision making. Between children and relationships with partners, these personal factors can impact a woman's career progression and aspirations.

Essence Three: Being a Woman in a Man's World of Academia

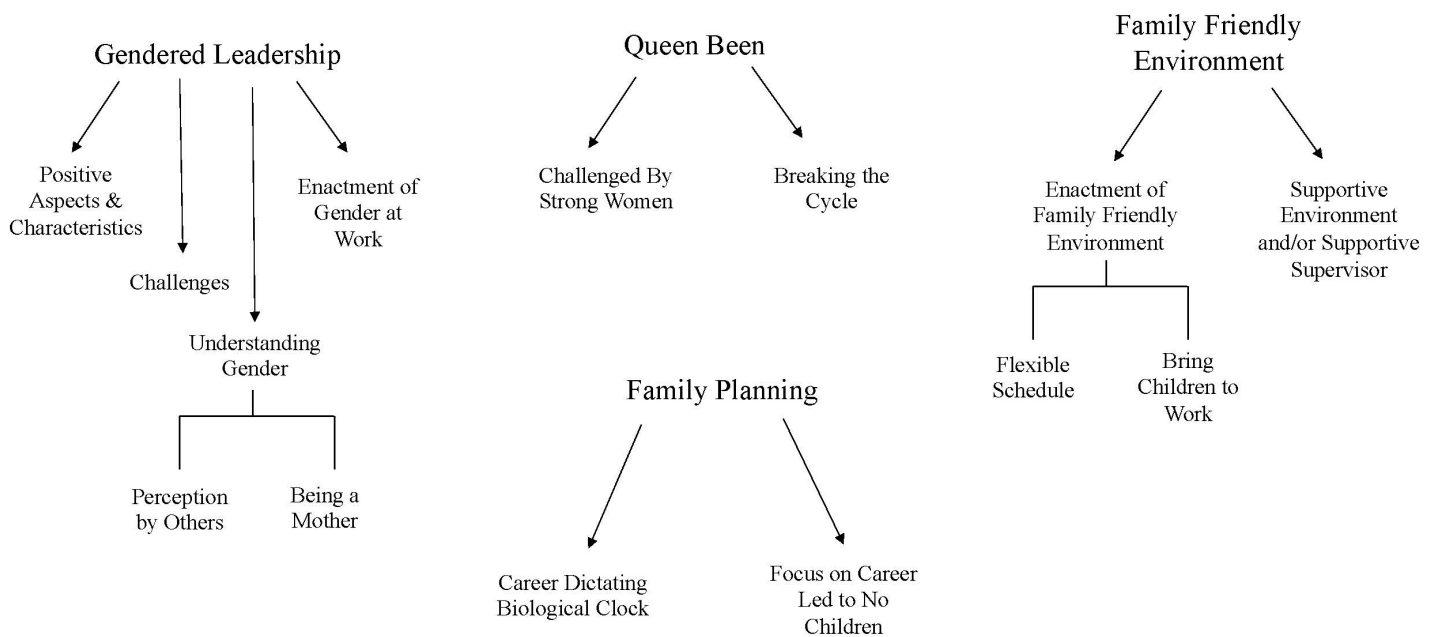
This essence looks at what these women have experienced through the lens of gender in the workplace and answers research questions one and three. During their interviews, these

women discussed several experiences that identified their gender as a barrier in their workplace and even their career progression. This begins with looking at the idea that leadership is gendered even in higher education. As mentioned during Chapter Two, male characteristics are generally seen as being the preferred standard to be chosen for leadership positions and respected once in those positions. This led to assumptions in the types of traits these women should have. This bleeds into how these women and those around them understand their gender and how it manifests itself in the workplace, this includes the enactment of motherhood as well. From there specific factors then were found to create barriers for these women in career progression. These include the queen bee phenomenon where women essentially oppress other women, the act of family planning, and if the actual workplace is family friendly by the participants' standards.

Figure 4.3 below maps out the components of the first essence.

Figure 4.3: Illustrative Representation of Essence Three

Essence Three: Being a Woman in a Man's World of Academia



Gendered leadership. As discussed in Chapter Two, as a society, we expect successful leaders to have more male characteristic regardless of their gender, which is a disadvantage for

many women. Some of the participants spoke about having some masculine leadership tendencies but most talked about having characteristics such as empathy, caring about the people they work with, and skills that help them develop relationships within their work. While both men and women can exhibit those characteristics, those aforementioned are traditionally more feminine qualities. The participants discussed how being a woman has affected how they approach their leadership. Ruth (R. Jensen, personal communication, February 14, 2020) specifically stated, "I think a positive piece is I'm not an authoritarian leader, and I think that is informed by my gender identity as a woman and I think it creates a set of challenges as well." This is something that almost every participant discussed; that there were positives to having more feminine characteristics, but that it also came with a set of challenges as well. Norma also discussed how society has created these gendered stereotypes for her as a woman, but how she has been able to use those to her advantage:

...being socialized as a woman, I was always socialized and like paying attention, like emotional intelligence and like reading other people and, you know, being nice and being polite and being conscious of how people are responding to me. And I found that particularly at the institution I'm at now, that really matters a lot in terms of getting things done. I think the last place I was, that it didn't matter so much, that people who were not as nice and polite and you know, sort of went along traditional gender roles actually got more done. (N. Lawson, personal communication, February 19, 2020)

Positive aspects and characteristics. Every participant had positive remarks about being a woman leader, however some went into further detail about how those characteristics or leadership approaches and styles were due to be a woman and not a man. Several women spoke of the softer side of leadership, such as being empathetic and caring. Claire, who is a scientist at

heart talked about her ability to be empathetic but not allowing those emotions to overcome her, something that many women are criticized for:

I can be empathetic, and I can understand, you know, yes, this is upsetting, but I also will not let the emotions get in the way of me doing what I have to do. But it also makes me not let emotions get in the way of identifying what needs to be done. (C. Lee, personal communication, February 20, 2020)

Claire also talked about how she is always very transparent with her students about her own struggles. For example, when she taught her very first class, she recognized that her students were in their first day of pharmacy school, and she was in her first lecture of pharmacy school. She would then talk about how the class was a joint effort:

So, we're in this together. And, you know, if there's something that I can do to make it better for you, let me know. And here's how I'm going to do things and here's why I'm going to do things this way. And if it's working, here's what we'll see. And if it's not working, here's what we'll see and here's how we'll change it. And I find that when you're open about that kind of thing. Students and faculty are more willing to kind of roll with the punches with you and to give it a shot. Whereas, if you are just this is how we're doing it, just cause, you're 'gonna get a lot more resistance. (C. Lee, personal communication, February 20, 2020)

She also talked about how transparency about her family helps her to relate to her students:

First off, I am able to connect with and make comfortable my female students. I've had several students come up to me before I was in this role, just faculty, because I was very open about my family. And, you know, I taught genetics. So, I use my kids a lot in showing inherited pattern. So, they all knew I had a family and I had students come up to

me and go you know, I'm really thinking about starting a family. Can I talk to you about it? What's it like being a working mom? So that's been that was helpful to my students even before I started this. (C. Lee, personal communication, February 20, 2020)

Empathy is more of a feminine characteristic and several women identified empathy and the importance of it in their leadership. Both Stacie and Birdie identified not only the importance of empathy, but how it manifests itself in their workplace is something that their male counterparts simply do not display. Stacie (S. Patterson, personal communication, March 3, 2020) specifically spoke about her care for all different types of students from all backgrounds, "But I also think being a woman brings a level of compassion for working with all kinds of different students, that being a man just doesn't." Birdie specifically spoke about her current supervisor and his lack of empathy:

I think bringing the empathy and the empathy component at times. I have a boss who reminds you of many times that he's not empathetic or sympathetic, and so sometimes it's great for some of the students. But I realize that sometimes you do need to have that empathy. (B. Chandlerson, personal communication, February 25, 2020)

Hannah also spoke at length about the positive leadership traits that women specifically have that men do not, empathy, compassion, and understanding being amongst those. She also spoke about how those skills impact the work that she does, and she was very passionate about her skills and that experience:

And what do women have that men don't have and one of those things that women do have in leadership roles is the compassion and the empathy that a lot of men don't have. And I think that being able to come into a position and understanding that people are in a place of being broken and, how do we repair that, I think is something that has made me

successful in this role. And being a woman and understanding and having that side, that maybe if a man came in, I'm not saying that they don't have that, but if a man came in and kind of seeing it as like, okay, well, we just need to fire people and move on. To get more of an approach of like, no, everybody is fixable and everybody can be in a better place. I think that that has definitely been a benefit. (H. Smith, personal communication, February 24, 2020)

Three other women, Kathy, Roberta, and Ruth specifically talked about what they believe to be gendered leadership strengths that come from being a mother or displaying motherly tendencies. Kathy specifically talked about how it has helped her foster relationships across campus and how being able to bring her children to events has been a part of that relationship building:

So, I would say that maternal aspect has helped me greatly. And also fostering relationships with faculty and staff as well as students. And so, I've been fortunate enough to be able to bring my children to events, and that's acceptable as a part of our campus culture. (K. Jones, personal communication, February 11, 2020)

Ruth also discussed how her role as a mother has impacted how she leads, builds relationships, and gives feedback to her staff that leaves her staff feeling validated and respected:

But, I think our gender socialization plays into the way that we approach leadership and certainly people break out of how we're socialized. But for me, I think being a mom has informed the work that I do with students as well as well as how I lead and give feedback and think about people. The staff that I work with feel very validated and heard and respected for their talents and skills, and I think not to suggest that a man couldn't do the same. So, yeah, I think those are some of the positive ways that they, you know, my

identifying as a woman impact the leader that I am. (R. Jensen, personal communication, February 14, 2020)

The way in which Ruth gives feedback and relates to her team aids in her ability to develop those relationships. Roberta on the other hand is not a mother, does not plan to become one, but has been identified as having motherly leadership traits through the care that she exhibits:

I work with the academically at-risk students, and so the women care, the motherly kind of you know, we talk about being people's aunts, talk about being, you know, people's parents. I don't have kids. I'm not planning to have kids. So, I think it's funny that people apply a maternal instinct to me. Or like having that kind of view. (R. Daleson, personal communication, February 25, 2020)

Perhaps due to our gendered society, students and colleagues expect Roberta to either be a mother or want to be one due to her gender. Other women said that they felt like being a mother had informed their leadership but did not necessarily indicate how. Several others talked about their ability to build relationships, being a safe confidant, and being empathetic and caring has helped them build those relationships. Liza talked about the ease in which her colleagues are able to speak openly to her regardless of their gender which she contributed to her own gender:

I think it makes me safer to confide things. So, I think I'm seen with less suspicion. If I ask someone, 'can we meet one on one' or I try and connect with them before or after the meeting to have a quick conversation, that sometimes I've been surprised at what campus partners or again, other staff will admit to me that like we just were in a department meeting with the leadership team for two hours, like arguing this and this little piece of thing you just said. Why didn't you say that in there? I think being female makes it easier sometimes for staff, regardless of if they're identifying as male or female or non-binary,

that I think it's easier to talk to me whether or not it's actually easier to talk to me that my being seen as female like precedes that. (L. Knoppe, personal communication, February 11, 2020)

Penelope talked about something similarly, but how the approachability and relationship building allows her to hold individuals accountable more successfully than if she were not as approachable:

I feel like I am approachable. Right. And I think that that definitely helps me. For students to come to me, I also think that it helps when I am holding people accountable is that it doesn't feel as abrasive, but it comes from a true, not that men aren't capable of doing it in a way that is developmental. But I feel like it from what I've heard from students, they feel like it's less of a shock because it's more of a conversation. (P. Perez, personal communication, February 7, 2020)

Figure 4.4 is a visual representation of all of the positive skills and attributes these women felt like they brought to their job and leadership positions.

Figure 4.4 Self-Identified Skills and Attributes



Challenges. While being a woman and an administrator has many benefits, there are also challenges that come with displaying more feminine skills and strengths. The women that identified these challenges mainly spoke about how being seen as more emotional or caring while at times can be a positive thing, can, and has for some, been a challenge they have experienced as well. This also bleeds into how others in the workplace understand and view gender and the systemic gendering that occurs. There is also the flip side of that experience where if any of the participants had more masculine tendencies such as being more direct, they were viewed by their colleagues as not caring or being empathetic enough. It seems as if the pendulum swings drastically from too feminine to not feminine enough in regard to their leadership styles and characteristics. Stacie's perceived leadership is a really good example of this. She talked about the compassion that she and other women have being a necessity in working with students, but also discussed the need to be direct and to hold people accountable. Even though the latter characteristics are not always received positively or even appropriately in the workplace. Stacie (S. Patterson, personal communication, March 3, 2020) talked about her experience with being direct, "I call people out because, [when they say] 'god she's such a bitch'. I'm like, is she a bitch or is she just direct?" Later in her interview she dove a little deeper into her personal experience in being treated differently due to some of her more masculine leadership traits:

But I think sometimes with women, like men can do that [being direct] and get away with it. And a woman does it and it's like she's aggressive or she's too direct, like some bad thing. You know, honestly, the Taylor Swift song, *The Man* is like, super true, because if we do these things just like a man, it's like she's too much and, And I've heard that in my life before. Like, you're just too much like you should just soften. And I'm like, no. You

should stay true to who you are. And you know, how can we talk about leading authentically if we can't authentically be ourselves? And there's nothing wrong with being direct, at all. It saves a lot of time. And it's not like I'm mean. So I think that's also the difference is like when you're direct and you're a man, it's like just what it is. If you're direct as a woman, it's like gosh she is mean. I'm like no. I'm not putting in all that extra energy to say it super nice. (S. Patterson, personal communication, March 3, 2020)

Hannah also mentioned a time in which her directness and holding her team accountable got her the quintessential *bitch* label much like Stacie spoke of. This caused her to recognize the benefits of being a woman in her work alongside the challenges:

I do think that there are pieces of me being female that have been a benefit, but it's also been challenging, right? Like it's not just butterflies and glitter and unicorns and what not. Supervising all males is the challenge of there's a testing point of what can I get away with? You know, how soft is that? And so when I have come and had to be much stronger, you do get that initial label of, oh, 'Hannah's being a bitch' or whatever the case may be. And so how to kind of play that and not get offended by those labels that are going to be thrown on you and be able to still kind of proudly say it is what it is. And if, just because I'm holding you accountable now, I'm a bitch. Well, that's something you have to deal with, not me. (H. Smith, personal communication, February 24, 2020).

Hannah does her best not to take the offensive labeling literally, but it can be difficult at times.

Jessica also discussed the struggle of being expected to be a certain way due to her gender and how it forces her to change her approach to her leadership at times leading her to not be as authentic as she would have wanted to be. Jessica (J. James, personal communication, March 4, 2020) spoke about the dissonance between others' expectations and the reality of who she is,

“I’m expected to be nicer than I am, and I don’t think I’m a mean person and my staff doesn’t think I mean person. You know, but I think the directness is sometimes. Can be off putting. If I don’t dial it back. It’s almost like I don’t have enough emotions.”

Understanding gender. In order to understand their more stereotypically feminine strengths, skills, and attributes, it is important to see how these women understand their gender including identities that are gendered, how others around them understand it as well as how it is enacted within their work environment. Most of the participants were able to identify that they currently view their gender in how they come to work and complete their work, however for one participant, Darlene, she did not really focus on her gender:

Well, it's hard for me to answer that because I don't, I don't think of myself...like the very first thing that pops in my mind isn't, 'I'm a woman'. That doesn't mean and you know I'm just me, like I don't compartmentalize. If I was a black woman, it might be different. If I was a lesbian woman, it might be different. If I was a queer woman, it might be different if I was a disabled woman. You know, whatever. I know who I am. I know I'm a white woman. I know what that brings because I've done a lot of internal work. So I don't think about it. I think I don't approach it from I'm a woman. (D. Dennis, personal communication, March 5, 2020)

Perception by others. The perception of others in the workplace for these women manifested itself differently for each participant but there are some commonalities as well. Many women reported that individuals expected them to be caring or that colleagues or students could play toward the stereotypical emotional side that women may have. Jessica talked about the expectation that individuals have of her in relation to who she actually is:

I think honestly, that sometimes, you know, looking at it a little bit on the flip side is that I think people expect women in housing to have that caring concern piece and less so that business piece. And so, for me, it's almost backwards is that I think I spend more time being efficient and proposing changes with good rationale. Because people already expect me to be caring. (J. James, personal communication, March 4, 2020)

Not only is Jessica constantly having to work against a misconception of how she should act due to her gender, she also talked about how she has experienced individuals try and use emotions to appeal to her since she is a woman and manipulate how she responds to a situation:

But I think oftentimes, you know, when they pull that emotional trigger, they expect that to be able to change my mind differently. And it is not my role. And so I think I don't know that it impacts sort of that how I see myself as a woman. I think it impacts how others maybe see me and their expectations of how those conversations might go. (J. James, personal communication, March 4, 2020)

Several other women experienced stereotypical gendered perceptions related to their inability to perform certain tasks in their jobs. Birdie talked about her time working in housing and working on a renovation project and was treated poorly specifically because of her gender. As she reflected back, she talked about how she wished she would have stood up for the opportunity to be in that space:

We were remodeling an office and I was told as I was a woman I couldn't participate, that I didn't know better. And now I'm like, I wish I would have stood up for myself a little bit more. I was also in a very different position. Like, no, I do have...my opinion does matter, and I do have some creative ideas. And I think this could have worked but now we're

trying to redo or fix something that could have been corrected when the construction just happened. (B. Chandlerson, personal communication, February 25, 2020)

She then went to talk about her experience overall in working with men who she felt like treated her more maybe like an administrative assistant than an administrator:

I think there's moments that I've definitely have felt like the little lady will take care of this. And sometimes some higher administrators as they are maybe old, older or old school per say, that they they're used to having administrative assistants. (B. Chandlerson, personal communication, February 25, 2020)

This experience with men is something also that Jessica experienced even though it was slightly different. Jessica spoke of her experience with a male colleague addressing them by their assumed gender as opposed to their names:

And he would send emails to us saying ladies instead of colleagues or just really little things that finally I just started calling him out on, which was not necessarily received really well. And I got a lot of apologies from him, but not necessarily a true change in behavior. (J. James, personal communication, March 4, 2020)

While she addressed her male colleague's behavior and he apologized, he did not seem to really understand the problem with his actions. While he did ask questions before saying certain things, Jessica said that he still said some problematic things which led her to also say that his behavior, even though he was apologetic, did not change. Unfortunately, this experience is not unique to Jessica. Norma also had a gendered negative experience with a male supervisor that belittled her by questioning her critical thinking skills and made her feel less than when they were trying to determine which graduate students to bring into their program and for an assistantship:

And so there was one student who he wanted to bring in who really she just wasn't ready...her scores, her math scores. I know GRE is not predictive of success in graduate school. But they were just not they were not acceptable. And I knew she was going to struggle to do statistics. And, you know, it was just kind of like you...you're thinking too much about this, Little girl. I'll, I'll handle it. I want her as my student, and she really struggled when she got into the program. I don't think it was fair to her at all. (N. Lawson, personal communication, February 19, 2020)

Norma also alluded to the fact that this graduate student was very attractive and that her supervisor was all around difficult to work with as she experienced discrimination in several different ways while in that role.

Emotions and emotional reactions are also a gendered stereotype and something that many of the women experienced. Roberta identified during the interview as a very emotional person. She provided an example of a time in which she had an emotional reaction to work and experienced ramifications for being, as she called herself, emotional:

Having a very emotional reaction absolutely has impacted my work in the perceptions of people around me. I've had two very particular situations where I cried very openly and uncontrollably in a large group setting at a previous institution, it was with our entire division. There were 28 folks in our division there. And then again in front of the entire hall director staff and most the residence life staff. And after both of those situations happened, I was taken out of leadership roles. No longer on particular committees and all what I got selected for and how I was viewed was absolutely changed. (R. Daleson, personal communication, February 25, 2020)

These situations could have been simply emotional or perhaps uncontrollable as Roberta mentioned in her interview. However, she was removed from leadership situations and opportunities and then experienced a continued effect from that by her inability to seek new leadership opportunities at that institution as well as how her colleagues interacted with her from that point forward. Liza also touched on this idea of how others at work perceive her as potentially being too emotional regardless of the emotion she was to portray as almost any emotion was deemed too much emotion. While Roberta spoke of crying, Liza specifically talked about anger:

I mean, in terms of being inherently female, I think not that it means so much for me, but I think in terms of how others perceive me in certain spaces. So, on the one hand, pushing can be scarier because I am female. But like people, you know, the like angry woman, you know, you're being overly emotional. It's like, no. (L. Knoppe, personal communication, February 11, 2020)

For some though, anger and tears can be connected. Anita talked about this in reflecting about her experience as potentially being seen as weak or lesser than for showing emotion, especially tears, when she is angry or frustrated at work:

I think, you know, in terms of when, you know, with women, it's so frustrating if you get upset, because if you start actually like crying or something and you just like, oh, God, now I'm weak or they're going to see me as weak or, you know, those things or when you're trying to have when you get when you're when you're when your feelings get you and oh, they're irrational because they're female, that kind of stuff. I do often wonder how they would treat me different in the role that I do if I was a guy. I do wonder that frequently. (A. Boston, personal communication, February 20, 2020)

This was especially interesting because Anita works in a business school and has said that she has been seen as a *glorified travel agent* before, especially due to the fact that her college, a school of business is mainly men and her supervisor is a man as well. Hannah had a similar experience regarding her use of emotion being questioned in the workplace which has had some long-lasting effects for her. She recalled this experience as also the first time that her gender was really brought to her attention, specifically by a male supervisor:

I remember the first time being a woman was really brought to the forefront for me. And I was in I was handling a conduct case and I was looking at removing somebody from on campus housing. And I had made the decision not to remove them. And at the time, I had a male supervisor that looked at me dead in the eyes and said, 'Are you making this decision based on emotion or based on logic?' And I remember sitting there even questioning myself, like even though I felt like it was completely logical. But it's those simple questions that make you sit back and go, 'Oh, wait a minute. Am I making this based on emotion?' Like is my compassion or my compassionate, empathetic side coming out? And what does that look like? And it's in a way, when I think about it negatively because of that one question, I find myself very often trying to remove all emotional feelings from a decision I'm making, which I see somewhat as a negative, because there are emotions involved in every decision and there's going to be an emotional response to every decision I make. But because I try to only approach it from a logical perspective of not wanting somebody to ever ask me again if something's coming from an emotional place. (H. Smith, personal communication, February 24, 2020)

Hannah's experience with her supervisor questioning her ability to make the best decision regarding a student conduct case made her question her decisions for a prolonged period after.

In fact, she believes that it has potentially created the problem where she is almost too logical and too methodical in her decision making. She talked about how this might lead to her forgetting about the emotional side of her decisions and how those decisions might affect the people involved:

I think that that's how it's negatively affected me. Do I have logic in the sound decision making skills to be able to justify the decision I made? Absolutely. But am I forgetting sometimes how it's going to impact people, I think, Yes. And that's because early in my career being asked if I'm doing one or the other. And so when I think about long term negative effects, that's definitely something that has affected me. In which case I have tried to be more like before I make a decision, I'll run it past people that are a bit more empathetic sometimes than me. But I have a colleague that will tell me she's like, 'Hannah, you run like a machine when you are making decisions'. She's like, 'you're a machine'. Now, granted, she's like, 'your decisions always make sound sense'. She's like, 'but you are such a machine that you completely detach from what that's 'gonna look like'. And she's like, 'that's some women. Some people would say, that's fantastic and it's great and other people would not see it the same'. And so, I think that that's definitely something that has negatively impacted that perspective. (H. Smith, personal communication, February 24, 2020)

Hannah's experience reinforced this idea of a pendulum swinging too far in either the emotional direction or the logical direction and forces the question why could a woman not be perceived as having emotional intelligence and care while also making sound, logical decisions that are not emotionally driven? Unfortunately, the perception that others have had of these women has caused them to change and adapt in order to avoid scrutiny.

Perception of others of course focuses around skills, traits, and abilities but for women their outward appearance can also cause scrutiny and lead to perceptions about them and their ability to do their work. Stacie talked about being treated differently due to looking younger than she is as well as how her dress has affected her perception of how she is treated or how serious she is taken by colleagues:

I also feel like I am perceived always as younger than I am, or at least talked to younger than I am. Like, I often get students who will say things like you were only twenty-nine or thirty or. And so, I think sometimes, like, people don't want to take us seriously if we have been women who take care of ourselves. And because somehow, we look young. So, we must not deserve it or whatever. And because even how we dress looks very differently than how a man dresses and looks professional or mature. You know, my husband can put on glasses instead of contacts and look more mature. And so, I had really long hair and I felt like it made me look really young. And so, I cut it because I was like, I need to probably look like a Director. So, I think part like that perception, people don't take women seriously because if we take care of ourselves, we don't look old enough to do it. (S. Patterson, personal communication, March 3, 2020)

It was interesting to hear Stacie talk about how different, even easier, it was for her husband to look more mature and essentially have more clout in his work. He had to simply put on glasses, where she had to change her attire and cut her hair. It begs the question, to what magnitudes do women go to gain the approval of their peers and superiors. Stacie also referenced that this need to alter others' perception to gain approval starts for women even during the interview process:

But it's funny because like even when I interviewed, I wore like a traditional suit and heels. And now I think we're seeing a generation of women who are more likely to wear a

dress or not a full suit and not feel like you have to dress like a man. But I think some of us are still in that old school, the older millennials all say we still think there are occasions that call for dressing like a man to be taken seriously like a man. (S. Patterson, personal communication, March 3, 2020)

Perhaps this newer generation of women will be able to break through the gendered stereotypes of dress and outward appearances that this current generation of professionals were not able to. Hannah also talked about how she alters her dress in order to make sure that those around her perceive her as someone who should be taken seriously:

If there was anything else, I think it's just the initial kind of walking in a room and having to establish yourself as a leader in the room. I remember having a conversation with a male colleague of I literally look at my calendar every morning to see who I'm meeting with and what's that going to look like. So that I make sure I'm dressed appropriately for the day. And he's like, 'what?' He's like, 'if I want to wear jeans, I wear jeans,' and I'm like, 'congratulations, welcome to your male perspective'. Like, there are days that if I wore jeans, I know I would not be taken the same as any, you know, a business suit or wearing very professionally dressed clothes. And so, I think that those are some of the things that as women that we are constantly thinking about in our leadership roles that men don't have to think about. It is, in a way, a negative perspective because it's something that's pushed upon us whether we want it to be or not. (H. Smith, personal communication, February 24, 2020)

The conversation with her male colleague reiterates that this alteration of self to change how women are perceived is not something that is commonly thought of. While Norma (N. Lawson, personal communication, February 19, 2020) did not give specific examples, she mentioned that

she experienced “a lot of weight based micro aggressions that were sort of intertwined with being a woman and a feminist.” When I asked her if she thought a man would have received the same treatment if they had similar characteristics to her, and she thought that they would not based on her previous experience in that department.

Being a mother. Motherhood is difficult without adding a career to the mix as discussed earlier when looking at these women’s relationship with their career and their children. Women already have a gendered system working against them, but when motherhood is added it creates additional barriers. Stacie attributed it to the fact that many of the men who are in upper level leadership are married with children, meaning their spouses took the brunt of the child rearing responsibility so that they, the man, could focus on his career. She talked about the percentage of women who complete their doctorates versus those that completed coursework but not the dissertation, and she attributed it partially to perhaps the lack of support or flexibility that these women and specifically mothers have to work and complete a terminal degree:

Because we've always I mean, to get to a woman who is in a doctoral program. You know, when you look at the statistics of how many people start a doctorate, never finish it. How many end up in ABD? And then you look at how many are women. And all of the reasons... I look at...there was a guy in my cohort, they had three children while he was in the program and he was like the first person to defend his dissertation and I'm like, ‘Of course, because your wife stopped working and did a stay at home mom and your kids were all taken care of’. And you're like, I didn't get that kind of world. (S. Patterson, personal communication, March 3, 2020)

This led Stacie to want to show other women that had the same goals as her that women could have a family and a terminal degree. Not only did she discuss the desire to lead by example, but

she wanted to also make sure that she led with a softness at the same time as she noticed many of her colleagues who are mothers can become very hardened, including herself at times:

And so, I think it's also made me because I want to be all the things and model for her that you can have what you want. And so, I also try to model that for everybody else. And I think it's really changed because I can very easily speak to, you know my daughter was born because of the generosity of a friend. But I think it's just softened me just enough, because I do think that sometimes in our field, women I mean, if you're in SAMs [Stay at Home Moms] Facebook page, you see these women just have to create these tough shells to exist. (S. Patterson, personal communication, March 3, 2020)

Ruth discussed how while she was willing to put work before her children when she needed to, she noticed that being a woman parent versus a male parent is different in the workplace. She talked about how men have to make similar decision to women regarding what are they going to be present for in their children's lives and what are they willing to miss, however men are more prevalently rewarded when they decide to be present and parent their child and women are patronized or even penalized to a degree:

I'm willing to miss my kids, whatever, because I will come in here and manage whatever the need of the day happens to be. I mean, I think that is sort of it can be gendered because it's more often women who make those choices, but certainly not completely. You know, there are men who could make similar decisions, but I think men are often rewarded for that. You know, like 'oh what an exceptional dad', you know, it's like, or actually maybe just a dad, you know, like these are the sacrifices that many women make every day. And they're not necessarily regarded as value added for doing so. (R. Jensen, personal communication, February 14, 2020)

Liza, also a mother, had an experience around women being parents and pregnancy when her colleague became pregnant. This affected how she felt about announcing her pregnancy at work. She experienced a complete lack of support and even animosity from her male colleagues when both she and a colleague were pregnant. She recalled the experience regarding her colleague during a very casual setting at the university's dining facility where she was sharing lunch with colleagues:

And so, I was the only female sitting there. So, we're talking about different things. And I forget who said, how it started, but somewhere along the line, someone made a comment of like, you know, we've already got Caroline is out, you know, for maternity leave. And now, like Shannon, it'll be, you know, because we're all filling in. You know, let's as we're planning out next year, like let's just make all of our plans around, like all the people who are going be out on maternity leave. Like, just tell me how I need to be doing more work. And then they kind of chuckled. And then one of the others turned to me, I was sitting next to him and he was like, is there anything you want to tell us that we need to be expecting for you? And I was pissed. They laughed and I did not. And when they stopped laughing and I said, 'I'm only 'gonna say this once. It is none of your fucking business.' I said, 'The other thing is you wouldn't have jobs if people weren't having children, so you may not see it', I said, but because I had one at that point, I was like, 'he is my 18 year investment plan of you all still being able to have a job at this table. So part of living in a community means that acknowledging we have different work and that we all contribute in different ways.' (L. Knoppe, personal communication, February 11, 2020)

This interaction that she had with her male colleagues showed that it is difficult for women to truly be supported in the workplace if they have the desire to have a family and a career. By having colleagues that essentially say that women having children while working is an inconvenience for them as they have to pick up extra work during the time she is recovering and caring for a child perpetuates the cycle of women feeling as if they cannot have it all. Liza went on to talk about how this effected how she announced that she was pregnant with her second child. When she found out she was pregnant, she decided to meet one on one with each of her colleagues after her supervisor knew to tell them she was expecting as well as to recount that day in the dining hall for each of them. During this process, she also wanted them to know how that made her feel and that she had carried those feelings with her for over a year:

And so, they all responded in different ways. I mean, all of them were like, 'of course', and I said, 'I hear that but again, I still need you to know that that has sat with me this whole time. That again now like, I shouldn't have to feel this way. And I'm not looking...like you can't undo what's happened before. What I will say is I want you to think about this when you think about any women you work with in the future and about the comments you make when someone announces that they're expecting that the only words that should ever come out of your mouth are congratulations, how can I help you?'

(L. Knoppe, personal communication, February 11, 2020)

Liza did have one colleague through this process that did tell her that her pregnancy and others did create more work for him and the other people in the office. Liza made the point that how is extra work due to pregnancy any different than extra work in any other form:

And I said, 'my problem is, is that you differentiate that as you are taking on more work from other ways that you take on more work. Here all the ways that I take on more work

for you in terms of committee work or when I helped you out with this or I took duty coverage on that. I'm not saying that because I'm having a child is why everyone needs to like do all these additional things for me. My point is that you are seeing it as distinct and it is not. It shouldn't be a question of who has children or who has a partner that we need to allow all these exceptions for them. It is how do we look at everyone in the department that regardless of who you are and what your personal life involves, that you have the ability to get help when you need it. You know, and again, like I don't understand why you have been taught that this is separate. I'm here to tell you that it's not.' (L. Knoppe, personal communication, February 11, 2020)

Liza made a very valid point that extra work is extra work regardless if it is due to a pregnancy, a sick colleague, personal issues that a colleague is working through or simply because one wants to pick up extra work for whatever reason. The way that these women were treated shows that student affairs is still in fact a very masculine focused field.

Enactment of gender at work through systemic gendering. The understanding that exists of gender in the workplace may fully or in part be due to systemic gendering that lives within student affairs and higher education as a whole. Many of the examples that the women gave in regard to perception of them as women in the workplace are enmeshed in systemic gendering as well. Stacie mentioned this systemic gendering when she noticed that there were not many women who were married or with a family that were in senior leadership roles:

When I was in undergrad, grad school and my first job, like all of the women who held higher positions, vice chancellors or vice presidents, none of them are married and none of them had children. And I thought, gosh, that's what I have to do to get up in my field

but all the men were married and all the men had children. (S. Patterson, personal communication, March 3, 2020)

Stacie's comparison shows that systemic gendering is firstly enacted through who holds the positions of power. For her, until after her first job, she had never seen a woman who was married with children or unmarried with children have a seat at the table of senior leadership. The rest of the women in this study shared example after example of how their gender is enacted at their workplace and more often than not it was not a positive experience. Barbara and Birdie discussed the fact that they felt like they had to work harder than their male counterparts to be seen as worthy to be in their role or to be respected. Barbara briefly spoke about how she specifically felt like she had to work harder than her male counterparts to prove that her ideas are strong and worth pursuing. She went on to talk about how even though the field is saturated in some areas and levels with women, there still is a lot of systemic gendering that occurs, but as a field, we do not really discuss the issues let alone come up with ways to mitigate the issues:

There's still gendered-ness that plays out that no one talks about because like, 'oh, well, we've got plenty of women, so we're good'. We don't talk about it. It's like, you know, but there's still issues happening for us and our students that we just never name. (B.Jackson, personal communication, February 6, 2020)

This makes these women's experiences almost invalidated or as if their concerns are falling on deaf ears. Birdie talked more specifically about how academia feels like a stereotypical *good ol boys' club* and that she and other women are not paid attention to until their generally more feminine skill sets are needed:

Sometimes that it's the men's club or the boy's club. And then it's turned around to be like, hey, so-and-so, two of us are working on this and they're in the boys' club. And then

later, hey, we need your detail-oriented side. And I'm like, oh, okay, perfect, now you need me. You don't want me sitting at the table with you at the beginning. (B.

Chandler, personal communication, February 25, 2020)

Birdie also talked about the importance of earning her doctorate and how that has helped her feel like her seat at the table was rightfully earned, but also with the hopes that her male counterparts would also see her right to be at the table and the worth that she brought to situations. However, she felt more like she was a threat to some of the men she works with, especially if they themselves did not have degrees:

I mean, I think part of it has come as I've moved on with this degree, too, of realizing like some folks don't have a degree. And so now they're feeling a little more that they're being attacked or that they have to prove themselves because they feel that this degree has elevated my thinking, but my thinking has always been where I wanted to be. And so, I think it's sometimes more them proving themselves to me than I'm proving to them. (B.

Chandler, personal communication, February 25, 2020)

Penelope also discussed this enactment of gendering at work through her work with a few male colleagues:

But that we get viewed as lesser, we get talked over; there is an assumption there that we don't know as much. Mansplaining is a thing. And that, you know, I had two men that were supposed to present to my diversity, equity, [and] inclusion task force. They said, 'oh, yeah, I will be there'. And neither showed up. And neither of them told me that they weren't coming. I'm like, what the fuck? That wouldn't fly for females. (P. Perez,

personal communication, February 7, 2020)

The fact that her male colleagues did not take her expectations as seriously as if a male were to ask the same thing, shows another example of gendering that is taking place. While Penelope was recounting the story, she realized that she actually had not processed that situation and how she felt, which led her to process verbally during her interview. The visible irritability and frustration that was shown while she was recounting this situation was telling to how it affected her in that moment and still does. However, she did discuss how she held the two colleagues accountable:

Processing through that right now is kind of icky. But, you know, I e-mailed both of them and I was like, I'm disappointed, you know. And they both apologized and, you know, whatever else. So, yeah, I think that I have, and this is so sad, but I think that I really have a whole lot more cred now that I have a doctorate and. And I see more and more faculty, probably men, even more so coming to me and asking for my advice. Now that I have those letters after my name, I find that I get more respect across campus. So, yeah, I mean, I think that we just have to do so much more as women to prove ourselves. And it's very exhausting. (P. Perez, personal communication, February 7, 2020)

While Birdie had hopes that her doctorate would provide more credibility with her male counterparts, Penelope saw that new reality for herself. After receiving her doctorate, she found herself being deemed as more credible across campus. So much to the point that her male counterparts were asking her for advice, something she had not experienced prior to earning that degree. She also mentions that this means that women have to do more than their male counterparts to prove themselves worthy to have a seat at that table, to almost jump through more hoops, and how exhausting that process can be. This exhaustion of always fighting the system could lead women to no longer want to participate in that fight up the ladder. Birdie also

shared an experience with her male colleagues where genderism was enacted when she was asking for advice and this colleague provided a negative gendered stereotypical response. If one was trying to prove themselves, the thought would be they would be positive to the individual whom they are trying to prove themselves to. But since this male colleague viewed her as threatening to perhaps his status or his expertise, he responded in a negative manner:

But I have seen some of that gender, particularly when I've asked questions of a colleague once when I was working at a previous institution and asking a colleague, 'hey, can you like look, can we talk out something like, I really need to talk this out?' And then he just going ahead and sending out the email on my behalf and then later telling my boss, like, 'you see, I always have to do it because she never feels comfortable in her own skin about it'. And I was like, 'I never asked you to send the email. I just wanted to walk through. Does this make logical sense to you on what I'm thinking?' Because I'm going to own...I've always been one to own, like my fault own when I've messed up and to own like this is a decision I'm making. And so I think that's when I definitely have faced Like, oh, yeah, they're not seeing me as like they're seeing me as just a woman who can't do it on her own. (B. Chandlerson, personal communication, February 25, 2020)

This led to extra unnecessary strife and work for Birdie. Barbara touched on her experience where women seem to be burdened more at their workplace, as they are expected to take on more tasks that are outside of their standard role. Barbara talked about two different examples; the first one being that women tend to do more work that serves the institution by going outside of their job description to get the work done. This included the act of being on committees but also the work that was completed within those committees as she noted that work tended to be completed by more women than men. She also gave a very specific example of extra work that

women tend to take on that has nothing to do with their job or even the institution but is a very gendered role in regard to office culture:

Sort of that like extra workload, like you have a party and I'm there helping clean up and some...then like my male supervisor is going back to answer emails. Well, I would love the time to answer more emails, too. But someone needs to clean up from the party. So, things like that, where I notice that there are some gender roles that play out that unfairly burden women. (B. Jackson, personal communication, February 6, 2020)

Those tasks are not things that according to the women, that men volunteer to take on or are even expected to volunteer for. However, if they did, they would probably receive praise, much like working fathers as discussed earlier. Anita (A. Boston, personal communication, February 20, 2020) talked about a similar experience where she was seen as a lesser position and essentially professional because she was a woman in a male dominated college, “But I do know that sometimes in my role you can tell that just think I'm a glorified travel agent.” Later in her interview, she commented that she wondered if she would be treated differently in her role and in her college if she were a male. She then talked about how she felt like her role and being a woman was a deterrent to her ability to not only at times complete her work successful as well as her ability to develop a healthy relationship with her dean due to the systemic gendering that happens within her college:

And then, you know, there's instances recently where the dean did something and it came to me through other people. And it was like if he had just had that conversation with me, I could have prevented all that because I could've told them the policy directly because I'm the one who knows the policy. He's... It's not his job to know these policies is not his job

to be informed. It's my job. And yet he didn't bother to include me in that conversation.

(A. Boston, personal communication, February 20, 2020)

Anita also talked about struggling to get a meeting with the dean, who is her supervisor, indicating it took over six months for him to finally meet with her. While he did not indicate directly that it was due to her gender or the gendered perception of her role, Anita's experience made her believe that her gender could very well be a large portion of it.

Darlene, who explained in her interview that she does not really view herself through the lens of being a woman, had a very poignant experience with a male vice president that was very gendered. What is particularly interesting about this encounter is that she has a very close relationship with this vice president. When she talked about this experience, even though it was several years prior, she still was angered and hurt by the situation. She talked about introducing one of her mentors at an institutional professional development opportunity and becoming emotional while she was speaking about her relationship with him during her introduction:

And Donald Porter came to speak to some divisional meeting, and I introduced him, and I got emotional like, you know, but I said, you know, Don's a mentor of mine. He's done a lot for me. I remember calling him at midnight, trying to figure out this law paper and whatever. And he means a lot to me. And I'm just so excited to introduce him and so glad people that don't know him get to meet him. And I sat down, but a week later, I'm out at staff leadership out at West Campus at the conference center presenting. And John [VP] had let me know earlier he wanted to touch base with me about something. So, I thought, 'oh, he's 'gonna ask me, how am I doing as an interim director? How's it going? Do you need anything?' Naive me! Ha! And he confronted me, 'you lost a lot of credibility today because you got emotional when you introduced Don.' I was angry, I was hurt. I was

disappointed. I felt disrespected. And so that was a time I thought if I was Chuck Price, you wouldn't say that if I was Brad Cone you wouldn't say that. No. I was pissed. Yes. I was so hurt, because I'm doing all this work and you're not even acknowledging me. (D. Dennis, personal communication, March 20, 2020)

For someone that did not think of her day to day through a gendered lens, she definitely had a very gendered experience. Her vice president essentially indicated that emotion, specifically her emotion, does not have a place at work if Darlene would like to maintain her respect and authority on the campus.

Queen bee. Working with a queen bee can be a very challenging experience. Not every woman in this study had experienced a queen bee yet on their career journey, however, those that did had no question that they had experienced this type of woman. Penelope reflected on why she thought these women existed in the workplace, citing that competition amongst women as opposed to collaboration and support seemed to be a major contributor:

I think that there is still competition. And I don't think technology helps that at all. I think that, you know, we in social media we get to choose what we show to the world, and I think that doesn't necessarily serve anybody very well because we see women who are mothers and CEOs and doing all the same, you know, all these things and there's so much pressure to perform and even more so as a woman, because we know we're not going to get paid as much and we know that we're not going to be recognized as much. And so, I think there's a lot of pressure. And that leads to I think that leads to anxiety. I think it leads to jealousy. And it leads to power plays. (P. Perez, personal communication, February 7, 2020)

Penelope also talked about how much of the systemic gendering that is discussed previously in this chapter has a large impact on the development of this competition. Women already have so many forces working against them with unequal pay and the need to perform at a higher standard which can create this sense of high competition and jealousy amongst women. Hannah echoed much of Penelope's sentiments and discussed the impact this can have on women in the field:

I mean, and I think that for me, that's always the most unfortunate part. Like, I just I don't understand that, you know, when we look up the ladder like it's obvious things get smaller and smaller. And for some reason, women seem to approach leadership as, I need to push this woman down because there's only so many women up [the ladder]. And what I don't think we realize as women, that obviously men have been helping each other out since the dawn of time. And there's plenty of positions for men. If women started doing the same thing, we could flip the script. But we just seem to be in competition with one another all the time, which doesn't make sense to me. (H. Smith, personal communication, February 24, 2020)

Hannah believed that this queen bee syndrome is rooted in how women approach leadership as a whole; that there is truthfully only so many seats available for women and in order to sit at one of those, one woman must push down another. Overall, the women that experienced a queen bee saw that these women were generally challenged by strong women which caused them to enact their queen bee characteristics. Additionally, some of the women also spoke of ways they themselves are working to break the cycle of chauvinistic women to ensure they don't become queen bees and that they do not support an environment in which these women can rise.

Challenged by strong women. As mentioned, one of the commonalities these women experienced was that queen bee's behavior was exhibited when they were challenged by strong

women. This could be due to the fact that queen bees are more than likely threatened and intimidated by strong, competent women. Penelope spoke about her experience with a queen bee that she worked. This woman she was working with would continuously perform belittling behaviors such as cutting her off during meetings. During one instance, Penelope was speaking her concerns about a training facilitator:

And the president of the organization piped up behind me and she said, 'let him finish Penelope' and I was like, 'oh, girl'. So, I was totally shut down. And I had a horrible first meeting because of that. And it's taken six months for us to get back to a place where I feel like I can actually have a conversation with her. (P. Perez, personal communication, February 7, 2020)

For Penelope it was not that she was challenged per say by another individual or woman, but the woman's attitude toward her that made her feel like the other woman was pushing her voice and opinion on the matter down. To Penelope, she sensed the other woman felt threatened by her having a voice and speaking up in that moment, so she felt the need to quell Penelope. Barbara discussed her experience with a queen bee at work where she felt like she had challenged this woman and it caused her to feel like she was being bullied at work as this woman publicly shamed individuals if they did not agree with her. Barbara did not go into explicit detail but gave a general account of her experience:

I think there is probably some degree of she had a certain authority and she didn't want [someone] ...she was the alpha female and she didn't want to be challenged by any other woman. And so, she would make sure that either you deferred, or you are unimportant. (B. Jackson, personal communication, February 6, 2020)

When digging deeper into this interaction, Barbara (B. Jackson, personal communication, February 6, 2020) talked about how she felt like perhaps she challenged too much and that may have caused this woman to react to her the way that she did, “My view of it is that I probably challenge too much. She's probably one of the people I like least on this planet. I would absolutely call her a bully, not just to me, but to others.” Barbara’s reaction during the interview to this woman was very visceral, even as many years later as it was, to the point where she called her a bully when recounting the experience. She then talked about how much of a bully this woman actually was and how she treated the men and women differently in her direct reporting line:

She really only supported the men in our department or women who would sort of like bow down to her and a lot of the work happened in spite of her instead of because of her or her. Like there was at times at times vision, but her leadership style was to publicly shame. (B. Jackson, personal communication, February 6, 2020)

The experience that these women have in the workplace is of course important.

When a run in with a queen bee creates actual ramifications in the work that these women are able to do or in their performance, that is a much worse experience. Both Norma and Hannah had such experiences. Hannah discussed an issue with her former dean of students that led to her performance evaluation being altered to a lower rating than what her direct supervisor had given her, even though she had little interaction with this woman. She talked about one specific interaction where the dean of students, the queen bee in question, asked to speak to her first thing in the morning and their interaction took Hannah by surprise:

The first thing she says to me is literally, ‘I hear you've been talking shit’. And I was like, ‘wait, what?’ And I'm like, it threw me off. And I was like, ‘whoa, like, what are you

talking about?’ And I was like, ‘Who told you this?’ And she's like, ‘I'm not here to talk about rumors.’ And I'm like, but obviously, you are because you're calling me, so. I had no idea what she's talking about. (H. Smith, personal communication, February 24, 2020)

This interaction with a senior administrator was inappropriate to say the least, but definitely left a bad taste with Hannah and was just the tip of the iceberg in her experience with this queen bee:

And how she approached things was just crazy to me. But as I saw the other women that she was treating the same way were other women that I associated with being strong, vocal. I had no problem, because I'm somebody I don't mind challenging, somebody, you know, like she had called me up and told me that I need to fire an RA for lack of Title IX response. And I said, ‘I disagree with what you're asking me to do’. Like you want me to fire somebody, but they followed protocol, like, but now you want me to fire them just because you think that they're associated with the perpetrator, and that's the reason why they [the reporting party] failed to disclose. And it's like that's not what happened. And so, I really had to with that was very much an internal battle of like there's things that, in my opinion, were very unethical taking place there. (H. Smith, personal communication, February 24, 2020)

Hannah believed that by showing her former dean of students that she did not have any issue standing up to authority if she believes in the work her staff has done, especially if they have followed written policies and protocols, created a continued issue for her with the dean of students. Norma had a similar experience where a negative interaction with an individual above her led to her not having her contract renewed with the institution. She attributed this to the fact

that she and this woman were no longer amiable with each other simply due to a disagreement that she had with her:

And when she and I stopped getting along, I found out that she was talking to the committee that was deciding on my contract to not renew my contract. So rather than saying that you know she's not doing as well as we would like, let's give her a chance to make it better. They were like, no, let's just get rid of her. And I didn't know that until someone who was also in the committee was like, 'what did you do to her? Like, why is she doing... saying this?' And I was like, 'oh, well, we had a disagreement.' And now it turns out that this is what was happening behind the scenes. (N. Lawson, personal communication, February 19, 2020)

It is discouraging that a fellow woman would do that simply due to a disagreement, but that is the reality for several women in this study. Hannah also mentioned in her interview that she would never work with this woman again, even if the job was her dream job, which speaks volumes to her experience and unfortunately could have an impact on her success and career progression. Regrettably, Norma did not have any grievances against her or any known performance issues, just a contract that was not renewed due to this other woman. Jessica discussed an observation of her current chancellor, who is a woman, and how this woman does not like to work with strong women. The observations that Jessica discussed in her interview did not directly happen to her, but she saw the effects of a queen bee on other women at her institution, to the point of strong women not lasting long at that institution under her administration. This queen bee's reign and control was so powerful that it led to other women not being hired for roles that reported to the chancellor:

Like there's this pattern that when the chancellor is challenged by another female that they don't last very long. And when our dean of students was let go last year, our associate dean of students was a female. But the director of case management is the one who got the interim dean role, and it was very specifically because the chancellor did not want this other person [woman] in the role. And that was made fairly clear to people running things. We actually have three interim assistant vice chancellors right now and all three of them are men and our vice chancellor is a man. Most of our directors are men. And yet a lot of the associate directors and a lot of the people who've earned their doctorates around here are women, so it's an interesting place to be politically. (J. James, personal communication, March 4, 2020).

Jessica alluded to the fact that women cap out at associate director roles at her institution due to this chancellor, even though these women have their doctorates and the experience to advance within the institution. Unfortunately, working with a queen bee can be much more detrimental than having potentially tumultuous relationships within the workplace. For these women it has and seems like it could lead to lack of opportunities to advance, lack of experiences, and a potentially hostile work environment.

Breaking the cycle. Regardless of if these women had experiences with a queen bee, they all agreed that women putting other women down or treating other women poorly must stop if women are to advance. Penelope (P. Perez, personal communication, February 7, 2020) had a very strong reaction to this section of the interview; she recalled her experience with her queen bee and she told her partner that evening, “that's the kind of girl on girl shit that I don't appreciate. That's not how we treat women. And, you know, there was there was a different way to handle that.” Penelope went on to talk about how important it is for women to support other

women, but also recognized that due to the systemic gendering and competition that exists in the field, she has more than likely had queen bee attributes or moments at times regardless of how hard she tries not to embody those characteristics or beliefs:

And I think that we forget that how important it is for us to raise each other up and to support each other in those moments that are opportunities. And I'm sure that I've done it, too. I can't say that I'm immune. You know, I think that we all we all do that. But I think it's important for us to think about that just like it is with race. It's important to think about the gender dynamics that are at play as well. (P. Perez, personal communication, February 7, 2020)

Acknowledging that women, including those that have had previous experiences with queen bees are not immune to the systemic gendering that can create new queen bees is important to break the cycle. Penelope mentioned talking about gender and the systemic issues very similar to how the field of student affairs and higher education discusses and provides developmental opportunities around race. Opportunities for this type of education would allow for development to occur for men in the field, but also for women to reflect inwardly to see if there are any queen bee traits residing within them in the hopes of breaking this cycle. Birdie talked about her experience with a woman colleague and how while that was a difficult situation and experience, she is almost appreciative that she had that experience as it taught her how she did not want to behave as a woman leader in the field. She worked with a woman who would take credit for her work, which caused Birdie to reflect on how she wanted to make sure she recognized individuals for their work moving forward:

And I had a colleague who definitely she was out for blood and it was very much aware of when she didn't like you. And I think, as I say, I am grateful for that relationship now

because it taught me a lot of how not to be. And if I ever start acting in that direction, I'm like, you know, I cannot be like that person. And I stop and I'm like, you know what? I'm going to give credit where credit is due. And so, I try my best to always make sure when people are like, hey, you did a great job on this. Actually, if it wasn't for so-and-so, helping me like this would have never gotten done. Thank you so much. And so always trying to give praise to others so that they don't feel like I'm taking away their glory and that is shared. (B. Chandlerson, personal communication, February 25, 2020)

Birdie's reflection and realizing much like Penelope, that she could easily fall into queen bee characteristics, caused her to develop a plan of sorts if she notices those characteristics emerging. By working hard to ensure she is adequately recognizing and praising individuals she works with not only is that a plan to utilize when she notices herself falling into those characteristics but also a preventative technique as well to help break that cycle. Stacie discussed one of the most prevalent characteristics of queen bees, gossiping, and how she works in the moment to stop the behavior:

I'm constantly trying to believe the best in other people. But I am very quick to call out women who gossip with other women. And, you know, if you gossip about other people, they're 'gonna assume that you're gossiping about them, too. And like that doesn't create cultures of trust. And so, I really think a lot about that. And. And I just don't deal with it, like if women come to me and start gossiping about other women, I'm like, that's not okay. And I just I think we have enough hurdles that we don't need to be hurdles for each other. (S. Patterson, personal communication, March 3, 2020)

Stacie discussed how this behavior and queen bees in general are not only problematic and potentially hurtful in the moment but can create issues that can create or change the culture at

work to a hostile one. Stacie specifically spoke about cultures of trust. Why would women trust each other if they are constantly being subjected to this sort of behavior by other women?

Hannah, much like Penelope talked about how women can support each other and celebrate the work that has been done, but, she does mention removing women who have queen bee tendencies, from her circle of influence in order to focus on the positive and not give energy to that type of behavior:

But I do my best to really kind of cut those kinds of women out of my professional life as much as possible. And I surround myself with women that uplift and uphold and make my life brighter, not dim it right. Like, how do we how do we associate ourselves with people that are going to make us feel empowered and not those that want to blow out our flame? (H. Smith, personal communication, February 24, 2020)

Making sure that these women surround themselves with supportive, uplifting, and authentic women is the way they have decided to break the cycle of queen bees, in addition to saying something when it occurs to them or when they witness things happening.

Family planning. Deciding to have a family while working on a career is not necessarily an easy decision. For some women, their family planning was not affected at all by their career. However, for others their career was a major consideration when determining to have children or expand their families. For some women, their career could have potentially led to them not having children at all.

Career dictating biological clock. Depending on the type of work each participant did, depended on the type of impact their career had on their biological clock. For example, if the women worked in a more Fall intensive environment such as housing or orientation, they may have felt like they could not have a baby around July, August, or September, or for some even be

pregnant during that time. Barbara (B. Jackson, personal communication, February 6, 2020) who works in orientation said, “I haven't wanted to let work dictate when I got pregnant”, but then went on to say, “so obviously as an orientation office, having a baby in August or early September would be awful from a timing perspective. So for the first year, I was like, we cannot touch each other until we figure this out.” So even though she did not want to let work determine her family planning, it very much did. Anita had very similar thoughts as Barbara regarding when she could become pregnant due to being an office of one person that is generally busiest during the beginning of the academic year:

When I wanted to have children, I felt that I could not have a child born in September or August because I did not think, especially being a one person office, I did not think I could do that to my colleagues and I was like, no, it's my career, it's my career. I can't be missing when university opens because that's my career. (A. Boston, personal communication, February 20, 2020)

As Anita was reflecting on this, she commented that in all reality her work would have continued if she did have a baby in August or the beginning of the school year:

You know, it's not like the world would not stop revolving. You know, people would have still gone abroad. It would have been fine. But I just at the moment, I couldn't see it. And now, looking back, I do regret it. I do feel like I do have some regret with that. (A. Boston, personal communication, February 20, 2020)

For her though, it almost felt like that realization came too late, as she revealed in her interview that even though she has two children, she would have loved to have had more. She does contribute being, so career oriented at the beginning of her profession to part of the reason why her and her partner were not able to have any more children:

You know, I was...my career, my career, my career. And I was very focused on doing what was right for my career. In hindsight, I wanted more children and we couldn't have more children. But I also know and, in this conversation, when it all came out, my partner did say to me at one point, do you remember that at times you were prioritizing your career? You know, so I have two children. They're four years apart. We didn't think...we didn't even know if we were going to [have children] for a long time...going to be able to have the second one. So, you know, there's things like that that I can look back now and say, that was so stupid of me. I really regret that because I lost something that was a priority to me and something I very much wanted in life. And, you know, who knows? There are tons of factors in there. And any one of them could be the reason why we weren't able to have more kids or why we had such a why we had a gap in having our two. But part of it was there was times where I was just like I [can't] think about this stuff right now because it...I mean, literally that would be an August birth. I can't. I can't risk that kind of stuff. So, I have some regret with that. Definitely. (A. Boston, personal communication, February 20, 2020)

There was a lilt to Anita's voice that hinted at the emotion behind her inability to have more children. The difficult thing, and Anita alluded to it, is that her and her partner will never know truly why they were unable to have more children, but she definitely placed some of that blame on herself and her focus on her career. Norma (N. Lawson, personal communication, February 19, 2020) does not necessarily want children, but she did talk about how she would not have been able to have children while on the tenure track, "So and I don't know if it would have been different if I had a partner who really wanted kids or if I went on the tenure track at the time. Like that wouldn't have been feasible to try to have a kid like on the tenure track." Obviously,

there is more to her decision to not have children, but the tenure track and her work had a large portion to play in that decision.

Focus on career led to no kids. Some women discovered that their focus on their career led to time to pass by and then suddenly, they were perhaps at an age where they did not want to have young children anymore or were unable to have children. For others like Birdie, she found that focusing on her education and career caused her to not focus on any type of romantic relationship, which for her means children have been pushed aside as well:

But I realize that I have put off like the romance section a little too much with work and with my studies. And so I think that really has affected...I'm happy with what I do, But I realize now that I've gotten older and I kept saying that could be next year or two years from now or once I'm done with this and the age is creeping up. And so I would love to have a family. And I'm hoping that in the next couple years, I just turned 40, that I can get this all done. So, I really do. I do think it does affect life planning sometimes. (B. Chandlerson, personal communication, February 25, 2020)

While Birdie was hopeful when thinking about her future in regard to children and a family, there was still a slight sense of regret when she spoke of her focus on her career over family. For several women like Birdie, they spoke of essentially keeping their head down, doing the work and glancing up and 10 to 15 years had passed, and they were not necessarily where they thought they would be in their personal life. Hannah also spoke about being so focused on her doctorate that it caused her desire to have children shift to more of a focus on her career:

So, I think for awhile it did very much of do I want to have a family, do I want children?

Do I want this and that, definitely played an impact for a while, especially when I hit this

point of like I wanted to have career advancement. I wanted to get a doctorate. (H. Smith, personal communication, February 24, 2020)

While listening to Hannah reflect on her experience, it almost sounded as if she subconsciously realized that she perhaps could not have both a family and a career as discussed in the second essence. Roberta discussed something similarly in regard to both her and her husband working on their doctorates at the same time and how they could not have children while doing that:

We had initially wanted to have kids, but we didn't start dating until we were both in our thirties and he was doing, we couldn't have kids when we were working on our PhDs and both working full time. I don't. People do that and I don't understand how it really. I really can't. And after we finished, we both just had this realization that we like our life. (R. Daleson, personal communication, February 25, 2020)

Roberta mentioned an interesting point about her and her husband meeting later in life, which then of course would mean, if they decided to have children, they would have had them later in life. This is essentially what Birdie will be facing if she decides to have children now being 40 years old. Along the same vein as Roberta, and Birdie, during her interview Hannah questioned if she had thought about children when she was younger, perhaps she would actually have children currently and not be at a place where she does not want children anymore:

But I do tell myself sometimes if I would have had a child and pursued this in my twenties, I think I'd be feeling very differently about family. But I did postpone a lot of those things because of my career. And so I sometimes wonder, did my career push me to a point where I said, I don't really want kids anymore because I'm happy with where I'm at? (H. Smith, personal communication, February 24, 2020)

This leads, yet again, to the idea that women truly cannot have it all. Those that focused on career first, like Anita did, had children later in life and some live with regret like Anita does about her inability to have more children. Or, you have women like Ruth, whose focus has always been on family, notes how much that has affected her career. This dichotomy shows that it feels as if there has to be a choice between the two for women specifically.

Family friendly work environment. For most of the women in this study, a family friendly work environment was crucial to them feeling supported. However, the field is unfortunately not set up to innately be family friendly and thusly supportive of women.

Enactment of family friendly work environment. While the women were speaking about what would be needed for their work environment to be considered family friendly, all the of needs surrounded around their ability to be a mother and have a career. Once again, this hopeful idea of being able to have it all. Overwhelmingly a flexible work schedule, which included the ability to work from home was the most frequently mentioned need. A need for understanding from their coworkers and supervisors was also an important need that goes hand in hand with the flexible work schedule. The ability to bring their children to work at times when appropriate was also an important component of a family friendly work environment. Outside of that, there were some specific needs such as a childcare center and more lactation rooms needed on their campuses to feel more supported to be able to have a family and a career. Penelope, Barbara, and Norma all mentioned the need for a childcare center of sorts while Barbara mentioned the need for more lactation rooms but those needs were minimally discussed.

Flexible schedule. Nine of the women in the study mentioned the need for a flexible schedule. Some of the women already have a flexible schedule in place whether it be through an official institutional policy or more of an understanding and unofficial policy with their

supervisor. Stacie's institution has an official flex schedule policy, but she also mentioned having the ability to work from home when felt like she needed to. She discussed how she and her colleagues use their flexible work schedule:

My daughter's drop off at preschool is 7:30 and pickup is by 5:30. And so I can, and it's really close to campus. And so, I can be the person who's 8 to 5. And my other team members who also don't like mornings and don't want to be there really early can shift their time to work at you know, 9 to 6 or 10 to 7. And so, I think having that as an institutional policy is really helpful, because then I can also shift that if I need to go and do things. And I also think having the ability to work from home when I need to. A lot of what I can do works from home. (S. Patterson, personal communication, March 3, 2020)

She talked about the importance of her ability to work from home when her daughter had surgery shortly before the scheduled interview. She was able to work during her daughter's naps while she was recovering. However, Stacie mentioned this was all possible due to the supportive nature of her institution and supervisor, mentioning that she could not have done that at her previous institution. While Anita does not necessarily feel like her workplace is always supportive of her, she did mention how she appreciates a flexible work schedule that allows her to volunteer at her children's school and be present for their sports practices or games. She discussed the person that hired her at her current institution and how supportive he was compared to her current dean:

I did not feel that misogyny with him [person who hired her] in fact when I had my first child, he was the first person who was flexible with my like with giving me a flex work schedule. And then when he retired, the dean at the time then rescinded it. I mean, almost I mean, pretty quick. (A. Boston, personal communication, February 20, 2020)

Luckily for Anita (A. Boston, personal communication, February 20, 2020) though, it did work out where she was able to negotiate a flexible schedule with her current supervisor, “I will say, even though I said what I said about it being misogynistic in here, I do have a flex work schedule and I do have it based on the fact because I want to be with my kids more, so.” Ruth, much like Anita has an unofficial agreement worked out with her current supervisor who is extremely supportive of her taking the time that she needs to in order to be present and support her family while still completing her work:

I think one that has flexibility is so critical, and I think that's part of why I like I feel like I have a fair amount of flexibility in my current role. You know, I think the ability and I also have an incredibly supportive supervisor, you know, anytime I've had to go to my supervisor and say, you know, ‘here's what I'm thinking. We'd like to do X’, or you know, ‘my daughter's playing soccer this fall. I'd like to catch the bulk of her games. That means two days a week I'm probably going to be leaving at like three. Is that okay with you?’ One hundred percent fine. Or, you know, travel with family or, you know, sick family. Just incredibly supportive. So, I think both the flexibility and in a supervisor who I think also models good balance. (R. Jensen, personal communication, February 14, 2020)

Having that supportive supervisor who also role models a flex schedule to be with family is crucial for creating that family friend work environment for Ruth and other women as well. Claire also discussed the idea of a flexible work schedule but more from the lens of working from home when feasible:

It's the ability to work from home when I need to. Just the ability the ability to come in late or leave early as long as I can get what I need to do. I don't have to clock in or out or

anything. You know, the understanding that you know, my kids come first, and if I need to leave work, I will leave work. (C. Lee, personal communication, February 20, 2020)

For Claire that also came with an understanding that she is completing her work even though she may not be present 40 hours a week and that of course, her family came first. Norma is one of the few participants that does not have children, but still understood the importance of flexibility with work and family life:

It's the ability to have some flexibility because you just never know what's going to happen with your kid. Like if there's something going on at school, discipline wise or sickness wise, you're 'gonna go out. Yeah. And that to me is always 'gonna be more important than whatever task it is that needs to get done. (N. Lawson, personal communication, February 19, 2020)

Joanne who also does not currently have children shared the same sentiments as Norma of understanding the importance of a flexible schedule and women wanting to be present for their children. She reflected on what she knew she would want if she were a mother:

An environment that kind of lets me be a good mother. Which would require you know, a flexible schedule that would let me do that. That would it would kind of, you know, understand that I'm not going to live and breathe my job. While currently my job might be priority number one or two. That's going to drop if a kid or if a significant other comes in. So, to be understanding of that. (J Dyers, personal communication, February 18, 2020)

Birdie specifically talked about not only having a flexible schedule but also one that does not question that she is completing her work. If the ability to have a flexible schedule exists

without the trust in the employee, it feels null and void and not truly family friendly or supportive in nature. Birdie (B. Chandlerson, personal communication, February 25, 2020), “[one where] people are OK with you not always being there as long as you are getting your work done. I don't think it really means that you have to be checked on all the time or if folks complain about like, where is she now?” Jessica spoke about something similarly where there should be this understanding and almost grace for colleagues, but she also spoke about how as a supervisor she wants to make sure those that report to her feel supported to advocate for themselves and their families:

I think its understanding of the comings and goings and the days off. I think part of a work friendly workplace is understanding that for yourself and being able to advocate for what you need with your boss and doing the same for your employees. It's not just about me. It's about what does that look like for my employees? (J. James, personal communication, March 4, 2020)

This intersects with the area that many women spoke about which was the environment in which they work and how their supervisors that was discussed in essence one, can either create and support that environment, or make sure it does not exist.

Bringing children to work. Being able to bring their children to work was another important component of a family friendly work environment. Some of these women currently have a culture at their institution that openly discusses and allows children to be in the workplace within reason, and others simply bring their children and have yet to been told it is inappropriate. Anita falls into the latter group. While she did mention her ability to flex her schedule, she talked about her current institution not necessarily having any type of children friendly policy or even encouraging family to be at events held by the institution:

I bring my kids. I don't know if I'm allowed to or not, but until someone tells me otherwise. When I first started working here, though, they used to have a start of the school like university wide or maybe student affairs I don't know picnic. Plus, we like bring your families and stuff. They do that at one of the extended campus and they get bounces and stuff like that. I think they cut it because of budget cuts and stuff like that. And it was kind of ridiculous, but it was also kind of nice because it was family stuff and then we have stuff like we usually have a kickoff event in the College of Business every fall. And it's always hit or miss. Sometimes it's like you can bring one guest, like, I can't go because I can't find a babysitter, you know? So. Or I go by myself because my partner has to stay with the kids. And like one night it was a baseball game and I was like, 'is there any chance I can bring my kids?' Like, 'oh, yeah, that's fine.' I'm like, why didn't you say that from the get go, right? Why do you have. And so sometimes stuff like that's a little frustrating. (A. Boston, personal communication, February 20, 2020)

While it seems like more than likely Anita's institution does not necessarily have an issue with occasionally bringing children to work and to university functions, she thought it would be better and take out some of the guess work and angst if the institution just let their faculty, staff, and students know if something was family friendly or not. Barbara has also brought her daughter to work and even worked out with her supervisor the ability for her husband to bring her daughter to work when she was an infant so that she would be able to nurse her and spend some time with her while she was still in her infancy while still being able to work:

When I came back to work, my husband brought my daughter. My husband's a stay at home dad right now and works part time, but he brought my daughter to work every day for the better for a year to nurse. And so, she would...I would like nurse in the morning

pump mid-morning, nurse her at lunch, pump mid-afternoon and nurse her for dinner and then through the evening. And so, the fact that like everyone was not just supportive but genuinely seem like 'Sadie's here!' and like this is so exciting and like it was no big deal.

(B. Jackson, personal communication, February 6, 2020)

Not only was her supervisor supportive, but the entire office was excited to spend time with her daughter. Additionally, the human resources department at her institution was able to provide a temporary parking pass for her husband so he was able to park close to her building when he was bringing their daughter to nurse. For Barbara not only was her supervisor supportive about bringing her daughter to work, but the greater institution was supportive as well. Stacie also talked about how she is able to bring her daughter to work and the staff and students are excited to spend time with her. She reflected on a time when her husband had to bring their daughter to her office as they were switching out parenting responsibilities:

He needed to bring her to meet me in the office because there wasn't enough time to do the full switch. And so it was totally okay that she was in the office. My students took her all around the student union. At one point, Paul called to check. And I was like, I actually don't know where she is right now because she's with my students running around somewhere. And so, you know, my boss, when school closes, because we've had a lot of rain and a lot of flooding. And so our schools have closed a lot. Like she brings her son and I have a coordinator in my office that has a seven-year-old little girl and she's come to the office and hung out. And I think it's nice to have that and to not feel like they can't be there or that we have to be chained to our desks. (S. Patterson, personal communication, March 3, 2020)

The fact that Stacie's direct work environment is very child friendly and many colleagues bring their children to work, makes it feel as if it is no issue or burden for Stacie to feel the same. Additionally, the fact that others, especially students, are willing to help care for her daughter and not make Stacie feel like she is trapped in her office with the door shut or cannot do any work while her daughter is with her makes the environment feel even more children friendly. While there may not be a specific policy for these women at their institutions around bringing their children to work, the environment that has been created within their workplace makes them feel comfortable to do so. While Jessica did not speak about bringing her children into her office with her, she spoke about how the institution works closely with the local school district to try and make things easier for families that have children in that school system by providing a program at the institution that she was able to bring her child to:

Our school system I think aligns fairly well with the university because the university is the largest employer. Even though, you know, there is a snow day program that you can drop your kid off at the elementary school and they'll basically be in their after-school program all day. (J. James, personal communication, March 4, 2020)

While that is not necessarily Jessica bringing her child to work directly with her, she is able to during extenuating circumstances take advantage of a child and family friendly program that the institution facilitates.

Interestingly enough, Birdie, who does not currently have children also mentioned the ability for colleagues to bring their children to work under appropriate circumstances:

So if it means that you don't have daycare for the day and it's okay for you to bring your children and it's a safe environment to bring them in. Obviously, not every single day. But if it's once in a blue moon that there are staff members that are willing to, like help

entertain or that your boss is okay with, you know, they're sitting in your office depending on the age and, you know, they're not really bothering anybody. And if it's a younger child that, you know, understand that maybe during nap time you can get most of your big pieces of work done, but that, you know, once the child wakes up, that you'll be entertaining them. But you're there, too, that you can get a few quick things done and be okay with like, hey, I need to leave. (B. Chandlerson, personal communication, February 25, 2020)

Birdie mentioned that some of the time spent in the office obviously would be spent caring for and entertaining the children, but she also mentioned something that Stacie talked about when she discussed bringing her daughter to work, is colleagues and even students helping to care for the child while they are at work.

Supportive environment or supportive supervisor. As mentioned earlier, policies are wonderful, but if the environment in which you work is not family or children friendly, then these women do not feel supported in their roles as a mother or other type of familial roles such as caregiver. For some women, this meant how their supervisor handled their familial responsibilities. This is exactly what Barbara (B. Jackson, personal communication, February 6, 2020) mentioned in her interview, “Just knowing that people see me and others as like humans that have families and little people that frankly come first.” Supervisors of course want their employees to have high productivity and to complete their jobs, but if these women are worried about their children or families while being at work, their productivity is going to be lower than otherwise. Additionally, if they believe that their supervisors and colleagues do not support them in their entirety, student affairs practitioner and mom or caregiver then they will more than likely not be as productive either. However, if support varies from supervisor to supervisor across

campus, that can create issues of inequity for women at an institutional level, which is something that Ruth mentioned in her interview:

I think where in terms of equity can become tricky is a lot of the caveats are with your supervisor's approval, right? So, if you have a supportive supervisor great, you're probably good to go. But if you don't, then that's not necessarily going to be helpful to you. (R. Jensen, personal communication, February 14, 2020)

None of the women spoke about any type of inequity across their institutions between supervisors, but it is definitely a potential issue that these women could face. Regarding supervisors, Darlene (D. Dennis, personal communication, March 5, 2020) spoke about having a supervisor that did not have children and had at times unrealistic expectations on her and other staff members who had children, “When you work for somebody that doesn't have a doesn't have children. And you still have that old school expectation that you're going to get here early and you're ‘gonna stay late. You're not walking out at four thirty.” She spoke about how she was able to develop a relationship with that supervisor and an understanding that she was also a mother, allowed her to have slightly more flexibility with her schedule as the years went on, however that was not an immediate response from her supervisor.

Other women talked about, regardless if they have experienced the support from their supervisor, that they want to make sure that those that they supervise always feel supported to be present for their families, however that may look. Hannah was very passionate about this. She spoke of how important this supportive environment is for her team, but also for her:

How do I produce an environment where they don't feel horrible if they have to take a day off to take care of a child or to take care of a partner or somebody else that might be sick or need to take care of themselves? And what does that look like? I think I kind of

expect the same from my supervisor and having that flexibility. (H. Smith, personal communication, February 24, 2020)

Hannah went further with her example and talked about how the simple task of checking in on someone, regardless if they are going through a rough patch or not, can be extremely impactful and aid in the development of that supportive environment. She makes sure that she practices that with her current staff:

But more importantly, checking in on me, I think is huge. And so, I've done the same thing with my staff. If I know things are not going well at home, is taking the time to do that, check in of like, how are things going? How can I support you? What does that look like? I think is important in providing that family friendly atmosphere regardless if we are single and living on our own. We still have friends or family that are coming and taking care of us or helping us in certain situations. So how we provide an environment where people don't feel guilty for missing work or leaving early or doing things along those lines. I don't think there's a more worse feeling than feeling like you're letting people down at work because you're taking care of yourself. And so how do I provide an environment that lets people know that taking care of yourself or your family should be your number one priority and that you're not letting anybody down at work? (H. Smith, personal communication, February 24, 2020)

Hannah alluded to this idea of guilt, that some women can have when they have to be away from work to take care of their families and children. By doing what Hannah mentioned, supporting her team, asking questions, and being present can help mitigate those feelings and foster that supportive environment. Birdie also spoke about making sure that she was a role model to others in her department through her supportive supervisory style:

So, I look at it as really important that the atmosphere and the environment conducive to it. And I hope that I will model that. So, if I don't ever have children, I hope to be like a good supervisor to someone who does and understanding of, hey, just communicate with me what you need. And if you're going to be out for a long period of time, just let me know what I can help you with so that when you do come back, you're 100% and take care of what you need to do. (B. Chandlerson, personal communication, February 25, 2020)

While not many participants spoke of a family friendly work environment being outside of the purview of children, Roberta spoke to her experience as a caregiver to her father who has cancer. Roberta (R. Daleson, personal communication, February 25, 2020) talked about how her supervisor and colleagues allowed her to be there and present for her dad, “And that that felt very family friendly, like I'm absolutely allowed to care about my family.” Even though Roberta is the only one that mentioned the ability to take care of family outside of children, it is still important to note that this supportive environment can be offered even to women who do not have children or a stereotypical family.

Essence Four: Career Progression and Thinking Forward...or Not

All essences and parts of those essences are intertwined in this last essence. Many of the themes that these women spoke about affect their ability or even desire to progress their careers. In this essence the women spoke of their futures by discussing their current and previous career aspirations as well as reflecting on their Career Aspiration Scale scores in order to dive even deeper into understanding their aspirations. Additionally, the women spoke of their career journey thus far, reflected on their internal candidacy, as well as how important their affiliation to those that they work with and potentially the field is to their career journey.

Figure 4.5A: Illustrative Representation of Essence Four

Essence Four: Career Progression and Thinking Forward...or Not

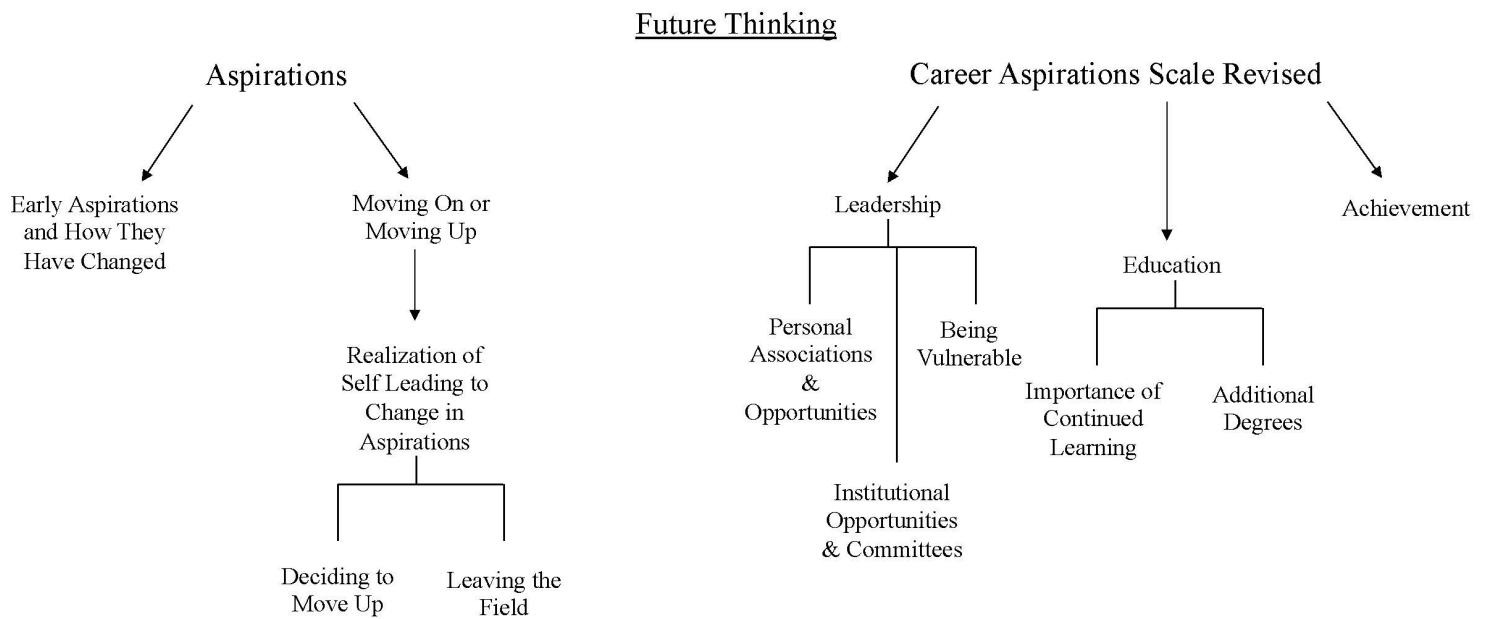
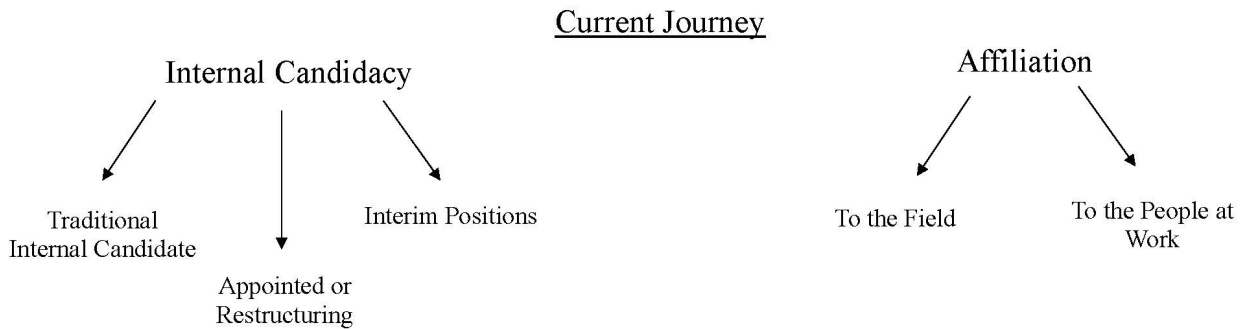


Figure 4.5B: Illustrative Representation of Essence Four

Essence Four: Career Progression and Thinking Forward...or Not



Future thinking: Aspirations. Some of the participants had very definitive career aspirations from the beginning of their careers that have only slightly shifted as they have progressed. Others entered the field with a desire to make a difference and no true path in which they planned to do so. It is important to understand what the participants' aspirations were, how they have shifted, and what potentially could be a guiding force of those fluctuations.

Early aspirations and how they have changed. Almost every participant had some sort of aspiration when they decided that they wanted to get a master's degree and join the field of higher education. However, every participant has had a shift in what they aspire to achieve now as their priorities may have shifted from when they entered the field for a myriad of reasons. Some women have experienced a significant shift in their aspirations, while others have experienced only a slight shift. This section will look at those shifts for each participant. Stacie wanted to originally be a vice president of student affairs or a dean of students when she entered the field. However, due to the amount of stress that many individuals who serve as dean of students experience, she talked about maybe wanting to switch over to the academic side of things and teach in a student affairs or higher education program:

I've kind of joked that like teaching in higher ed is probably the retirement game. Like doing this for 15 years and then teaching. Because it's so much less stress, honestly, and honestly, now we've seen all with all the benefits and perks faculty get. It seems like a really nice gig. So maybe teaching, maybe passing it on. (S. Patterson, personal communication, March 3, 2020)

While Stacie mentioned teaching as being her retirement plan, her teaching would actually take her to the age in which she would be able to retire; but due to the stress-free nature of the job, it would feel like a retirement job to Stacie. Jessica also reflected on her early aspiration to be a dean of students, however like most other women in this study, that has changed. For Jessica a portion of that change is due to family commitments and balancing being a mother and having a time intensive job such as dean of students. But another reason, that a few other women also discussed including Jessica, is the fact that the field and positions such as dean of students and

vice president type positions are having to work even closer with behavioral issues and difficult conduct concerns that seem to be happening more prevalently:

I think partially that I think I don't like what has happened in the dean of students office in terms of the changes of behavior, university responsibilities. You know, I work closely with, you know, ADA and Title IX and all of these pieces, but there are also students who are not okay to be in college right now. And there are so many laws that protect individuals that I agree with, and there are individuals who are not currently okay to be on a college campus. And navigating that, I think is it puts everybody in a really difficult place and I feel like our dean of students office has become the helicopter parent. It's become the university's responsibility not to let a student slip through the cracks. Instead the University offers the service to assist students in being successful. And so, the amount of yelling and it's your job to keep my students safe, but your student is suicidal. This might not be the best place for them. I don't want to be in that role because I have clear opinions on the whole situation that don't necessarily follow current guidelines. (J. James, personal communication, March 4, 2020)

This change in the field has led Jessica to shift her aspirations to be a director of housing so that she is not purely focusing on residence life and student growth and development, but able to use her strategic skills in ways fit well with a director of housing or similarly functioning role. Also, for Jessica, she needs to feel as if her work impacts students whatever that role may be, so the focus for her is not necessarily on title. Birdie also wanted to be a vice president for student affairs much like Stacie, however she also felt as if her aspirations have changed due to how much positions have changed within student affairs as well, much like what Jessica spoke about:

Yes and no. I want to say that there's days I think about it. I'm like, oh, yes, I want to still do that. And then there's other days with the politics that I'm like. I don't know if that's really what I want to do. I also now realize that the ever-changing face of student affairs has more mergers with the academic side or enrollment management. So I think it's more... I would like to be in a leadership position that makes me happy. Let me have a life and let me have a good staff and so whatever that may look like. If it is a vice president or an assistant vice president in academic or student affairs or engagement or whatever, like whatever anything is being called these days, as long as I'm in a trusted position that I get to help make some leadership decisions, whatever that means, I think I'll be happy. So I don't think anymore I have a full title. I think it's more is this fulfilling? What I want to do is it looking at strategic initiatives. Is it looking at accreditation and enrollment and what our students look like? I think it's become more broad. (B.

Chandler, personal communication, February 25, 2020)

Birdie, much like Jessica, was not intensely focused on the title, but more on the level of work she would be able to complete in that position and how it affected her personally. Hannah had the aspiration to become a university president when she first started her master's program, but now that has shifted to a vice president potentially or at least a dean of students. However, Hannah has a unique outlook on career trajectory and aspirations. She believes if she focuses too much on what the future might hold, she would not be focusing enough on what she is giving to her current position:

I have this very interesting perspective when people will ask me, where do you see yourself in five years? Where do you see yourself in six years? My answer to this question has been the same for about the past four or five years. And my answer is

always, I believe that if I tell you where I'm going to be in five to ten years, that means I'm already thinking about something else, which means I'm no longer 100% committed to my role that I'm currently in. And so how do I give my all to a position if I'm already thinking about what the next step is? I've worked with a lot of professionals in my career that have...they'll start a job and the day they're starting the job is already thinking about how do I prepare myself in this job for my next role? And it's like, just do what you're supposed to do and you'll prepare yourself for your next role. But I just I don't want to be sitting in a space where I have one foot in and one foot out. So how do I focus on having both feet in the place that I'm at currently? (H. Smith, personal communication, February 24, 2020)

With Hannah not necessarily thinking about her next steps as frequently as maybe some of her colleagues, it may be more difficult for her to achieve those aspirations. Kathy, like Hannah, also wanted to be a university president as well, but specifically at a mid-sized institution. She attributed that to the fact that the president of her undergraduate university was a woman president:

And that was because of the university president at my undergrad was a female president, and that was very rare at that time. And so just seeing how she engaged and interacted was very admirable. And like, I feel like I could do that. It's a lot of administrative work and sort of directing people and delegating and accountability like that, that's my jam. So even at that young age. (K. Jones, personal communication, February 11, 2020)

However, currently, Kathy feels like she would be much better being in a position that reports directly to the president as opposed to the actual president. She identified perhaps a provost or a vice president so that she could do some of those tasks that she identified such as administrative

type work and managing individuals that would allow her to also make things happen at her institution. When she reflected on why she no longer wanted to be a president, she discussed that she believes those senior-level administrative roles to be shorter lived than those that report to the president. She talked about wanting this end career goal position to last long enough to essentially take her through her retirement as opposed to having to hop from one position to the next.

Anita was one of the few individuals who did not really have specific job title aspirations when she entered the field. As she discussed, she was driven, and still is to a degree, by financial success:

I had none. I was just trying to get a job as I graduate from college and income rent. That was my angle, income. And I will tell you, I used to say this and people would get really offended, I used to say this when I was doing the doctoral work, which, you know, I've done for like ever, the people were like, 'why are you getting your doctorate?' And I'm like to make more money. And everybody I mean, people were like, clutch their pearls, appalled, that I would say that like 100% to make more money. I'm like yeah I want to advance my career, but I can't advance my career without it and I can't make more money without so it's about making more money. And people were just, 'did she just say that?' Yeah I did and I'll keep saying it. I am financially motivated, you don't really hear a lot.

(A. Boston, personal communication, February 20, 2020)

Listening to her discuss her aspirations, not much had changed from when she started in the field. Anita (A. Boston, personal communication, February 20, 2020) did say that she would like to see herself as a senior-level administrator, but she mentioned that her lack of a plan has done her well thus far, so why change, "Honestly, you know, I haven't set out with a plan and I seem

to keep running on my feet thus far. So I guess we shall see. I'll tell you. I'll tell you in 20 years, 30 years." Similarly, Joanne did not necessarily have a career goal or aspiration when she started in the field either. She talked about relating more to the people in certain positions when she was first starting as opposed to the positions or the titles. She talked about perhaps maybe wanting to be a dean of students as she was progressing through her career, but then when directly asked, she talked about how she is good at being the second in command, so more of a position that plays on her strengths of being a helper, a strong manager and supervisor and a good visionary. These are the things that she thinks the individuals in charge do not always have the time or the capacity to do or be:

I've recent... recently....I've really thought about for our current vice president, like an assistant to the...I feel like there is a lot of stuff on his plate that really should come out of his office. But he is a one-man office. And there are a lot of stuff that he should be doing that he knows, should be under his feet, under his umbrella, but he doesn't have a go to person to do it. So, I've thought about that. (J. James, personal communication, March 4, 2020)

While Jessica identified as an introvert and would prefer to be the assistant to a senior level administrator, she also recognized that at times, the dean of students position is appealing to her as well. Similarly, Liza did not really have specific career aspirations when she first entered the field much like Anita and Joanne. She immediately joked about essentially just having a job that would allow her to live and support herself. She talked about how this desire to take care of herself first and foremost came from her mother:

I would say I guess really it was just about being independent and that ties some into conversations with my mother. I have all sisters and then my parents are still together.

But I vividly remember growing up, my mom making comments of like, don't be responsible for taking care of anyone else until, you know, you can take care of yourself. And so that piece. Personally, for me, I saw that option within student affairs. You know, too, again, knowing you'll have somewhere to live, housing specifically. But I think other career aspirations, I think it was the ability to be in spaces where new ideas are being born. And so, again, back to like I don't need to have an official title or have certain awards...it provided, like my aspiration was to have access to those spaces. And that's very much what it provided for me. (L. Knoppe, personal communication, February 11, 2020)

Liza continued to discuss that even currently, she has no true title or position in mind as her end goal with her career. She spoke about the desire to work in some sort of position that bridges academic and student affairs. She felt as if in that space an exchange of ideas happens, and this is where she feels the most challenged as well as finds her work rewarding. Liza spoke of how the exchanging and implementation of ideas allows students to get what they need which is what she personally aspires to accomplish with her career. When asked to try and place a title on what her end career goal might be, she mentioned something at the divisional level of whatever institution she is at, but also something that allows her to think critically:

I know the types of spaces I want to be in. And I know what my work is worth. So back to the title piece. At the same time, salary is often linked to certain position titles. So, like, yes, I want to be in a position where I am compensated for what I provide. And so, for that reason, I will seek out those positions. But if that wasn't the only way to get access to being compensated for what I am worth, then I wouldn't need to do that. I would be content in any position that allows me to be a problem solver to say like, yeah

again, this issue has popped up. (L. Knoppe, personal communication, February 11, 2020)

Interestingly as well, this is where Liza, much like Anita discussed the financial component of the career progression process. Liza once again does not care about the title, but she noticed that the only way to get the salary that she feels like would compensate her for the work that she produces would require a specific level of title, even if it is not necessarily something that she originally aspired to be or do. Penelope similarly did not necessarily have a career aspiration upon entering the field. In fact, in order to have many options she switched her master's degree programs from student affairs to counseling. She talked about how she could have a career in student affairs with a counseling degree but not a career in counseling with a student affairs degree. Penelope did identify that when she started at her current institution over ten years ago, she had the aspiration to be a dean of students. She has applied for some dean of students positions and still is interested in the position but has also set her eyes slightly higher up the ladder as well:

But I think that's probably the thing that has resonated the longest. I mean, I certainly have thought about being a president at a small liberal arts school. And. And what that might look like. Yeah, but vice president of student affairs has certainly come up as well. I've applied for some of those jobs I've been nominated for again pie in the sky. I didn't think that I was at all ready. But yes, sure, I'll throw some materials together and see how it goes. But yeah, I think that's probably the thing that's been the longest. (P. Perez, personal communication, February 7, 2020)

Barbara talked about how most people when they enter the field want to be a Vice President for Student affairs, instead of taking the more cookie cutter career path, she took a liking to teaching:

Like I want to do something different. And I think my interest was teaching. Teaching in a higher ed program. Yeah, like being higher ed faculty like that was sort of where I wanted to work towards. So, if I'm thinking back, I think that was what where it started.

(B. Jackson, personal communication, February 6, 2020)

While Barbara was drawn toward becoming a faculty member within a higher education program, she recognized that there were two different ways in which she could meet that goal. She could have become a researcher and taught, making her way through the ranks of faculty tenure, or she could have worked her way up within student affairs and become a faculty member after being a practitioner. However, like Stacie, she has said that teaching is more of her retirement plan, even though her current aspirations are still in the academic realm:

Right now, it lies towards moving like moving towards a provost office, not as provost necessarily, but working within a provost office to look at the educational curriculum and I was initially just sort of super interested in working with faculty on how they can assess their coursework to know whether or not students are learning what they think they're teaching. But I am now even more interested in looking at educating new generations. It's much more of a like general liberal education idea that our world is going to need people to do things that aren't even known that we need to do them. And if we can educate really good thinkers and collaborators and learners, then that's more important than a narrow skill set. I think it would be really cool to look at like an audit or assessment of degree

fields, not just individual classes. (B. Jackson, personal communication, February 6, 2020)

Darlene (D. Dennis, personal communication, March 5, 2020) also had a different entry aspiration than most of her peers as well. She wanted to get her master's degree and head back to her home state up north and be a hall director, "I was going to be a hall director, earn a master's degree and go back to, go back to [home state]. That was it." However, Darlene has obviously surpassed that aspiration and she did talk about wanting to potentially be a vice president of student affairs or a president as she was progressing in her career. But, as she worked with individuals in those roles, her desire to sit in that seat changed:

I don't feel like my spot here is threatened and could come in and be like, you know.

What are you doing? You can't do this job. I don't believe that, but so. I don't know that I want to be a dean or a VP one day. I did back in the day. You know, I wanted, you know, a university president, oh that would've been cool. But then when I co-taught with Dr. Rheinbeck and I got to know him more like personally and professionally. Nah I'm not interested in doing that. (D. Dennis, personal communication, March 5, 2020)

She reflected on positions that she had applied for at her institution, realizing she probably would not have been happy in those roles or those roles have been phased out of the institution completely due to budgetary constraints. She also talked about feeling called to her position currently, but also how there was a position that her vice president sent to her that was also very enticing to her, which would have been a potentially lateral director level move but working at a larger institution:

I feel like I was called to come here. I feel like I'm called to do this job. I feel like I'm called to be challenged to do this. And right now, this is good. Part of it's because I'm

chickenshit. You know, that position looks good, but I'm a chicken... Yeah, but part of it because I'm chicken. Being honest. I couldn't lie to you. (D. Dennis, personal communication, March 5, 2020)

Darlene talked about how her fear of potential instability if she were to try new career ventures holds her back from potentially reaching her aspirations. Roberta (R. Daleson, personal communication, February 25, 2020), similar to Darlene, had the aspiration to be a hall director when she started her career journey, she wanted, “to be a director of residence, I think to go like literally to go back to my undergrad and be the director of residence or to be the dean of students there. Yeah, that was it.” As she surpassed that position and left housing and residence life, she realized that she “like this idea of being able to influence policy, to train others, to be more supportive or more inclusive of college students who are low income or first generation. I think I want to be more on the policy side than the direct student side.” For Roberta, the aspiration is not about the title, but the type of work she would be a part of, which is the case for several other participants as well. Roberta went into more detail about her shifted aspirations:

It's more of a connection between like an academic view of education and like practical steps to be able to make change. I love reading. I love the application of theory to practice. I love looking at why we do something, identifying what those barriers are, brainstorming for potential ways to change it. And there's, this position right now provides me those opportunities to identify those barriers. I'm working on our institutional retention plan right now and I'm involved in our strategic planning process. And holy crap. I love looking at the data. I love trying to figure out what we're seeing, what isn't the data telling us? What do we need to know more about? And so that's more of a mixture of the classroom. I really do think of myself as a scholar practitioner because

it's not just what I do on the daily. I look at why and how we do these things and that's more of what I want to do. Those are the positions that I'm absolutely drawn to. (R. Daleson, personal communication, February 25, 2020)

Roberta at the time of the interview was in an active position search that fit those positional needs that she spoke of and would also progress her up the ladder.

Claire, who was faculty focused from the beginning has switched from more of an academic desire to an aspiration to move up as an administrator:

So, I thought I wanted to be like my mentor, which is to run a research lab and teach at a high-powered research university. And then I realized I liked teaching more than I liked the research. So, I then wanted to run a small research lab and teach at a small liberal arts university. (C. Lee, personal communication, February 20, 2020)

For Claire though it is slightly different as she is unaware of essentially the entire field that she just recently entered. So, while she knows she more than likely wants to be an administrator long term and potentially at a larger institution, she is unsure of what that might look like for her:

So that's kind of what I was thinking about when I was doing your survey thing. Like, yeah, my answer to this is so different than it was a year ago. Because as I said, this whole field wasn't even on my radar, but I'm truly loving it. I could see myself doing this long term and even wanting to advance in it. And I mean, I don't I truly don't know. Yeah. I would love to be able to continue in this role for a while and eventually maybe move up to a bigger institution or a different type of program maybe something that's the whole university. But I truly don't know. I mean, I the only thing I know about the field is what I've lived in this role. It's not like I even know what the different career paths are

because I didn't have that education. (C. Lee, personal communication, February 20, 2020)

Norma as well began her career and her aspirations as wanting to be a faculty member that imparted knowledge within her specialty. When asked if Norma (N. Lawson, personal communication, February 19, 2020) had any desire to become a dean or program chair when only teaching was on her radar, she passionately declined, "I had no interest in being an administrator. It seemed like a really shitty, shitty job." Currently though, Norma is an administrator, so her aspirations have changed and have not shifted back to teaching within the classroom. She talked about perhaps aspiring to a specialized assistant or associate vice president position that focuses on wellness as it would blend her academic background and her skills as an administrator. When discussing this, Norma does not necessarily seem to be excited about the possibility of these types of positions and she talked about how it is due to how good her current position is:

In some ways, the position I'm in, I refer to it occasionally as like a golden handcuffs type of thing, because they pay really, really well for benefits, including retirement are really unlike anything I'm 'gonna get anywhere else in a position like mine that you know what I mean? And so, it's hard for me to imagine going to another school doing the same job.

(N. Lawson, personal communication, February 19, 2020)

Therefore, for her, if she aspired for a different position, it could mean that she and her partner have to alter their lifestyle.

Moving on or moving up. While a change in aspirations can tweak a career trajectory, an aspiration does not necessarily mean it is feasible for an individual. Some of the participants discussed being comfortable staying where they are because they enjoy their jobs and the

compensation creating a *golden handcuff* scenario like mentioned in her interview and mentioned when reflecting on how her aspirations have changed. Others however discussed their desire to continue chasing their aspirations and moving up the ladder. However, even if these women have the desire to progress some identified the lack of upward mobility and the gender barrier. Anita discussed how the positions at the top are extremely limited in student affairs.

It's so limited to move up after a certain point anyway in higher ed. And I think even if I wasn't in international education, if I was somewhere else, I think I would start I would be encroaching on feeling that in any area, you know, there's only one director of housing, there's only one dean of students. (A. Boston, personal communication, February 20, 2020)

The lack of potential positions can be discouraging; however, other participants have decided perhaps it make more sense to find a new ladder to climb by leaving the field of student affairs. When Stacie (S. Patterson, personal communication, March 3, 2020) was reflecting on how she would more than likely need to uproot her family to reach her aspirations, she additionally reflected that she thought, "women in our field are less likely than men in our field to move to move up. That's a big barrier." Therefore, we are seeing some of the gendering that happens in the workplace affecting the ability for these women to reach their aspirations. However, when thinking about moving up the ladder and aspirations, some of these women have decided it may just not be in their futures anymore for various reason.

Realization of self, leading to a change in aspirations. As briefly touched on earlier, some women have realized that perhaps their view of their career, the field overall or changing priorities have caused their aspirations to shift. This could also mean not necessarily knowing what could be next for them. Hannah talked about not really knowing what that next rung on the

ladder might be, but that she knows she does not want to make her career a huge time commitment for her:

I think for me, I'm at a place of do I want that next step? And I still feel like I'm being very much challenged in my current role. And what that looks like. And I see what people higher than me are having to deal with. And I don't know if I want to deal with it. I just don't know if I want that extra stress and feeling like I am tied to my job. I mean, with residential life, you're on calls. You're already in some ways tied to your job that way. But I am able to detach, I am able to break away if necessary. And I just don't know if at this point in time that I want to take on. So a lot of it just comes down to what kind of stress and what kind of time commitment do I want to give when I have other personal things I'd rather focus on? I don't want my career to be my life. I did that for too long. (H. Smith, personal communication, February 24, 2020)

Hannah talked about making sure that her career does not become the main focus on her life again, which means perhaps not working towards her aspirational career. Stacie, Jessica, and Norma discussed something similarly, but more along the lines of their well-being and perhaps even sheer ability to be able to do what is expected out of those high demanding aspirational careers. Stacie (S. Patterson, personal communication, March 3, 2020) recognized that the rest of the positions for her will require a lot of her time and energy, more than what she currently exerts in her current position which is a lot, "I also just don't know that I'll have the stamina to do this, to move up especially." That sobering moment of knowing that there may be a position that you want, but just may not be able to give it everything that is needed is difficult. Jessica touched on that as well recognizing that the work she would be completing at a higher level

would be very consuming, emotional, and at times difficult to mentally work through due to the demanding nature of certain positions such as dean of students:

The heart of it is that, yes, it's time consuming and it's. It's emotionally consuming. How much do you have to give at the end of the day? In some of those roles? And so I think I've backed off of that partly because of the role of the dean of students, has changed more so than the time commitment of it. (J. James, personal communication, March 4, 2020)

Jessica has decided that that level of time commitment needed for those types of positions, is not something she is interested in anymore. Those types of positions can be really hard on an individual's emotional and well-being and can take a toll after a period of time. Norma was very aware of her own struggle with her mental health and realized that she was unable to progress toward those types of aspirations:

I think in some ways it's been shaped by some of my struggles with depression like such that I know that taking on a job with too much more responsibility or like too many more people to manage them might actually be a little bit too much for me. I'm sort of good where I am because my managing is manageable. My portfolio is manageable. I have a lot of control over what I do. I'm not expected to be on all the time. I'm not on call like all of that stuff. And so that really that makes a big difference to me as I'm sort of trying to continue to manage my illness. (N. Lawson, personal communication, February 19, 2020)

This means that while Norma may have wanted to have more of a lead or senior-level role at an institution, it may not be what is best for her and she has realized that over time that managing

her mental health, even though she is ambitious is important to her. Also, she indicated that those types of positions are more work than she wants to currently put into her career.

Leaving the field. For some participants, leaving the field may be a necessity if they can progress their career and feel fulfilled. Anita is in a unique position if she wants to stay in her specialty to begin to move up. Her position is very specialized and the state in which she lives has very few positions focused around international education, specifically within an academic setting. She talked about feeling unsure and how to bridge her current position to whatever the next position might be for her, specifically potentially outside of Student affairs and higher education:

I've known higher ed for 20 years. I don't know what I would do otherwise. I know I have the skill sets, you know, but they're not the same vocabulary as what we use in higher ed. So when you look at if you go if you went into Indeed.com right now and look at a job description, it would be like creating a foreign language, somebody who's been in higher ed, because it's not our linguistics, it's not our language, it's not how we do it. And very likely you and I both could do that job. And if not, we could probably learn it pretty quick because Lord knows you get things thrown at you in higher ed that you just like and roll with it. (A. Boston, personal communication, February 20, 2020)

Anita processes the potential for leaving the field and the implications that could have for her. She mentioned the potential for almost starting over, even though she has plenty of transferable skills, switching careers could potentially mean a lower position and potentially even lower pay:

Does that mean an entry level again? Does that mean I'm having to start over again? And it's one thing to start over, like what's switched over to faculty or something like that. It's

another thing to start over and be like having supervisors who are 15 years younger. (A. Boston, personal communication, February 20, 2020)

Additionally, Anita mentioned the concern for having a much younger supervisor in addition to the concern of starting over. Having a significantly younger supervisors that may or may not have experienced some of the same things such as having a partner and children could make Anita's experience starting over much more difficult. While Anita's main desire for leaving the field is due to lack of opportunity in her state, Jessica (J. James, personal communication, March 4, 2020) did not feel appreciated for the work that she does, "That's where looking at what are my other options outside of student affairs. Anywhere. Where do my strengths align with other things happening on campus where I might be more appreciated for the work I do?" While Jessica did not go into details about what a career outside of the field would look like, the fact that she mentioned it in the interview means she has entertained the idea of leaving. Ruth as well talked about leaving the field for other work that she has found more passionate:

So sometimes I think like, oh, maybe I would, you know, become a mediator or maybe I would, you know, I don't know. But I've certainly thought about. kind of like criminal justice reform, work with restorative justice, prison work. So, I mean, I kind of thinking about really vulnerable populations and ways to bring more justice in the structures that that serve them. So, I don't know, something about that is appealing and possibly something for me in the future. (R. Jensen, personal communication, February 14, 2020)

These passions for Ruth have come from her work as a coach and volunteering in multiple capacities. For Norma, she has thought of ways she can slowly look at opportunities outside of the field while still maintaining the safety of her current position. For her, that has come through past consulting experiences and looking at ways she can find new consulting opportunities:

I've actually thought some about the potential for creating like a side consulting opportunity. You know, I've done a little bit. I did some methods, qualitative methods, consulting with a friend who's a faculty member elsewhere. And I've started to do some talks on like size, diversity on campus. I think that. So that's something I could kind of create. (N. Lawson, personal communication, February 19, 2020)

In order to increase diversity, equity, and inclusion work on college campuses, Norma hopes to use her skills and passions to create a consulting role that focuses on those efforts.

Deciding to move up. Some of the participants have decided that they want to move toward their aspirational goals, but that can require very planned or deliberate next steps. Anita stated that while she does want to advance her career, there has to be a strong reason for her to take another position that would align with her career trajectory:

The reason I will leave this position when I leave it is because I'm going to advance my career. Like I'm not going to leave it flippantly, you know? So now maybe it's more directed now. Now it's more intentional in terms of the opportunity I'm going to seek out. And what would cause me to leave this position? I've also been very intentional about creating opportunity for myself and exposing myself. (A. Boston, personal communication, February 20, 2020)

Jessica also spoke about taking the next step, but how she is not only focuses on how that job would fit into her career trajectory, but also how strong of a fit that job is for her and her family:

I look at different things when I interview now. And so when I met with the person who would be the direct supervisor, you know, they t weren't quite as personable as somebody who might typically be in student affairs, but also there were no personal pictures. There were none like in the office. Right. And so. It made me wonder, which then I later heard

from people who do work in the office. You know, that that this person does not value or understand the whole working parent thing. (J. James, personal communication, March 4, 2020)

Being a working parent can potentially cause some difficulties while trying to balance two important parts of one's life that can at times be in conflict with each other. Knowing that, it is important for Jessica that part of her job search process is to focus on the family friendly nature of colleagues and a supervisor can make that hurdle potentially nonexistent for her. This means that Jessica would not take a position solely because it would advance her career. Hannah also discussed briefly her trajectory toward her career aspirations. Hannah earlier mentioned that she does not like to think about her next step as it means she is not focusing as much as she should on her current position, however, that does not mean that she is not prepared for that next step when it shows itself:

So although I may not be looking for the next job, I'm always aware of what my resume looks like. Because you never know when someone's going to shoulder tap you and be like, hey, this is a job. And as soon as they tell you about it, you're like, holy moly. Like, that's what I would be loving to do right now. And so always being prepared for the next step, but not necessarily thinking about it. (H. Smith, personal communication, February 24, 2020)

While she is not actively pursuing a different position, she is setting herself up to hopefully advance her career trajectory.

Some women in this study are proud of their work and feel as if they have mastered the skills needed for their current position and are ready for whatever that next rung in the ladder may be. This might mean exploring new avenues while staying in their current position. This was

the case for Anita. When she spoke of about potentially leaving student affairs, she did mention that now that she has found a newly lit passion for her career which makes her want to move up soon:

You know, they're getting more independent. And actually, now that I finish the doctorate, I can feel that fire just wanting to, like blaze again. And so I'm trying to take some different routes with it to just kind of build some different experiences. So like after I finished my dissertation, I've been invited to write a chapter in [a book]. So I'm going to work on publications and then I'm going to either contact [some people] about the possibility of maybe doing some adjunct teaching to see if I like the teaching. (A. Boston, personal communication, February 20, 2020)

So while Anita did not necessarily identify a next direct step, as that is not necessarily how she functions, her passion being reignited is a major step in her career progression.

Future thinking: Career readiness scale revised. Each participant took the Career Readiness Scale-Revised in order to see what type of aspirations fueled their career aspirations. Table 4.2 below shows each participant's score for reach of the three areas that can drive aspirations.

Table 4.2: Career Readiness Scale-Revised Results

Participant Alias	Achievement	Leadership	Education
Anita Boston	20	31	29
Barbara Jackson	25	27	27
Birdie Chandlerson	20	24	30
Claire Lee	25	16	18
Darlene Dennis	24	24	29
Hannah Smith	20	26	29
Jessica James	20	25	24
Joanne Dyres	10	11	28
Kathy Jones	23	30	28
Liza Knoppe	21	26	30
Norma Lawson	18	20	22
Penelope Perez	22	26	25
Roberta Daleson	19	27	28
Ruth Jensen	17	15	28
Stacie Patterson	19	26	26

During their interviews, each participant was asked questions allowing them to reflect on their top two categories. Many women were not surprised by their results; however, a few others were surprised by their numbers. This was seen as they reflected on their results during their interview.

Kathy (K. Jones, personal communication, February 11, 2020) talked about how her results made sense as it reflected not only areas that she is strong in, but also perhaps areas she needed to work on, “But I would say I guess that kind of makes sense where I feel like a need to continue or where I'm kind of comfortable obviously with where I am.” Both Ruth and Roberta scored high in the education aspiration and neither were surprised by that result. Ruth talked about loving to learn and making sure she stays up to date with current trends:

But the education piece was my highest. And that doesn't surprise me in part because I am always interested in learning something new, making sure that I'm up to date with the

latest trends in the field or in my work specifically. (R. Jensen, personal communication, February 14, 2020)

Roberta's (R. Daleson, personal communication, February 25, 2020) focus on her top aspirations were focused more on how she used those aspirations, "I was not surprised that educational and leadership. I always want to help people be better than they were prior to me meeting them or supervising them." Roberta was however surprised that her achievement score was not higher than it was. She talked about how she was extremely competitive in her work and even had competition as a top strength in another inventory, "I understand it's not a competition, but it is like if I can get all my paperwork in and I'm not a problem then and you are, then I have beat you. So I was really surprised to see that achievement wasn't higher." Roberta reflected that each time she answered one of the questions in the instrument she would ask herself why she was answering the questions in a particular manner. Both Claire and Hannah were also slightly surprised by some of their results as well. Claire (C. Lee, personal communication, February 20, 2020) talked about being unsure of what to expect as that type of instrument was new to her, but she was surprised how low her education score was, "I've never taken an instrument like that. I wasn't really sure what to expect. I'm always the type of person who wants to learn so I was kind of surprised that the education came out so low." However, she did mention that it more than likely had to do with the fact that she just started her job and did not feel like she had time for anything other than work at that point in time. Hannah reflected that some of her results were slightly surprising but overall feeling as if her results made sense to her and her experience thus far. Both Anita and Stacie reflected on their results and how they have seen those manifested throughout their career journey at different points along the way. Anita talked about how she felt

like her scores were high in each aspiration and how that may reflect her previous workaholic behavior:

I am really high in all these numbers, am I supposed to be this high in all these numbers? And I was looking at it in a sense of, you know, it's like this is kind of me that I'm going to push. I'm going to run all engines as hard as I can. Hence the reason my husband thought I was going to have a heart attack and my mother thought I was going to have to go to a hospital. (A. Boston, personal communication, February 20, 2020)

Stacie (S. Patterson, personal communication, March 3, 2020) reflected on how her answers and results may have been different if she had taken this toward the beginning of her career journey, "I did think like had I taken this at a different point in my life, I would have answered very differently if 25-year old Stacie had taken that. I probably had bigger aspirations and now my priorities are just different." This change in priorities revolves around her daughter and husband and balancing a career and family life:

I want to raise a daughter that is kind and involved and has A good role model of life and balance, and I can't do that if I'm never here. And, you know, marriage is really hard and I kind of you know, we both have very demanding jobs. And so I can't expect him to prioritize our family if I don't. And so I think Pre married me, pre like young in the field, me want to change the world, me would have been much more aspirational as more realistic me and more tired me has come into play, thinking of very different things and I think like I hated the dissertation process. I hated writing it. I love learning and I love school. And the classes were great and wonderful. I hated the process of having to be by myself and write. And so I think that also was like, oh, because I was like, of course I'll get my doctorate. And I thought, oh, it's going to take me like four years and took six and

a half. And that's totally fine still within that 10 years that they give you. And so I think younger me would have had very different answers. (S. Patterson, personal communication, March 3, 2020)

Leadership. In this section, the women's responses to how they are seeing their leadership aspiration manifest itself in their career journey will be displayed. What was found is that leadership for these women can unfold in two different methods; women being tapped for things due to their competency displayed during previous work and them actively seeking out opportunities to display their leadership skills. These opportunities can be within the workplace or other professional opportunities as well such as professional associations.

Professional associations and opportunities. For some of these women, professional associations are very important and one of the main ways they sought out leadership opportunities. Darlene (D. Dennis, personal communication, March 5, 2020), for example, is very heavily involved in the regional version of a national professional association and when asked how she sought out leadership opportunities in her career journey she did not hesitate and said, "through professional associations, first and foremost." Birdie (B. Chandlerson, personal communication, February 25, 2020) also reflected on her involvement in professional associations, "I've volunteered for some areas within the professional organizations that I was a part of or I'm a part of, some of them have been volunteer roles of just leading a committee or being an active participant in something. Liza also reflected on her time attending a leadership institute that is attached to a national housing professional association, in addition to her work in planning a specialized conference that is attached to a higher education national association:

I mean, I can think of a few things here and there. You know, again, that it's like going to NHTI you know. So an example I think of is a few years ago, ACPA now calls it the

Institute for the Curricular Approach. But it used to be the you know; it was all a residential curriculum before. And so, my school had just wrapped up, its third year. And we still had a lot of work to do. But they put out a call for people to be on the planning committee for that for the next year, as well as showcase institutions. And so that was one that I put myself out there. Once I had expressed an interest and found myself in that space. I actually got to teach some of the sessions. And so, again, like the benefit that I got, people at the conference looked to me as a leader, someone that was presenting on that. It's like leading some of the actual heavier content sessions, but at the same time, what I personally gained from having my co faculty presenters or again being at those curriculum meetings when they were talking about the curricular planning of the conference, I never would have gotten that if I hadn't put myself out there. (L. Knoppe, personal communication, February 11, 2020)

Anita (A. Boston, personal communication, February 20, 2020), who did serve in some leadership opportunities with a state professional association, spoke also about her time serving in a professional leadership program that her city offered every year, “I did the leadership program last year and I was intentional in thinking that in terms of wanting personal leadership development.”

Institutional opportunities and committees. In addition to professional associations, the women spoke about leadership opportunities that they took advantage of at their institutions, mainly in the form of institutional or departmental committees. Liza shared the committees she has worked on and how she was able to secure those opportunities. She talked about being very direct with her interests to her supervisors and stated that she was chosen for those opportunities because she is competent in the work she is assigned to complete:

Whenever we do preferences for certain like committees and things like that, then I'll kind of say, like, I'm interested in chairing this. You know, I try to be very thoughtful and selective about those things. But beyond that, honestly, I haven't sought it out that this goes back to the I'm trusted to do the work. And so, you come, and you tell me, like, this is what we need and I'm just like, okay, let's do it. So, I think when I do push for that, it's in areas that, one, I think I have something maybe unique to contribute, but also that I have a lot to learn in that situation. (L. Knoppe, personal communication, February 11, 2020)

Darlene, Birdie, Hannah and Stacie also talked about how they had various committees that they were a part of or they chaired. Some of the women were appointed onto these committees and others sought out the committee opportunities. Darlene talked about the different committees that she has been appointed to and that they have allowed her to show others across campus her leadership skills and the additional value she brings to the committee:

So different committees that will put you in [forefront]. There was a master planning committee group last Thursday that I was asked to serve on. So, appointments from [my supervisor], from the president, from the provost, from the university, that has opened your head and mind to different leadership opportunities. And then other people can see you as a leader and a valued colleague across campus. (D. Dennis, personal communication, March 5, 2020)

Similarly, Birdie (B. Chandlerson, personal communication February 25, 2020) mentioned that volunteering for those committees has given her the ability to show off her leadership skills, “And then even on the university front, volunteering to serve on some university committees, even if it means chairing on a project or just being the organizer of something has given me some

of that leadership opportunities.” Stacie (S. Patterson, personal communication, March 3, 2020) talked about how she simply offered her help to one of the Directors and they reached out to her, seeking her leadership on the committee, “Different committees. I’m on a search committee right now for it’s like an assistant director for service learning or something like that, and it was just because I was talking to the director and I was like, if you need some support in that, I’m happy to help.” Hannah talked about how no one wanted to sit on a specific committee, but she volunteered and has had some really great experiences through serving on that committee. Hannah’s willingness to serve on that committee is indicative of her general willingness to volunteer for many different committees and opportunities across campus:

So, I think that people have found that I tend to volunteer a lot more for those experiences and crazy enough, it’s been a great experience. Like, I absolutely love that committee. I got to go to New Mexico and was part of this huge conference. And like the way that they approached the learning was very different for me. So I was like, oh, this is interesting. I could take it back to my staff. And so, I tend to volunteer a lot. I am somebody that enjoys assessment. So, I end up getting placed on a lot of committees because I’m one of the few people in student affairs that enjoys assessment and enjoys breaking down data. But I think what has given me some of those leadership opportunities that maybe others don’t experience is just who I am as a professional and people knowing that I approach things from a very different lens. We all know that like right now it’s heavy job recruitment season and I’ve been asked to be on five different selection committees from everything from a vice chancellor search to a conduct coordinator. (H. Smith, personal communication, February 24, 2020)

The fact that Hannah is willing to sit on committees that may not be as desirable as others means that she has had the opportunity to sit on many different committees and enhance her leadership skills while letting them be known across her institution as well.

Being vulnerable. While volunteering to sit on committees or serve in some capacity within professional associations, these women had to have a sense of vulnerability in order to make themselves available to those opportunities. Every participant that scored high in the leadership area discussed how important it is to be vulnerable and be willing to make oneself available to those types of opportunities. Asking for an opportunity or making sure their supervisor is aware of what these women want can feel awkward but is essential to garner leadership opportunities. Ruth spoke about how she advocates for herself with her supervisor:

A lot of the leadership opportunities were around like areas where I thought I could have some valuable input. And so, yes, I'm going to step up and either apply to them or say to my supervisor, hey, I see this group is happening. It seems like really relevant to the work that I do and might make sense for me to be there. So, it was a mixture of people tapping me, of me being interested and kind of making a difference, if you will. And then also if I wasn't tapped, I would bring that to the attention of either my supervisor or his supervisor. (R. Jensen, personal communication, February 14, 2020)

But, for Birdie (B. Chandlerson, personal communication, February 25, 2020) she simply stated that she, “just asked sometimes more than anything of like, ‘hey, I have an interest. How can I help? Can I participate?’” Roberta (R. Daleson, personal communication, February 25, 2020) also talked about it very plainly, “I volunteer for, you know, if there's if there's something to do, I volunteer to do it.” Jessica talked about how sometimes it is not only the act of making oneself

available to those opportunities, but what is done with those opportunities once you have a seat at the table:

But yeah, I think putting yourself at the table. I also think I think putting yourself at the table is a big one, right? I was in enrollment management meetings last year and the year before that were the provost, two vice chancellors and three directors and then me.

Because I can speak more clearly and concisely about it than my boss can. But I also put I put forward proposals like and because it's what I think is a good next step. (J. James, personal communication, March 4, 2020)

Jessica spoke of a SWOT analysis that she was able to provide while sitting in on enrollment management meetings and from that then recently proposed some changes to their student fee structure that were approved. She talked about while the announcement about the changes did not have her name directly attached to the announcement memo, she made the initial proposal to begin those changes. She did question if her actions on the committee were reflective of leadership:

And so, I don't know that it makes me a leader, but I think it continues to put your name out there. Like somebody had this idea; we're looking for money in the division. Here's \$22,000 and here's \$240,000 and all that came from me. (J. James, personal communication, March 4, 2020)

Jessica also talked about how she drafted a similar proposal and sent it on to a senior-level administrator, but the administrator who was also sitting on this committee, told her that he did not understand it, so her SWOT analysis and new proposal allowed her to change something that she saw a need for and allowed others to see her leadership skills, even if she doubted her skills in that scenario. Anita (A. Boston, personal communication, February 20, 2020) spoke about

taking a similar approach to Jessica, “So I try to seek out those type of opportunities if they're not naturally happening and developing in my work environment. I try to put myself in an environment where those might as options might present themselves.” Anita who was not receiving any leadership opportunities from her supervisor had to essentially look for ways to make that happen by being vulnerable and putting herself in a space across campus and in her community that might make those happen. Several other women reflected on how volunteering and making themselves available shows that they are a team player, and the opportunities will make themselves available. Hannah talked about volunteering for things that maybe do not sound as interesting or high profile as perhaps other opportunities, much like that committee that none of her colleagues wanted to be a part of:

Volunteer, volunteer, volunteer, volunteer, even if it seems like it's 'gonna be so boring. Volunteer because you never know what you're going to get out of it. And more importantly, the people that are at the table, when I volunteered for this thing, the people that are at the table are faculty members that I don't normally see. So now I have an in with a faculty member to potentially help me out in residential life. So that's what I really kind of taken from. That is like even if something doesn't seem exciting. How do we how do we engage in those things? (H. Smith, personal communication, February 24, 2020)

Hannah mentioned one of the most impactful benefits of volunteering and making yourself available are the relationships that you can develop. Sometimes these relationships can provide additional leadership opportunities, or in Hannah's case provide an opportunity for her to work on a new initiative of having more faculty involved in her department, which could potentially lead to career progression. Stacie talked about how being available for opportunities shows that she is a team player:

So, I think just volunteering and making it known that, like, you want to be a team player and you want to be a partner can lead to a lot of leadership, not just by nature of. People want being like, oh, okay, I hadn't thought about that or I could really use some help. (S. Patterson, personal communication, March 3, 2020)

Showing that she was willing to partner with other individuals across campus as well as provide help and support perhaps when others would not, can lead to increased leadership. However, it is not just about being available, but also about the work that is completed when sitting at the table and following through with the work that comes with those leadership opportunities. Ruth (R. Jensen, personal communication, February 14, 2020) spoke about how that reliability is extremely important in order to continue to be tapped for leadership opportunities, “So I think that's been a piece of so for me, it's, you know, showing up It's being reliable. It's following through on what you say. And. And then usually, though, not always. I think those opportunities follow.”

These women, by allowing themselves to be vulnerable and opening themselves up to leadership opportunities whether they are within professional associations or at their institution has allowed them to continue to develop their leadership skills and competencies. Additionally, these opportunities have allowed them to be seen and opened up other doors at their institution which may lead to career progression possibilities.

Education. Several women scored high in the education aspiration. In this section their responses and reflection to their scores will be explored. For those that scored high in this area they spoke mainly of their desire to continue to learn and never truly arriving in their educational journey, even though they have a terminal degree. For Anita however, the importance of education began when she was a child and has been engrained in her family:

But I've always had a high value of education. I've come from a family that values education, my siblings and me. There's three of us and we have 10 degrees between the three of us. So I think that I always valued education. I mean, I joke about my next degree and my partners like... it was 10 years, now it's five years that I have to wait. So, I mean, I just I value education. And I think that's also why the field resonates with me, because I think this is such an important opportunity for our students, for people, although I'm not a person who believes everybody should have to go to college, I just think everybody should have to have postsecondary training of some sort. But. I think that's part of it. I think that's why that reflects the education piece in my pursuit of education. (A. Boston, personal communication, February 20, 2020)

For her, it was not a question of if she would get her doctorate, but more along the lines of when. The idea of continually learning has not left even after she received her doctorate.

Many of the participants also felt like if they were not continuing to learn and better themselves that they were doing the students that they serve and even themselves a disservice. Hannah (H. Smith, personal communication, February 24, 2020) felt that personal improvement did not end with her doctorate, "Not only do I have a doctorate, but I think that we do our self a disservice as professionals when we decide that there's nothing left for us to learn." Birdie (B. Chandlerson, personal communication, February 25, 2020) also talked about how education for her is more about giving back as opposed to how she can use it in her career advancement, "I'm always one that encourages just education and learning and webinars. It's not about my process or my journey is about somebody else's and just encouraging them to explore the question." Penelope (P. Perez, personal communication, February 7, 2020) also talked about how her continual education impacts the students that she works with, "I think that's I think that education

in particular is really important to get formal or informal in whatever ways, because I don't think we're serving students as well as we could be if we don't." Barbara and Kathy talked about how their love for learning is what they believe led to their high score in the education aspiration. Barbara (B. Jackson, personal communication, February 6, 2020) got really excited when she was talking about her love for education, "I truly love learning. And so I think I know that's why education came out so high for me. If there was a secondary doctorate in higher ed, I would be doing that right now." Kathy (K. Jones, personal communication, February 11, 2020) never really thought she would be someone who identified as a lover of continuous learning but can now see how she is and how learning is imperative to keep her inspired in her work, "I never thought of myself as a lifelong learner. But I truly believe that that is my thing. I have to be doing something new in order to keep me stimulated, to stay in a position."

Some of the women talked about how their decision to earn their doctorate is a manifestation of how the education aspiration plays out in their career. Liza spoke about how the doctorate has allowed her to feel more prepared to tackle situations and problems that she may experience in her work. The complexity of those challenges and learning how to navigate them are important to her as well:

So, I think what prompted me to be interested in getting my doctorate and that I found to be consistent once I went through the coursework is that our world is complex. And the longer I'm in the field, the more complex the challenges are. And so with my master's degree feeling like I wasn't prepared. And like, again, how do you tackle something when you really don't know what to do? And so getting my doctorate prepared me. The analogy I like to use is having that doctorate now means I'm better prepared to build the ship

while I'm sailing it because I think that happens a lot more as I've moved up. (L. Knoppe, personal communication, February 11, 2020)

Liza also reflected that learning how to “build the ship while it’s sailing” mentality has increased as she has moved up the career ladder which means it will continue to happen more prevalently as she continues in her career progression. Therefore, this desire to keep learning will benefit her as she moves on.

Importance of continual learning. Each individual that scored high in education talked about the importance that they, and others in the field, continue to learn and grow in their discipline as well as others. The participants talked about what this type of continual learning looked like for them in their current positions as well as areas they felt like they wanted to learn more in for their current positions and beyond. Darlene (D. Dennis, personal communication, March 5, 2020) talked about finally getting to the giant stack of books she had in her bookshelf that would hopefully lead to not only more reading, but more writing, “I have to do more reading. I'll be honest. I think all of us need to practice writing more to be better scholars, practitioners.” This writing would not necessarily be from an academic lens but from a practitioner lens allowing her to stay abreast of current national trends and of course being a better practitioner and advocate for her staff, colleagues, and students. Joanne similarly had a list of things that she wanted to research and learn about. For her, she focuses on areas that she feels may be a deficit in her current knowledge and focuses on those areas:

So, I try to learn about a lot of different things. And if I look up here as I'm looking at the slips, it says books I want to read. This is stuff I need to research, you know? So I'm always like, what's next? What's out there that we're missing, you know? Knowing that as I get older, the students don't. They're always staying the same age. What's happening

that I'm missing out there or my institution is one type of institution, what's happening at other types of institutions? Because I'm if I'm not here forever, I need to not only know what happens at my little school, but what's happening, you know, other places or other areas of the country or whatever. (J. Dyers personal communication, February 18, 2020)

Joanne, much like Darlene, also talked about the importance of understanding trends and operations not only at her current institution but other types of institutions as well. Staying on top of current trends and what other institutions are doing to handle different trends can continue to make them an asset, which is what Anita (A. Boston, personal communication, February 20, 2020) mentioned, “what do I need to keep doing to keep growing, to keep staying ahead of things so that I am an asset?” While Joanne spoke about the students not aging, but she does, Penelope spoke of how the students and their needs are constantly changing, so she tries to stay abreast of trends with students and the protocols around working with students:

I think that I'll never stop learning. I am all about professional developments and I do that in my free time. I'm doing a me in white supremacy group with friends off campus as part of professional development. Just to learn more about kind of how as a white person I can contribute to violence and why that's important to understand that on a really deep level. But yeah, I mean, I don't think that I ever wanted to stop learning. I don't think that we can stop learning in this field because students are constantly changing, and the rules are constantly changing. (P. Perez, personal communication, February 7, 2020)

Penelope also spoke of taking her learning in her own hands by creating her own professional development opportunities. Hannah, similarly, finds ways in which she can constantly be learning through reading and other opportunities that she can find. She spoke about how learning is the essence of who she is:

And so, like just constantly finding ways to educate ourselves and be better than we were yesterday is really important to me. And what does that look like? So that's the reason why I think education is so important to me, is just constantly learning, because with the day that I stopped learning is the day that I'm no longer human. That's how I kind of see it. Like one involving species, we should constantly be trying to get more out of what we do. (H. Smith, personal communication, February 24, 2020)

More degrees and additional training. Most of the women spoke of specific skills or experiences they felt like they would need to move to the next rung on the ladder. For some, such as Anita, she wants to make sure that she does not become obsolete, so her additional training is critical for the senior level leaders at her institution to view her as a continued value to have on staff:

I try to spend some time trying to think about what's going to change in higher ed over the next 10, 20, 30 years. And what can I do to make sure that I am not one automated out of a position to continue to be an asset to with whoever I work for. So, is that, do I need better legal understanding? Do I need better data and technology understanding? Do I need more business acumen? Like what is it that I need to stay abreast of what's going to come at us in the next few decades? (A. Boston, personal communication, February 20, 2020)

The questions that Anita has asked herself are also those that several other women asked in order to progress in their career. Some of the experiences and knowledge were very specific, and others were more generalized. There were four areas of skills that emerged from the participants' interviews: student support; management and supervision; strategic planning and budgeting; and diversity, equity, and inclusion. Norma, who did not necessarily have any management or

supervision skills prior to her current work, would like to increase her skills in that area. She talked about being hired because of her terminal degree, not necessarily her skills in that area, but knows she needs more experience and training:

I got hired because I had a PhD you know; they didn't necessarily know I was 'gonna be a good or bad manager. And so, I was brought into a situation that needed a really good manager. And I didn't have any training in that. That's not what you learn as a faculty. So, I was sort of thrown in there and I had to get some coaching. And so now that I'm with a different group of people, I feel like I've honed some of my management skills, but I have a lot learn. (N. Lawson, personal communication, February 19, 2020)

Additionally, Ruth talked about wanting more training around how to manage conflict and the resolution process. Ruth (R. Jensen, personal communication, February 14, 2020) received some of that training through her volunteer work but felt like that is an area she can still grow in, especially working with people, "Anything related to conflict management, conflict coaching. I do have a certificate in mediation, but it's been a while." Another area of importance was strategic planning and budgeting this ranged from standard training and exposure to strategic planning to construction and capitol project management. Birdie talked about wanting more training with budgets, fundraising, and construction management. Birdie had a negative experience when she was working in a Housing department and they were remodeling one of their offices, and she was not allowed to participate due to her gender. Due to that experience, she has not been able to gain experience in this area, but knows this is something she would like experience in. She also talked about how she has had some opportunities to solicit funds from potential donors but needs to have more experience not only in the collection process and being comfortable with it but also how each foundation or account works and what it is used for:

Definitely some fundraising skills. So, I realize more and more that I need to be okay with asking for money from donors. And so, I've been given a couple opportunities to like to solicit some funds from folks sort of or host events and kind of are practicing that. But I realize having that knowledge of how our foundations work and being okay with asking for that money. (B. Chandlerson, personal communication, February 25, 2020)

Penelope, who has had some experience with fundraising through her extensive nonprofit work felt as if she could still learn more about fundraising, specifically how fundraising occurs in higher education. This will prove to be beneficial for her if Penelope (P. Perez, personal communication, February 7, 2020) decides to pursue the path of a university president, "I could certainly learn more about fundraising. I learned a lot through the nonprofit doing that. But I can always learn more, especially within this realm, if I decided that I wanted to go on to be a president." Along similar lines as fundraising, several women spoke about the need for more budgeting experience as whatever role is next and their final end goal will be responsible for a larger budget and perhaps even developing budgets. Anita spoke about not simply managing large budgets but being able to understand and develop financial and budgetary forecasting as funding sources can change and create a need for cuts and pivoting where resources are being allocated:

I think I need like heavier budget lifting. So, you know, some of the financial instruction. I mean, I've had pretty big budgets over the years, but, you know, it's different, you know, kind of thing. And modeling, I think like financial forecasting, like budget modeling and things like that, I think is really important. And that's an area where sometimes I don't think you really understand it until you're fully in it either. So I think that would be useful skill set. And just in the education piece, in terms of understanding

how to forecast models for budgets and projections and especially to state school projections and cuts, you know, like how do you work with the potential for both, you know, kind of thing? (A. Boston, personal communication, February 20, 2020)

Stacie (S. Patterson, personal communication, March 3, 2020) also reflected on how she has had experience with budget, but recognizes how complex they are, especially the further up the ladder she would become, “I have always had budgetary responsibilities and even maybe grant responsibilities. But nothing could have prepared me for how complicated my budget is now. So I think moving up, that would be something that would definitely have to happen.” Birdie (B. Chandlerson, personal communication, February 25, 2020) also spoke about while she understands some of the budgeting basics, she currently seeks out more guidance around budgets and would like to continue doing so, “And I realized like just understanding budgets and all the different budget lines that happen, even though I'm not a great math person, I sit with our budget and finance people and ask questions to see the bigger picture. Liza, much like Stacie and Birdie already has more budgeting experience than she thought she would need, but also recognizes that simply understanding how to budget, does not mean she fully understands budgetary responsibilities inside and out. She specifically spoke of the importance of understanding where funds are generated from in order to understand how they can and cannot be spent:

I'm trying to work on through my professional development plan and relates to budgeting and accounting like I never thought I'd have to know as much as I already do or I'm having to continue to learn about understanding budgets and funding sources and so even understanding how that relates to fundraising or grants, because when you have new initiatives and things you want to do, sometimes you can't find the money to begin with and you can't reallocate funds. (L. Knoppe, personal communication, February 11, 2020)

Another area in which these women identified additional training needed, was the different modes of student support and services. Several women spoke about learning more about Title IX and the support for students around that policy along with understanding law that surrounds higher education as well as restorative justice practices. All of these practices and protocols are unfortunately constantly changing as elected government officials and the law is changing frequently as well. Stacie (S. Patterson, personal communication, March 3, 2020) mentioned how it is important to stay continuously on top of higher education law specifically, but that it is also important to understand basic law as well as that also has an impact on students and their experiences, “Higher ed law is super important because I feel like it changes all the time. And not even just even specifically higher ed law but knowing the laws of our country and generally and how that impacts our students.” At the institution where Birdie works, they have an entire team that specifically focuses on law and governmental relations, however, through her work with them she understands not only how important that work is, but that she is in need of training around the protocols that they work with in order to be better equipped to move up in her career journey. Birdie (B. Chandlerson, personal communication, February 25, 2020) talked about having some experience with protocols, but still being in need of more training in that area, “I realize now, how important it is to have an understanding of what the governmental relations team does. And then I think some protocol training, I've had some of that background, but I think more and more of it being aware.”

This past year the Department of Education has changed Title IX regulations and how that impacts the work of student affairs practitioners, which is cause for more training and knowledge in the area for all of the participants if they desire to move up in their career journey. However, several of the women spoke about how they did not have much training or experience

with this policy and the protocols surrounding Title IX even prior to the changes but recognizing how important it is for them to gain more experience. Some, like Penelope and Joanne have actively been seeking out opportunities to become engaged in that work and learn more, while others like Ruth, have the experience but recognize the need to constantly stay abreast of changes and nimbly ready to adapt to those changes. Penelope talked about working with an office on her campus to gain more experience. By working with that office on her campus she will gain a better understanding of the process from a philosophical standpoint, but also a lived experience by being able to be a part of the investigation and conduct process around some actual Title IX cases. Since Penelope has interest in perhaps becoming a dean of students, Title IX would be a critical part of that position in addition to other protocol and student support services. Penelope also spoke of ensuring she is aware of the Clery Act which would ensure that she and her institution are report all of the crime statistics necessary in order to maintain a safe campus and stay in compliance. Joanne also spoke about wanting Title IX training and seeking it out at her institution. While it sounds like Penelope will be able to sit in on cases and receive additional training, Joanne is currently receiving pushback from her supervisor due to financial constraints and how it currently does not fit directly with the work she is doing:

I need Title IX training, and I've talked to my boss about that and he's pushed back because there is no financial support from the institution, so it would just be one more thing on top of my job. Instead of okay, but I really like if I'm going to go anywhere else and be an assistant dean or a dean, I 'gotta have something in Title IX. (J. Dyers, personal communication, February 18, 2020)

However, Joanne understands the importance of that knowledge and experience in order to achieve the next position in her career journey, so she is going to keep pushing for that

experience. Ruth who currently has experience in Title IX, knows that it is currently an evolving policy which leads to evolving protocols, which she alluded to when referencing the new regulations from the Department of Education. While Ruth (R. Jensen, personal communication, February 14, 2020) may not need training on what Title IX is and how it affects her work and students, she recognizes the need to stay on top of the changes within the government realm, “The whole world of Title IX. So, I mean, we're essentially waiting for the regs from the Department of Education that we anticipate are likely going to change a lot. So, understanding the implications of those and what that means for shifting our policies and procedures is pretty significant.” For Ruth, she spoke of not being sure if she wants to move up in her career due to being in her current position for so long, but she did recognize the importance of Title IX in addition to restorative justice work if she does want to move up to a vice president or assistant vice president role. Ruth (R. Jensen, personal communication, February 14, 2020) currently has some experience with restorative justice practices but has a desire to learn more, “thinking about what are the restorative principles that we can weave into our process. So I think that's an area that I have been learning more about and will strive to continue to learn to learn more.” Ruth also mentioned the importance of educating herself about student mental health issues. Each institution has different protocols and practices when supporting students who are working through mental health crises, but Ruth spoke of the importance of understanding different diagnoses and how students can experience those, in addition to how Student affairs practitioners can support those students.

Another overarching area that the participants spoke about was the need to learn more and stay abreast of diversity, equity, and inclusion work, principles, and practices. Much like protocols and government relations, this is an area that these women recognized is constantly

changing and evolving meaning the work is never complete. Norma (N. Lawson, personal communication, February 19, 2020) spoke about the importance of this work, “oppression and anti-racism in my field and in other fields are really important to continuing to learn about.”

When talking about diversity, equity, and inclusion work, Ruth (R. Jensen, personal communication, February 14, 2020) reflected inwardly “I think justice work is never done in terms of, you know. How I understand myself in relation to the world and evolving terminology evolving you know.” Stacie also reflected on her identity and how it is important for her to continue her work in cultural competency:

I think it never hurts to continue cultural competencies, especially as a white woman. I think it's funny that I'm the co-chair of that diversity committee because I don't have any marginalized other than being a woman, I don't have other marginal identities, but I think cultural competency is a super important. And I think will continue to be important as our student body becomes more and more diverse. I read a statistic a few years ago that in the under-five population, there was no majority identity or race. And so, I think we're ‘gonna continue to see that, especially as we see the drop in the number of students available in higher ed. I think we're ‘gonna see more and more diversity. (S. Patterson, personal communication, March 3, 2020)

Stacie also reflected on how the changing student demographics means that as a practitioner, she needs to continue her understanding of the identities may be entering her institution.

Additional degrees. In addition to supplementary training some of the participants discussed having a desire for subsequent degrees. For some, this could be because they want more experience that is parallel to their experience in higher education and student affairs, for others it could be because they have the desire to leave the field and feel as if a subsequent

degree may be necessary if they want to enter a new career trajectory and not find themselves at the bottom of the ladder. However, for the most part, most women did not want to earn an additional degree unless they thought it potentially would be beneficial if they were to leave the field. Penelope (P. Perez, personal communication, February 7, 2020) mentioned potentially looking at public administration, “We've got a master's of public administration here and I think might be interesting if I wanted to make the shift over to a different side of administration, if I want to get out of higher ed. I think that would serve me well.” She has also discussed a master's in curriculum development if she wanted to stay in education but switch over to the K-12 system. Roberta (R. Daleson, personal communication, February 25, 2020) similarly has thought of earning additional certifications in human resources in order to make herself more marketable, “right now I've been looking at human resources certifications or project management certifications to make myself more mobile across industry.” Darlene had a unique stance on additional training and degrees. She talked about how her training and education comes from her involvement in the professional organizations and boards that she serves on. So, while she does not identify specific areas of growth and adamantly speaks about not wanting or needing more degrees, she does see her professional growth through her affiliations:

My formalized education comes from my involvement with professional associations.

My attendance at professional meetings, my attendance on different committees and boards that I serve on. I serve in the community, on boards that informs my work here. So that I'm not going to earn any more degrees, I don't need any more degrees as Kanye West would say those degrees I've earned enough. I don't need any more formal education. I got to get to that bookshelf that has a lot of books that I've purchased over

the years that I haven't even cracked open. (D. Dennis, personal communication, March 5, 2020)

Each woman had a different view on what areas they needed to grow in as well as unique ways in which to achieve that growth. The realization that they have not fully arrived yet in their skillset and their plans to remedy those deficits will aid in their desired progression.

Achievement. Only one of the participants had achievement as their highest scoring aspiration, Claire Lee. This means that for most of the women the desire for recognition and even financial gains is not the main driving factor in their career aspirations. Some of the women, like Stacie, reflected that if they had taken this toward the beginning of their career journey, perhaps achievement would be the higher. For Claire, this makes sense as she has recently transitioned from the world of being a faculty member to now an administrator. As a faculty member, recognition for research and awards for teaching are generally very motivating and important to ensure tenure. However, this aspiration could begin to lower as she becomes further along in her journey as an administrator. One of the ways that achievement can also manifest itself is through competition. When Claire was asked if she felt competitive in her role or how competition has manifested itself in her career journey, she really did not feel like it had, especially with this new role. In fact, it was quite the opposite for Claire, where she tries to foster collaboration and teamwork:

How can I try to make my office a place where people build each other up and work together, we can do more than each one of us can do alone. And that's not what it was before. It was very competitive. Everybody works in their own silo kind of place. And I really try to make us a team where everybody knows what everybody is doing so that everybody can jump in and help everybody win when it's needed And, you know,

everybody gets credit for what they do. And I really try to foster that. In terms of competition for the next role, I mean, the next role is honestly the dean, which I don't see opening up any time soon. I also, you know, I have one year of administrative experience. I'm not there yet. But maybe one day. (C. Lee, personal communication, February 20, 2020)

Claire even made sure she was still able to teach not only because she loves it, but because it made her more relatable to the faculty she works with; “I'm not a high-powered person in this ivory tower corner office. You know, I'm right. I'm right there with you. It's really important to me.” Another portion of the achievement aspiration is becoming a master of the work that one does. Claire, since she is so new to her role, did not feel like a master of her work, but she talked about wanting to get there eventually and the steps she would take to do so:

I would love to have a mentor in student affairs, so I would love that and to get some real feedback. That would be really helpful. I would love exposure on how other colleges do these things because again, all I know is what I've done, and I was kind of thrown into this without a map and without any sort of guidebook book. And we just kind of did the things we need to do because we needed to do them. But we have no idea how these things are supposed to be done. Like in a way is good. But in a way, is bad also. (C. Lee, personal communication, February 20, 2020)

Current path: Career journey. Each participant had a unique career journey and there is not one thread that ties them all together other than having their terminal degrees. There was not one position or type of position, experience in graduate school or early on in their career journey that shows it leads to a forward movement in their career progression. However, most of the participants had multiple positions within one institution meaning they were either appointed

to the positions or interviewed as an internal candidate. Additionally, a few women also served in interim roles as well. When asked to reflect on their career journey, several women spoke about feelings of guilt or feeling a lack of loyalty that impeded them from applying for new opportunities and potentially moving forward. Barbara spoke about how she came across an article that addressed the difference between men and women in their job search behavior. After reading that article, Barbara applies to more aspirational type jobs than she did previously:

I used to only apply if I could check every box on a job description. And then I read an article, how women look for jobs, that they can check every box on a job description and that men don't. And I'm like, well, screw 'em and stop doing that then. And so, then I just started applying for jobs more like men would. And so, it is a very it's a very conscious decision and it is still slightly uncomfortable And I find that I have to write and then reread my cover letter very carefully to make sure that I'm not selling myself short. (B. Jackson, personal communication, February 6, 2020)

While Barbara has changed her approach to her job search process in the past as she used to only apply for jobs that she felt like she was fully prepared for she could have potentially impeded her progress. Now she applies for positions even if she does not meet all of the qualifications. For some women, there is a sense of guilt when deciding to leave their current position, due to loyalty or this notion that one must stay in their job for a certain number of years before moving on. Stacie (S. Patterson, personal communication, March 3, 2020) talked about her process when deciding to apply for her current job, "I almost didn't apply for the job that I'm in now because I felt bad about leaving the nonprofit in eighteen months. Higher ed beats into your head that you have to be somewhere so many years and it's just the time." Roberta (R. Daleson, personal communication, February 25, 2020) also spoke about this notion of required time, but more

along the lines of learning the position as opposed to a feeling of guilt, “I feel like I need to give two years in order to be fully vested in that position. You spend the first-year learning, the second you're doing on the third year making the change. Making changes or whatever.” Roberta also however spoke about this notion of guilt, but for her it had more to do with how her vacating a position would impact those that she works with, “who am I letting down? What's the impact going to be if I leave? What am I, you know, how am I going to harm the people around me?” Roberta while reflecting on this talked about how her husband does not go through the same process when he job searches:

That's not a part of the conversation for my husband. He doesn't think about the harm that might come. He thinks about what he's going to be able to get out of the position and what he deserves to get the position, rather than being concerned with what he leaves behind. (R. Daleson, personal communication, February 25, 2020)

She acknowledged that this could have had some negative impact on her career journey as it could have kept her from seeking out new opportunities. Sometimes though, these women have realized they have to take a leap of faith in their career journey and trust their instincts. For Barbara that meant not taking a position that meant she would have had to move and leave behind a budding romance that turned into her husband. This also meant she had to trust that her current institution truly did have the desire to keep her as her supervisor said. Barbara (B. Jackson, personal communication, February 6, 2020) spoke of how her institution was able to keep her by, “being able offer me like a promotional opportunity. I still haven't hit the pay point that I would have liked.” Claire similarly had to decide on a leap of faith. Her current job is one in which she was not sure if she wanted or if she was ready to take with her experience being purely on the side of academia:

I realized I had two choices I could either Take this leap, do the best I can with a disaster. It couldn't really get any worse. And you know do the best I could or stay as faculty, watch the office collapse completely because she was stepping down, whether someone came into the role or not and know that I could have done something about it and chose not to. And I just decided I couldn't live with that. So, I jumped. (C. Lee, personal communication, February 20, 2020)

It is important to recognize that each participants' journey is unique to who they are as well as their career aspirations and how they have shifted over time.

Internal candidacy. Internal candidacy looked slightly different for each of the participants. Some of the women had to apply for either an internal process or as part of a national search. Others did not have to apply for their promotions due to being appointed, tapped or a reorganization occurred. Additionally, some women held interim positions in addition to being an internal candidate. There can be benefits to being an internal candidate, such as the community knowing the work that these women had done in the past in addition to their overall strengths. Anita (A. Boston, personal communication, February 20, 2020), while she has not been an internal candidate, talked about being a part of a search process where the internal candidate was chosen over her, "And, you know, lots of times people go with the internal candidate because you know better the devil you know kind of thing." This is something that these women who were internal candidates experienced as well.

Traditional internal candidate. Darlene's entire professional career has been at one institution, so she has been an internal candidate for virtually every position that required an interview except for her current position and her first position. While she has had mainly

successful internal searches, she did apply for three positions in which she was not successful.

Darlene reflected on her career journey as an internal candidate:

I finished actually that summer of 1998, I finished my master's degree and was interviewed and promoted to a hall director at Marshall Hall. And then the next year interviewed, I was promoted to complex director then. And I served in that role at Parker Hall for a year and interviewed for the area coordinator position, which, of course, we don't have any more. (D. Dennis, personal communication, March 5, 2020)

She then talked about her continued upward progression within the housing department. She talked about how there were some shifts in departmental and institutional priorities and she was asked to take on new responsibilities which led to a new role, but then Darlene interviewed for an associate director position in housing and then experienced the three unsuccessful interviews for other positions at the institution. The other women who were internal candidates had much fewer positions and interview processes than Darlene had. Ruth, however, much like Darlene had a few failed internal searches as she has tried to move forward in her career progression:

There have been a couple of roles at my institution, that I have applied to. They were like assistant dean roles but in academic units. And so, it's a lot of that kind of helping students navigate, and you know, but then also the academic component as well. So, I was a finalist for four, two of them, but I didn't get them. (R. Jensen, personal communication, February 14, 2020)

Even though Ruth was a finalist for half of them, she unfortunately was not a successful candidate. Others such as Kathy, Penelope, Liza, and Hannah all had successful internal searches. Hannah (H. Smith, personal communication, February 24, 2020) applied for the associate director position more at the prodding of her colleagues than her own volition, “And

then the associate director left and more than a handful of people were like, you've got to apply for the associate director position like you're ready, you can do this. So that's what I did.” Kathy (K. Jones, personal communication, February 11, 2020) has only had to apply for one internal position in her career journey thus far, “The only position that I had to apply for was that first assistant director to oversee occupancy, assistant director for administrative services. Everything else was either a promotion or tapping.” Liza had two internal searches going on at the same time as she was serving in an interim director position:

I was in two searches that then led up to my being at the academic success center. And so the new executive director sat me down and said, I understand, you know, everyone who left, like the previous executive director and the former director were like, Liza is awesome. And you know what, you can do an internal appointment. That would be great. Not that I was expecting that, but he said, I've heard great things about you, but I want you to understand that we're gonna do a national search and I encourage you to apply. But I want you to know now that my hope is that we will be bringing someone from outside of the institution. And so then when the job actually posted and I had prepared my materials and I was going in to actually apply for the director, I just happened to see that the director of the academic success center had also posted. (L. Knoppe, personal communication, February 11, 2020)

Due to the former director letting Liza know that they were going to conduct a national search, this caused her to explore potential other opportunities as she mentioned. Liza was in a unique position where she was serving in an interim role and in applied to two internal positions.

Penelope also had a unique experience when she switched from student affairs to more of an academic affairs role at the same institution:

And so when I shifted from res life to the course and program manager position, I was very much switching from student affairs to academic affairs, so I didn't feel like an internal candidate. I didn't really know the people that were interviewing me during that time. (P. Perez, personal communication, February 7, 2020)

This goes back to the point that Anita made during her interview. While Penelope was an internal candidate and some of the folks on the search committee may have been familiar with her work in housing, more than likely they did not know much about her and her work. This meant that even though Penelope was an internal candidate, she felt more like an external who had to prove herself to her colleagues.

Appointment or restructuring. While some women had to go through an interview process, many were appointed to their positions due to their reputation they had created from their hard work, professional achievements, and relationships across their campuses. For some of the women, these promotion opportunities were due to a restructuring in their department, a vacancy at their institution, or for some their supervisors were able to create positions in order to keep them at their institutions. Birdie experienced her promotion due to a restructuring in her department and the senior level administrator knowing who they wanted in those roles, and she happened to be one of those individuals:

And then the associate director position. Yes and no. So there was no interviewing for the position with the restructuring. The senior vice president for academic and student affairs decided she knew what staff she wanted and was able to make hiring decisions or promotions based on the restructuring and based on job responsibilities and knowledge. And so she just went ahead and did those switches. We were asked if we were interested in the positions we were being promoted for, but it really was. Congratulations. This is

what's happening next for you. (B. Chandlerson, personal communication, February 25, 2020)

Stacie (S. Patterson, personal communication, March 3, 2020) had a similar experience with restructuring, “They just created them, for me and another girl. She was the director of student activities. Actually, they, when that academic VP retired, they did a lot of restructuring.” Stacie talked about how the new VP learned about her work with greek life in addition to her assistantship in graduate schools and they ended up giving her those responsibilities in the restructuring, “my area kind of lumped in all the leadership service student activities and so they kind of restructured and as moving me over to student life, that's when they made the promotion.” With successful restructuring, there has to be a level of knowledge of the individuals’ experiences, strengths, and passions. Birdie talked about those relationships and how that has led to her never really being a true internal candidate, even though there has been no restructuring. Those relationships have also led to Birdie (B. Chandlerson, personal communication, February 25, 2020) being asked at times to apply for a position, but not necessarily going through a fully interview process, “So not an internal candidate. I've never really been an internal candidate for, say, for any position, but I have been fortunate enough to know people and have been called sometimes to just apply and see what happens.” Barbara (B. Jackson, personal communication, February 6, 2020) reflected on her experience with her job search in general and noted that it has been difficult for her to get jobs unless individuals know her, which happens in internal processes, “But once folks know me like I've been promoted once they know me. Which is just kind of interesting.” Barbara talked about how she was not sure if there was something insufficient with her application materials, but not necessarily the work she produced since she is receiving promotions once individuals are aware of her work and the

relationships she has built. Ruth also spoke of the importance of building relationships and how those allowed her to be successful in gaining promotions during her career journey:

I had built relationships here with people that I believe respected me. And I think that served me well. I was kind of a known entity. You know, there might you know, maybe there's someone who looks a little shinier, if you will, or more exceptional, but they're not necessarily a known entity. Whereas I had a proven track record at the same time. (R. Jensen, personal communication, February 14, 2020)

Those relationships helped Ruth when she was an internal candidate several times. Those relationships can also lead to being appointed to positions as well. Hannah talked about how she was actively job searching, but her supervisor did not want to lose her, so they created a position for her which was a step up:

The director at the time was like, 'we really don't want to lose you. What if we create an assistant director job that you can move in to? I don't want to lose you here.' So I ended up being the assistant director of judicial and residential programs. So I ended up doing that for about two or three years. (H. Smith, personal communication, February 24, 2020)

Hannah processed her upward mobility at that institution and gave her reputation and the relationships she had built credit for that movement, "And so, in some ways, yes, positions were even created for me to stay. And then opportunities for advancement opened up. And I was successful in achieving those things." While Claire and Anita did not have positions created for them, they were essentially appointed to their current positions. Even though Claire (C. Lee, personal communication, February 20, 2020) was hesitant about the position, she remembers a new supervisor and her interaction with him, "And he basically said, 'I want you for this.'"

Anita (A. Boston, personal communication, February 20, 2020) had a similar process when she moved from a coordinator position to her current director title, “One of our former deans, I mean, it was essentially bestowed upon me. So, I really didn't interview for that, that succession.” Joanne has also been tapped for positions and truly has not interviewed for a job since she graduated with her master's degree, but she struggles with the idea of is she actually the best candidate, or simply a convenient one:

So, I've struggled a little bit with that to go am I really the most qualified person for the job or am I just the one that, you know when I'm convenient? So I especially here as well, because I came in internally and I didn't really go through an interview process to be hired for this specialist position. I don't even know if my supervisor talked to the students and said, hey, do we like her or not? I assume that he did, but I don't know. So I struggled a little bit with that. Did I really get it because I was qualified, or I was the most convenient person? So that was kind of an interesting for me to kind of figure out for myself. What does that mean? Like, I haven't really had to interview for a job in a long time. (J. Dyers, personal communication, February 18, 2020)

For Joanne, this could mean if she decides to progress, regardless if it is at her current institution or not, she may have some internal barriers that may keep her from feeling successful in her job search and progression. Joanne (J. Dyers, personal communication, February 18, 2020) did talk about feeling competent in her job and work, but that the lack of being scrutinized against a peer in quite some time is slightly unnerving, “I feel like I'm competent and capable. But it's that I haven't in the past 18 years been really compared against anybody else that I know in that way.”

Interim positions. Five of the participants in the study served in interim roles as well which is a unique internal process. Some of these women ended up serving in this role officially,

while others did not. Ruth (R. Jensen, personal communication, February 14, 2020) talked about her experience serving as an interim director, “So my initial plan, our director of res ed had left and so on my resume, you'll see that I was interim for about six months. And so, during that period, I applied for the director position.” However, there was another internal position vacant at the same time as discussed earlier, which she applied for and chose to take that position as it was more of a challenge for her and she felt like she had more influence in that area. Darlene served in her current role as an interim for an extended period of time before being appointed into her position by the president of the university after a failed national search in which she did not apply:

And then I never really interviewed for this job, but I was serving as interim director for almost two years and we had a search. I was a you know; I was a part of searching for a new director here. And what I had to do for this position was because I'm not a clinician what I had to do was put together sort of a rationale. (D. Dennis, personal communication, March 5, 2020)

Darlene's position is unique as she is the director of a counseling center at an institution and does not have a clinical counseling license. Therefore, she had to as she said create a rationale for her to be the director. Due to her strong relationship with the president though, there was no question for him, and he immediately signed her appointment contract. Darlene ((D. Dennis, personal communication, March 5, 2020).) talked about submitting her materials to the outgoing vice president to give to the president, “he said, is this about Darlene? And he signed off on it and pushed the paperwork and went on to the next topic, because, of course, I knew the president and he knew me and trusted me and respected me.” Joanne also sat in an interim role and was eventually appointed to the position as well:

I did not have to go through an interview process. And so it was understood that if he moved up, if they didn't open it up that it was going to be me. And I did it interimly. And then they well they decided that they would just appoint me to that position. (J. Dyers, personal communication, February 18, 2020)

While Joanne's institution decided not to do a national search for the position, she was filling in an interim role, Jessica's institution decided to do a national search:

There wasn't really a search for this one [current position]. The position was vacated at an awkward time of the year and I walked to my boss's office and asked him if I could do it. And so I was interim for about nine months, nine, 10 months. And then there was a national search for this position. I was just, I was the candidate who got the job. (J. James, personal communication, March 4, 2020)

While Jessica asked for her interim role, the other women did not. Ruth (R. Jensen, personal communication, February 14, 2020) was also tapped to serve in an interim capacity twice, "I was tapped for the interim director of res life and the interim assistant director of res life." For Liza, the assistant director role was one in which she served beyond her interim capacity. Through relationships and their hard work, these women were chosen to temporarily fill a vacant position and then were chosen to do maintain their leadership in the position. If these women had not been asked to serve in the interim roles, their careers would not have progressed in the fashion in which they did.

Affiliation. Relationships are important to thrive as humans. As learned through the women's experiences serving as internal candidates, relationships can have a strong impact on the career progression for these women. Not only does this include relationships with supervisors

and individuals that they work with on a daily basis, this includes relationship to the overarching field in which these women work as well.

The desire to be affiliated to the greater profession of student affairs through involvement in associations evolves as these women progress in their careers. Birdie (B. Chandlerson, personal communication, February 25, 2020) spoke about the importance of her affiliation to the field, “Any professional organization that you get involved in can open doors for you and introduce you to colleagues.” However, instead of being affiliated with multiple associations and several leadership opportunities, most of the women have generally chosen one organization to stay involved with and limit their leadership opportunities as well. As the women have progressed in their careers, their time has become more limited, leading to having to choose wisely what their affiliations look like. Darlene is heavily involved in the regional chapter of the NASPA and has been for several years. Her affiliation to the field is seen through that involvement and the mentorships and friendships that she has developed from that affiliation throughout the years and mentioned a dozen individuals by name that she has developed a relationship with across the field. Several other women spoke about their affiliation to the field through their memberships in professional associations as well, even if those need to be reestablished. Liza is one of the women who talked about the need to re-establish her connections:

So right now, I'm looking to reestablish my state and regional connections because again, when things come up like I am that person that I will call so and so at the other school and be like, hey, can we chat about this? I heard like you already experiencing a similar issue or a new initiative that you're rolling out. And so right now, I'm just trying to reestablish those relationships once I feel locally that I'm better established again I

typically go to NASPA that's, my conference of choice. And I like a lot of those connections. (L. Knoppe, personal communication, February 11, 2020)

Norma (N. Lawson, personal communication, February 19, 2020) due to switching from academic affairs, also sees the importance of an affiliation to the field, but currently feels as if she does not have a connection due to that switch, "I definitely don't have a reputation in my current field. So, I'm sort of rebuilding almost as if I were back in graduate school, like what my professional network looks like." Stacie (S. Patterson, personal communication, March 3, 2020) also talked about the desire to reconnect as her previous institution did not necessarily have the funds to support much affiliation with professional associations, but now that she is at a larger institution, she has the support and funds to do so, "And I want to do more of it. I think I think that varies by institution, because I couldn't I didn't have the resources to go to all these conferences at my previous institution. And so now I do and can and want to make sure that I stay involved." However, Stacie also brought up a valid point about how affiliation can shift based on her responsibilities at work, "And I think it's a balance with our field, too, because, you know, we have a lot on our plates and we want to take on leadership and volunteer roles and our affiliations." Ruth also talked about her preference for NASPA, much like Darlene and Liza, but talks about how she was more active as a younger professional and now enjoys being able to attend sessions and not worry about the behind the scenes responsibilities of leadership roles:

I mean, I've presented at NASPA and so it's not necessarily leadership role, but kind of offering something to the involvement. I mean, I go to their conferences, so I'm connected that way. But I think probably as a younger person was more kind of active than I am now and now I just like going and not having a lot of responsibility and being able to go to sessions and not be stressed about like, oh no, the projector is not working

or, you know, whatever the issue of the day happens to be. I'm like, oh, I just get to choose sessions that interest me. That's kind of nice and less stressful. (R. Jenson, personal communication, February 14, 2020)

Ruth also mentioned that she has developed long lasting relationships from her affiliation to NASPA and other organizations she has been involved with. Hannah spoke about her experience sitting on committees for various organizations and how that has helped keep her connected to other colleagues in the field:

I found that those individual committees that I sit on is what has been the bridge for me and being able to have that connection with folks, which is also the reason why regionally I am heavily connected. People know who I am. I know who they are. They know to reach out to me, which is the reason why recently I decided to do more stuff nationally than just regionally. Like how do I get to know more colleagues on a more national level for benchmarking and best practices and things? (H. Smith, personal communication, February 24, 2020)

Hannah went on to talk about the importance of those connections and relationships for her and her institution:

Building those relationships outside your individual, you know, region or even just your institution, I think are important because there are those questions that are asked of like, well, what is everybody else doing? Well, then it gets hard. If you don't have people to shoulder, tap right away and say, what are you doing for this or how are you approaching these things? So, I think there there's a value besides just having people that understand what you're going through. There's a value in building relationships with colleagues and

partners across the field and across institutions in order to best inform your practices as well. (H. Smith, personal communication, February 24, 2020)

Much like Hannah, Birdie also talked about the importance of developing those relationships and essentially a strong network of knowledge for her to be able to pull from when necessary:

I realize that it's important to have colleagues and knowledge base from different areas even if you've never worked there. So, I like to get involved and I'd like to know people and reach out and see where folks are. So, I know who my rolodex of people is that I can call and be like, hey, I know that you're working in this job function area. Can I run something by you? (B. Chandlerson, personal communication, February 25, 2020)

While several women are connected to the field, several currently do not feel connected due to perhaps not finding their niche within the different associations or perhaps their institution is unable to support them due to finances or simply not understanding the importance of such affiliation. Joanne and Roberta both touched on the financial aspect of being affiliated with certain professional organizations. Joanne talked about the differences between her experience with state conferences and involvement as opposed to national and the financial implications of that choice:

I feel like state conferences, they're not great. I feel like they're not meant for me. More and more, they're focused toward new professionals, which is okay. But that means the only place I can get information is a really expensive national conference, not even really regional. So that's kind of my struggle to go. I would like to do other things, but there's just not where we are currently. (J. Dyers, personal communication, February 18, 2020)

Joanne has the desire to be connected but is not sure how to make that happen without institutional support. Much like Joanne, Roberta discussed a lack of support with her current

institution as well. However, for her, it is both financial and supervisory support. Therefore, Roberta (R. Daleson, personal communication, February 25, 2020) has found a way she can be involved that does not have any financial obligation and does not affect her day to day work either, "I joined the editorial board, I'm a program reviewer because I needed to like to do something, and that's pretty much where I'm at with what I'm allowed to do." Anita also does not feel like she has the support of her current senior leadership to be involved with the field like she used to be:

When I was in [a state organization] and I was doing that stuff, I definitely felt like I had a stronger connection with people in the field outside of my school and the state even. And I definitely don't feel like I have that as much. I'd really like to get into a leadership position again, but to go to my super to the dean and be like, I need you to support me financially so I can go to these conferences and be on this leadership team...It looks great for her. It looks great for our college. But I don't know if our college values me and my position enough to understand the benefit of that and the value of that like. So, I think that that's the challenge with that. (A. Boston, personal communication, February 20, 2020)

Anita's struggles with her supervisor and senior level leadership have made it virtually impossible for her to reestablish her rapport in the field and to develop new relationships with colleagues across the nation. Penelope has had a very different experience in trying to become connected with the field. When she switched her master's program from student affairs to a counseling program, there was no emphasis for her to attend any sort of student affairs conference or belong to any professional associations. Therefore, her connection to the field happened when she was an entry level professional and attended a few state housing type

conferences. Unfortunately, though, she had a terrible experience with ACPA through an award that she had won, which has left her hesitant to become involved again, even though she does want to:

I wish it was more important. I have been a part of ACPA. So I think that I would I would like to be more affiliated and more involved, but I'm not right now. But that's not really a thing here, which is. Yeah. So yeah, I just it hasn't been an emphasis at my current institution, and I've been here for ten years now. So, I think that that's probably a big part of it. (P. Perez, personal communication, February 7, 2020)

Additionally, for Penelope, involvement in professional associations is not heavily prevalent so the support is not there for her to even begin to journey back down that path. The importance of affiliation to the field of student affairs varies for each participant, but those that feel their affiliation is strong are able to articulate the importance of that affiliation to their work and their career. However, if these women do not have the support from their supervisors or institutions to create, continue, or evolve these relationships, that can have a negative effect on their career progression.

At work. Affiliation to those that these women work with on a daily basis is more likely to happen and potentially be even more impactful than their affiliation to the field of student affairs. These women view their affiliation at work through two different lenses. For some, their relationships in the workplace are extremely important, personal, even fundamental for some while others view their relationships to their coworkers as a necessity to get the job done and more business oriented than personal.

Most of the women recognized that they would have varying levels of closeness with those that they worked with. However, for Hannah, it is very important that she is connected to every person she works with:

Very. As I mentioned, being an individualistic, I believe that I need to have a personal connection with every single person in my department. And I think that maybe that's part of the reason why I don't look to go up either, because it's to get more difficult to have that kind of thing. But being able to have a personal connection with every person you work with ensures that you have a pulse on every single thing that's taking place. (H. Smith, personal communication, February 24, 2020)

For Anita, the relationships that she builds at work are very important to her, but unfortunately, working at a larger institution on top of being an office of one plus having a supervisor that is not very involved or supportive, she does not feel like she has strong connections:

For me, it's essential. And that's been the piece that's been hard here to have a few good friends. And honestly, more recently, I have I was walking out of a career fair on Friday. And I was thinking like there are really a lot of great ...a lot of people I do not like in this building, but there are a lot of people I just think very highly of. And so, I think that is a big piece of it. I mean, I think that I'm an extrovert and I need relationships and I need people and I need to have those connections with people. (A. Boston, personal communication, February 20, 2020)

Darlene (D. Dennis, personal communication, March 5, 2020), much like Anita is an extrovert who appreciates her relationships within the workplace; for her it's, "Very important. I think you'll see that by you know, when I walk in, I usually go down the hallway, speak to everybody." Darlene also mentioned how the value that she and her coworkers have for each

other is critical. Stacie (S. Patterson, personal communication, March 3, 2020) also talked about the importance of having strong relationships to the people that she works with in order to make all of their jobs much better, “Oh, very important. If I didn't like the people that I saw every day. I don't think I'd enjoy this work as much.” Much like Stacie, Barbara (B. Jackson, personal communication, February 6, 2020) also touched on the enjoyable side of having personal relationships within the workplace, “[Its] just more fun, right? Like, it's just more fun to work with people who you know and you care about and you've built rapport with. Barbara talked about how not only it makes the work more fun, but there is some work benefit to it as well:

From a theoretical perspective, I recognize the need for task and maintenance and things that you do in groups. And I recognize how there's some, you know. Reciprocity in how you model and share like and be vulnerable in what you bring personally and what you ask others to bring personally. (B. Jackson, personal communication, February 6, 2020)

By bringing the human element to not only her work but her workplace Barbara also talked about her and her coworker's ability to work as an effective team and better serve the students:

You can't be a robot. Like you need to be human in this work because it's so dynamic and non-formulative. And yeah. And I think we also I think in order to best support students, you have to work as a team because no one person is going to be able to do it. Where can you go, what they like to know everything, so you have to rely on one another and trust one another. And you need report to build that trust. (B. Jackson, personal communication, February 6, 2020)

The work that these women do is not easy, so it is essential that they trust their coworkers. Trust allows people to be vulnerable and their authentic selves. Norma spoke about the importance of authenticity with her relationships at work:

I think it's really important to have people that you feel like you can be authentic with and who won't take advantage of that authenticity. I finally feel like I've got people that I can just like go out to lunch with and just like talk about stuff with. (N. Lawson, personal communication, February 19, 2010)

Penelope also spoke to the idea of authenticity at work and how the ability to do that is created through her relationships. For her, authenticity looks like eating her breakfast at a table with her team and communing over difficult decisions they might have to make:

I feel like relationships are really important part of my life in and outside of work. And so I don't think that I would have the same experience at work that I do if I couldn't come in and eat my oatmeal at the table, you know, with other people and have the conversations about what's going on. It's just so much more collaborative to be able to have those conversations and it makes making decisions together easier. And it just makes things more bearable. Yeah, I'm very thankful for the relationships that I have at work. (P. Perez, personal communication, February 7, 2020)

Kathy, much like Barbara, talked about how important it is to her, but she also understands that everyone has different relationships desires and thresholds at work:

I like to have the humanistic element to that, but there are people want to be all in or just at least cordial enough that, you know, I understand that, you know, work is work and I'm 9am to 5pm and I'm going home like, that's okay, but I need to have enough of a relationship. And I'm understanding that those are their expectations and what my expectations are. (K. Jones, personal communication, February 11, 2020)

Liza (L. Knoppe, personal communication, February 11, 2020) also discussed how those relationships can look different from person to person but having a few individuals that are close

to her personally is essential for her success in the workplace, “[Its] very important for me. I think what those relationships look like can vary. You know, I think it's important to me at least have some colleagues who I'm closer with than others, especially within your peer group.”

Much like Kathy, Birdie (B. Chandlerson, personal communication, February 25, 2020) also talked about that her relationships look different with different people at work, “I've had some really great colleagues who have become friends who are it's really important that we have a connection. But I also am truthful on that we're all not going to be a family where we sell candidates on family.” When she is recruiting and hiring new staff members, she makes sure that they are aware of the spectrum of relationships that exist within her department and institution.

Birdie also spoke about her relationships within the workplace also from a business lens as well:

And so, I think it's important to just be professional. And so, for me, I've always just wanted to be a professional with colleagues and just show that I'm an adult as much as I may not like you or I may not like your work ethic. I will work with you. But don't hinder my progression or my process. And I won't hinder you; I'll help you rise. But don't bring me down if you're not doing what you need to do. (B. Chandlerson, personal communication, February 25, 2020)

For her, it is more important for her and her coworkers to have respect for each other than necessarily like each other and want to develop a relationship outside of work.

The participants also spoke about the importance of their relationships with the individuals that they supervise, but that those relationships look different most of the time than their relationships with colleagues and peers. There is an importance to making the work environment enjoyable and encourage appropriate relationships as a supervisor. For Kathy, this is a way for her to help ensure people stay in her department:

Like, there's things that you can bring back the human elements to work to have this connections and just natural conversation. They don't like work to be just work like I have to have fun. But I was like, get me out here. And I know other people feel that way, too. Like, you have to have that humor fun, otherwise people don't stay. (K. Jones, personal communication, February 11, 2020)

Jessica also spoke about creating a fun environment at her work and how that is important because as individuals that work more in the operations side of housing, they are often declining students' requests:

I think that we have fun at work. Like so we celebrate yelling day, right? We'll go to lunch you know, here and there, celebrate this, that and the other. But we don't necessarily hang out outside of work like we have very individual lives. (J. James, personal communication, March 4, 2020)

However, for Jessica the relationship is slightly different with one of her direct reports because of her ability to be more autonomous in her work and not requiring traditional supervision. She talked about how her and one of the women she supervises is also a mom and her child is in the same school district as her child. She treats her more as a colleague than a supervisee. Both Liza and Claire talk about the need to not necessarily create a fun environment at work but one in which their supervisees feel comfortable sharing information with them as a supervisor. For Liza, she outlines expectations about sharing information about work and encourages her team to share what they are comfortable with, with her:

I think for the people I supervise that it's about trust and their ability to let me know again just where they're at. So, if they choose to want to share personal things, then I do want to

hear about that. But one of the things I outline, and expectations is. It's up to you how much you share with me. (L. Knoppe, personal communication, February 11, 2020)

Claire, who is new in her role as a supervisor also creates an environment that encourages her staff to develop a relationship with her in whatever way they are comfortable. However, she is still learning how to facilitate that relationship without crossing any type of boundary:

The answer is yes, but it's also changing because I've never been in a supervisory role before. But I'm still learning to navigate the. I want to be friendly and I want one, but I can't be friends because I'm your supervisor. I've not been in that role before. So that's something I'm still trying to figure out. And I made a comfortable work environment. I know that. My faculty...my staff are comfortable coming to me with personal issues or professional issues or, you know, I've made it very clear that if you make a mistake, you're human and tell me about it but we can fix it together. I don't want anybody hiding anything. (C. Lee, personal communication, February 20, 2020)

By encouraging a relationship with her supervisees, Claire has found it easier to hold them accountable and work through any potential issues she may have. Roberta (R. Daleson, personal communication, February 25, 2020), who supervises two very different women also spoke about the importance of those issues, but much like Claire and Liza she tailors her relationship to the individual, "And my goals for the relationships that I have with each of them are different based on what they're interested in and then what is really appropriate for the two of us to have."

Much like the women who are supervisors spoke about ensuring boundaries with their supervisees, some of the women set those types of boundaries up with their colleagues as well. This does not mean they do not see the importance of relationships with colleagues, but the level of depth and type of relationship is not the same as those who desire a more personal relationship

with colleagues. For many, these relationships are important to the work that they need to complete, not necessarily to feel fulfilled in the work that they do. Hannah reflected on learning about the importance of building relationships at work when she was a resident assistant and how that message has stayed with her during her professional journey:

As they said, your success as a professional and as a person will always rely on three things relationship, relationship, relationship skills. And I was like, and it's true, right? Like the relationships that we build with people and the relationships that we have with people can completely dictate your success as a leader. The fact that I built individual relationships, I can say something that somebody doesn't like, but they don't take offense to it and they will tell me because of the leader, you are crossing the relationship we have. I trust what you're doing when I have not built that relationship. (H. Smith, personal communication, February 24, 2020)

For Ruth, a positive relationship does not necessarily equate itself to friendship. For her, it is important to have respect and to be able to provide feedback:

So, I think it it's important. For me, when I think about the people that I work most closely with, it's really Helpful, I think, to have positive working relationship that doesn't necessarily mean you're best friends. But like I can be open and honest with you. I can give you direct feedback. You can do the same with me. Those are important. And I think by evolution or default, I don't know which I have grown to like as well the many people that I work most closely with. It doesn't always happen, and it doesn't have to happen.

(R. Jensen, personal communication, February 14, 2020)

Similarly, Roberta spoke about how it is easier to work with individuals if there is a mutual level of enjoyment, especially as it allows her to be authentic as discussed earlier. However, being

liked by her colleagues is not necessarily something that she looks for anymore as the work that they complete is the important aspect:

In order for me to feel like I can be, be myself in the workplace, it's very important. I don't know if people need to like me. Because I know not everybody is going to like me, but I need to know that I can have valued conversations and strong relationships. If they like me, it makes it easier. But it's not necessarily the thing that I look for anymore. (R. Daleson, personal communication, February 25, 2020)

Ruth also talked about how while sometimes she ends up developing closer relationships with colleagues that she finds herself liking, but she also recognized there are some colleagues that she does not necessarily care for, but those relationships are equally as important. All of the relationships affect the end goal of serving students and getting the work done:

I have other relationships that don't really feed me, you know. But they're still necessary and so kind of recognizing, you know. I can be cordial and respectful and do my part, but I'm not going to be your buddy. So I think it's just recognizing that, you know, it's almost like it's probably a funny comparison But in your family, you have people that you love and admire, hopefully. And then there's the weird uncle and the, you know, wild cousin and whatever those things may be, they're still your family. So for your family's sake, you show up and, you know, unless it's completely toxic, you know, kind of do your best to, you know, and I feel like I have relationships like that in work, like I have my core group that I'm really close with. And I like and respect immensely. I have other colleagues that. Maybe challenge me in a lot of ways. (R. Jensen, personal communication, February 14, 2020)

Ruth's analogy of an essentially dysfunctional family sums up the type of relationships these women have with their colleagues and supervisees in the workplace. For some, they have a strong emotional response in addition to deep and meaningful relationships with their colleagues. Others hold their colleagues at an arms distance and have the utmost respect for them and even find working with them enjoyable but are not necessarily going to seek them out outside of work. Of course, there are some individuals that these women do not connect with, but they work through those issues and toward their common goal at work, and then for others it is about work with no emotional attachment regardless of how they feel about the people themselves. Regardless, for most of these women how they are able to form relationships within the workplace will dictate their happiness and their desire to stay and even their support network to propel them to progress in their careers.

Conclusion

Chapter Four opened with an introduction to the four essences that were found through the analysis of the fifteen participants' interview transcripts and Career Readiness Scale Revised results. For each essence rich and thick description was provided in order to support the essences and provide connections between their career aspirations and experiences thus far. Due to this study being phenomenological in nature, the provided information provides a greater breadth in the understanding of the lived experiences of the participants as women, middle managers in student affairs, not a generalized exploration into their experiences. Through the four essences, each of the research questions was answered.

Research question one was answered through the second essence that focused on the impact of relationships on their career progression. It was found that relationships with partners, children, and family had a strong impact in how these women understood, have navigated their

progression thus far and will continue to navigate their progression moving forward. Those that do not have any or a few of those relationships navigate their progression differently than those with intimate relationships with partners or have children. The second research question was answered through three separate essences that focused on leadership and relationships. The women spoke in detail about all of the positive things in regard to mentorship, sponsorship and supervision that have been beneficial to their career progression. Additionally, having supportive families and partners also had a positive impact on their career progression. The third and final research question focused on how career aspirations and certain personal and professional factors have affected their career progression. This is the only research question that was supported by each of the four essences. This included both positive experiences and barriers as well. For these women, their career aspirations were affected by personal and professional factors which in turn affected their career progression.

Chapter Five: Discussion

“I don't give a damn 'bout my reputation. You're living in the past it's a new generation. A girl can do what she wants to do and that's what I'm 'gonna do. An' I don't give a damn 'bout my bad reputation.” - Bad Reputation, Joan Jett & the Blackhearts

The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study, which was grounded in feminist theory, was to examine the lived experiences of women identifying, student affairs, middle managers and be able to discern how their aspirations and experiences have affected their career progressions thus far. The foci being on personal and professional factors as well as any barriers these women may have experienced in the field allowed for a deeper understanding of their experiences. This chapter includes a discussion of the findings in each essence that is related back to the current research that is discussed in Chapter Two. The hope is that those findings along with subsequent research in addition to how these findings implicate the field of student affairs will begin to increase the number of women middle managers in student affairs that successful ascend the ladder.

This chapter will focus on the findings that relate directly back to the research questions:

1. How do women identifying, student affairs, middle managers understand and navigate their career progression?
2. What experiences have women identifying, student affairs, middle managers found to be beneficial in their career progression?
3. How do career aspirations, as well as personal and professional factors impact career progression?
 1. Do these hinder or enhance their ability to overcome barriers?

Discussion and Interpretation of Findings

Through this study, it was found that there are four underlying essences that help to explain the lived experiences of these women: (a) Leadership from others to others, (b) Women cannot have it all: The impact of relationships on career, (c) Being a woman in a man's world of academia, and (d) Career progression and thinking forward...or not. Each of these dynamic essences has secondary themes within the main essence that assist to explicate the essence in further detail. These essences in term as discussed in Chapter Four answer each of the research questions. In this chapter, each research question will be answered in detail by the findings found in each essence.

RQ1: Understanding and Navigating Career Progression

This research question was answered by both essences two and three as the women in the current study discussed how their relationships have affected their career decisions as well as how their experience in the gendered system of academia has affected their upward mobility as well. The discussions around each of those areas led me as the researcher to be able to gain a better understanding of how women identifying, middle managers in student affairs are able to use their many identities to understand their career progression and then how those identities can at times hinder or propel them through the non-existent career ladder within higher education, specifically student affairs.

Essence two. Over half of the women in the study had partners and or children and each spoke about the effect that these relationships have had on their careers thus far. For some of the participants, their focus was heavily on their career which led to a lack of family or a negative impact on their family while others have happily placed their family first. Regardless of where the women were at in their lives with their family planning or romantic partnership, most had to

choose between different bias avoidance strategies as discussed in Chapter Two. Some of these techniques include staying single, delaying the decision to have children, deciding to not have children, missing children and family events for work commitments, taking a shortened maternity leave and more (Drago, et al., 2006). These bias avoidance strategies would be how the women navigated their careers while being a mother. For those women that currently did not have children, they also identified the difficulties navigating their career that mothers in the field have and had begun developing potential strategies to mitigate the strain. The women in the current study also spoke of how essentially working in a man's world made navigating their career progression difficult as we see through the unpacking of the third essence.

Essence three. Even though women have made advancements, there is still systemic genderism in higher education that the women in this study spoke of very candidly whether that be from the behavior found in their workplace or simply by the fact that women are not seen in a representative way at senior level administration according to a survey conducted by the American Council on Education (ACE, 2018). Women have to understand their gender and gendered leadership in order to navigate their career progression.

Gendered leadership. Yakaboski and Donaboo (2010) wrote about how women tend to cap out at middle manager positions. Interestingly, women in student affairs also tend to be in positions that are deemed more nurturing that require more feminine skillsets and characteristics, which are also generally middle manager type positions or lower (Collins, 2009). Most of the women in the study discussed having more feminine characteristics such as being empathetic, caring, and nurturing leading them to identify how they understood how their gender impacted their perceived ability to lead. While the women in this study talked about how those more feminine characteristics and skillsets were beneficial to successfully completing their jobs, being

a leader, and hopefully their career progression, they still experienced obstacles as other individuals responded to their more feminine characteristics. This bleeds into the understanding that these women and others have of their gender and its enactment in the workplace.

Not only is it important for the women to reflect upon their experiences as a woman in the workplace of student affairs, but it is also important for them to reflect upon how others also view their gender. Many of the women spoke about the emotional side of leadership, essentially humanizing the work that they do and how that experience is a double edge sword. While the women recognized the benefits of having emotions at work, several also provided experiences where an emotional display caused them to lose credibility with colleagues or created instances of having to prove they belong in their leadership position.

Family planning. The women in this study, the participants either let their career dictate when they had their children, or they focused so much on their careers that they were then unable to have children or decided not to. The literature tells us that male senior level leaders are more than likely to have a partner or spouse that works in a less competitive or time-consuming job than higher education, so not only do they not have to choose between their family and their career, but men also do not have to think about how pregnancy or the birth of a new child would affect their career (LeBlanc, 1993; Williams, 2000a). This is seen in this study as several of the women talked about how their career dictated when they felt like they were able to become pregnant. In fact, several planned that their children would not be born in the Fall because that was the busiest time of year for them. A 2003 study supported that many women in higher education are timing their pregnancies around work (Ward & Wolf-Wendel, 2003).

Family friendly environment. As discussed in Chapter Two a campus climate consists of many different components; components of which these women were acutely aware. The type

of environment around families and children is part of that climate or as several studies have suggested, the culture within the organization as well as the attitudes individuals have within the university toward that culture and each other (Peterson & Spencer, 1990; Hart & Fellabaum, 2008). This climate and culture around motherhood as well as families involving children impacting how these women were able to navigate their careers. There are several factors that these women spoke of such as the ability to have flexible work schedules that allowed for them to work hours that work with their family but also their institution as well as the potential ability to work from home occasionally. This would allow for the women to take care of sick children or be present in their children's lives without having the guilt for being away from work or being forced to take vacation or sick time. The other component of this family friendly environment is the ability to bring children to work occasionally and even university sponsored events without fear of retribution. All of these flexibilities and almost encouraging these women to be mothers and have a career allowed them to successfully navigate their careers thus far or made them feel like they could be more successful if they had that type of support. The lack of this support could cause women to leave positions and even career trajectories to seek out more supportive positions and environments.

RQ2: Experiential Factors and Career Progression

As we begin to see with research question two, the essences are enmeshed within each other as they answer multiple research questions throughout the current study. The second research question focuses on the experiences these women from the current study have found to be beneficial in their career progression leading both essences one and two to answer that research question. Essence one focuses on how the leadership experiences such as mentorship, sponsorship, and supervision these women have experienced have impacted their career

progression while essence two focuses on dives deeper into the impacts that familial and romantic relationships have on a woman's career progression.

Essence one. While each participant had a unique experience with the three types of leadership discussed: sponsorship, mentorship, and supervision each of these types of leadership answers the research questions uniquely. Sponsorship and mentorship for some of the participants were found through the relationship they had with their supervisor and some participants had all three types of leadership relationships and experiences separately. Mentorship is more closely related to the third research question and will be discussed there.

Sponsorship. Sponsorship has the potential to be the most active form of leadership through the grooming process and active support for upward mobility, however very few of the participants truly experienced it. In fact, over half of the participants did not feel as if they were actively being groomed for any sort of upward progression at the time of the study. In a 2016 study looking at female university presidents conducted by Diehl and Dzubinski, all of the women experienced sponsorship from male senior level leaders. It is important to note this connection that the women's experiences supported the literature that women who move upward, especially on the path of a university president, require sponsorship and more often than not from a male leader. This meant that sponsorship may be the most important influential factor regarding career progression but that very few women in this current study experienced that.

Supervision. The third type of relationship that was found to be impactful during this study was that of a strong supervisor. For some women, this was intertwined within mentorship and even sponsorship. By having a supportive supervisor, the women were able to have an additional support in progressing their career if they so desired. For women that had strong relationships with their supervisors their supervisors advocated for them within their institution

which provided additional opportunities to be seen in different avenues and even advance at the institution.

Essence two. While children were also important to the women's career progression, motherhood and the impact of children answered research question three more closely so the focus of answering research question through the second essence will focus on the women's romantic relationships.

Romantic Partners. The research shows that women university presidents experienced a negative impact on their romantic relationships at a higher rate than their male counterparts seen through high rates of divorce (ACE, 2016). However, the women in this study did not experience any long-lasting negative impact that their career created on their romantic relationships. In fact, it was the opposite for several women who indicated that their partners created a desire for them to want to work less and have a healthier balance in their work life balance. This meant that middle manager type positions are the highest that women can go before their careers and upward mobility have an impact on their romantic relationships. In this currently study, financial implications were more important to the women and their families than her career progression. If the male partner was the current breadwinner, then their career took precedence over the woman's. Interestingly, a few women had partners that worked part time or were stay at home parents so there was a gender shift within those relationships. Even though the women in the study have found a process that works for them, it unfortunately perpetuates the masculine patriarchy as women statistically make less than men and has negative impacts on the women's career progression.

RQ3: Personal, Professional Factors and Career Progression and Aspirations

The final research question focuses on how the women's career aspirations and their personal and professional factors impact their career progression. Additionally, the research question also looks at if the women were able to use their aspirations to overcome those barriers. Some components of each essence answer the last research question.

Essence one. While both sponsorship and supervision were also a part of the first essence, mentorship was one of the most widely experience phenomenon and also began to look at the women's evolving aspirations.

Mentorship. The fact that mentorship was the most widely experienced professional factor is promising since many studies have found that senior level leaders have had strong mentorship relationships. Much like sponsorship, the research indicated that women who were university Presidents indicated that their mentorships were imperative in their career progression to their presidency (Campbell, Mueller, & Souza, 2010; Lewis, 2012). The relationships with mentors whether they were formal or informal were very impactful to the women's career progression and either pushing towards aspirations or their mentors supported the women as they altered their aspirations for a myriad of reasons.

Essence two. As discussed earlier, the second essence also answered both research questions one and two and focused on both romantic relationships and the role of being a mother. Children will be the focus of this essence as that relationship answers the third research question since children had the most impact on aspirations and progression.

Children. There were two main experiences that the participants who had children experienced. These women either found themselves striving to find a balance between their children and their careers, or they found themselves placing their children first. The work of sociologist Arlie Russell Hochschild (1989) spoke of the difficulty for women to feel like they

are able to truly have a career and a family due to the constant and tiring balancing act as she shifts between her responsibilities at work and then to those at home; some women even having to shift between those roles almost simultaneously (as cited in Spangler, 2011). In this current study, the women that have chosen to put aside their aspirations due to the amount of time they would be spending at work which means time away from their families, experienced that inner turmoil known as the third shift discussed earlier. Additionally, there were several women in the study that discussed that the focus on their career early on may have actually been an avoidance strategy as they knew the difficulties, perhaps even the impossibility, of having a family and a career. The women that strive to find balance between their career aspirations and their families do have a sense of guilt at times which can manifest itself in a lack of career progression.

Essence three. Experiencing queen bees and a family friendly environment or lack thereof are professional factors that can impact career progression while family planning can be both personal and professional in nature. These factors also impact both negatively and positively the women's aspirations and career progression.

Queen bee. Queen bees are quiet saboteurs of other women. They do not necessarily have overt chauvinistic behaviors, but quietly display these slightly chauvinistic characteristics or behaviors to ensure that they stay at the top (Brock, 2008, 2010; Hurst, Leberman, & Edwards, 2018; Mavin, Grandy, & Williams, 2014). Only a few women had direct experiences with queen bees, but those that did definitely spoke of how those queen bees did everything in their power to keep themselves and even other women from progression in their careers. Some of the women spoke about how they may not have had direct experiences, but they saw how

senior-level women who displayed those characteristics impacted their work environment and other people the queen bee worked with.

Probably the most impactful bit that came from the discussion around queen bees is the promise that even if these women had not experienced a queen bee that they themselves would work to break the cycle through their behavior as well as confronting the behavior of other women. This is crucial to encourage mentorship and advancement of women in the field.

Family planning. Unfortunately, this focus on the career can also cause women to no longer be able to or have the desire to have children. This impacted mainly women that did not have children but did impact one of the women had children. One of the participants who had children talked about wanting more children but found out she was unable to have more children and attested that to spending time focusing on her career. The women that did not have children talked about being so career oriented and sort of waking up and realizing their age and the fact that many of them were not partnered and realized that children may not be in the cards for them anymore.

Essence four. The last essence focused on the participants' career aspirations, how they have changed, and if these women want to move up in the field or out of the field. Research shows that women's career aspirations can be affected by many things, but gender has been proven to be one of the strongest influences on career aspirations (Domenico & Jones, 2006). As seen in this current study the perception of gender by the women and those around them are imperative to their career progression.

Aspirations. As mentioned earlier, each of the participants' aspirations changed from when they entered the field as either a graduate student or a young professional. There were many reasons for this change in aspirations; for some, the upward ascension can be frustrating,

and they begin this phenomenon called cooling down. In this current study, several of the women that had those aspirations are unsure if they want to follow through with those aspirations and several even discussed different career options for them outside of student affairs and higher education. A small portion of the participants still had a desire to obtain a senior level leadership position, which supports Greenhaus's study (2007), that stated that women were less likely than men to desire a senior level management position.

Theoretical Implications

By applying a modern feminist lens to this study, I was able to focus on the true experiences of the women to shine throughout the research. The societal and cultural norms of patriarchy while they were recognized and identified throughout the study, the way in which the participants' voices and experiences were displayed in the analysis of findings began to try and break through those norms as they were unapologetically truthful and feminine in nature. It is also important to note that while the participants experienced some similar experiences, each of their experiences is unique meaning that there are multiple realities to the lived experience of women identifying, student affairs, middle managers (Kellner & Best, 1991; Spangler, 2011).

Liberal feminism focuses on pursuing equal treatment for women while standpoint feminist theory takes that inequality and focuses on giving a voice to that experience, through interactional feminist theory which focuses on the women's day-to-day interactions (Beddoes & Borrego, 2011; Lorber, 2001; Zalewski, 2000). Through the identification of the discrimination that these women experienced individually as well as systemically discriminatory practices that their institutions have in place as well as providing ways in which institutions can dismantle gender discrimination at their institutions, equal treatment can be pursued. However, true equality for women in student affairs is not going to happen simply from this study, but through

continued efforts discussed in the implications section of this chapter. Even though systemic gendering will not be dismantled through this study, the goal of shining a brighter light onto the issues that women identifying, middle managers in student affairs experience in their career journey was met by giving voice to these women where there previously was not, recognizing the patriarchal nature of the environment in which they work, and the examination of the women's day-to-day experiences (Beddoes & Borrego, 2011).

Limitations

All research studies have their limitations and this one of course is not exempt. Even though all attempts were made to obtain a diverse participant pool, the diversification could have had a stronger representation of certain identities. When analyzing the findings about children and relationships it was apparent that the results could have been different if the participants were not all heterosexual. Having participants that identified as another sexual orientation as well as those that identified as women but perhaps presented more masculine in nature would have provided more robust findings. While there was only one participant out of 15 that was non-White, that is statistically representative of the field, however, the findings would be more representative as well as more beneficial if the participants included more BIPOC women. Lastly, while there was a good blend of public and private four-year institutions that were varying levels of Carnegie classifications, there was only one participant who worked at a community and technical college.

Implications for Higher Education and Student Affairs

This study reiterated that there is still systemic gendering that occurs for women in student affairs, especially those in middle manager positions. Women in student affairs have to navigate their career as if they were navigating a glass labyrinth as the term glass ceiling does not justly

describe their experience as the term ceiling only focuses on the end results (Eagly & Carli, 2016; Foster, 2019). However, there is much to learn from the journey that will benefit other women currently in the field and those yet to come. Recognizing and celebrating the challenges and experiences of these participants allows not only them, but other women to applaud their experiences and achievements thus far, come to terms and reflect that their experiences may not be as easy as their male counterparts but more importantly to help prepare themselves and other women for the potentially arduous journey ahead if career progression is the goal.

With an overarching lack of research of what women administrators, let alone middle managers experience in the field of student affairs, this study and its implications are imperative for the field to become stronger, more supportive, and more diverse in how it looks, but also how it thinks and acts. Unfortunately, the limited research does tell us, “because women may be less inclined than males to think about their career trajectory, they may not advance as quickly or as far as their male counterparts. As Mertz (2009) posited, this is particularly the case within traditionally male-dominated fields, such as educational administration” (Brown, & Irby, 2009, p. 4). It is important to note that all of the recommendations not only benefit women, but any student affairs administrator and practitioner.

Hiring Practices

“In the new competitive, fast moving, global economy, institutions must be innovative, entrepreneurial, nimble, and flexible...qualities that women bring to the table” (Bornstein, 2007, p. 21). This study and others have shown that women bring in unique set of talents and strengths to the organizations that they lead. Therefore, universities should work encouraging women applicants and successful candidates as well. This begins with the recruitment process. Institutions must ensure that they are recruiting in ways and places that are attractive to women.

Secondly, institutions need re-evaluate their hiring processes to ensure that homogenous hiring practices are not occurring. A 2010 study found that hiring managers tend to hire individuals that are like them; this means that if it is mainly men serving as senior level administration then it is more likely that men will continue to be hired (Yakaboski & Donaboo, 2010). Therefore, all selection committees should have to follow guidelines that encourage a diverse group of individuals on the committee to ensure that diverse individuals will be considered, and homogenous hiring practices cannot occur.

Institutional Environment

Once institutions have successfully hired more women to serve in administrative roles, they must then turn their focus to the environment and culture that is created at their institutions. By creating a supportive and encouraging environment for women middle manager at individual institutions, the field of student affairs will better the field holistically. This can be done through a few different methods that the participants mentioned in their interviews and that the current literature has shown to be important as well.

A large portion of rectifying a current institutional environment that is not supportive or creating one that is acknowledging the fit or lack-of-fit that women may experience. According to research conducted in relation upper-level female managers a lack of person-job fit has been previously used to explain why women are not promoted as frequently as their male counterparts (Lyness & Heilman, 2006). Lyness & Heilman (2006) discuss the gender bias that exists for women when managers believe that women need specific agentic leadership traits that are many times more stereotypical male characteristics to be successful in leadership roles meaning there is an immediate perceived lack of fit in those types of roles for women. These lack of fit then can lead to double standards in the evaluation process. These double standards exist for women

when a manager or general leadership places stricter requirements are placed on them than their male counterparts as well as requiring more evidence that they are meeting or exceeding job requirements (Rosette & Tost, 2010). By institutions and leadership acknowledging this bias, they can begin to create an environment that supports women structurally in addition to other more relational factors such as mentorship and organizational factors such as policies and protocols.

Mentoring for women. As discussed earlier, mentoring is an important component of our participants' experiences and those in the field that have desired to ascend to senior level leadership (Campbell, Mueller, & Souza, 2010; Lewis, 2012). Therefore, institutions should recommend their women administrators to not only have mentors but to participate in mentoring younger women in the field. This is increasingly more important because while a woman can be mentored by a male and have a positive experience, being mentored by a woman can help younger women embrace their more feminine qualities and characteristics (Bower, 1993). Institutions could create an internal mentoring program for younger women professionals to connect with those that are more experienced. Since there is a deficit in the number of women serving in senior level administration, this could pose as a difficult task (Collins, 2009). Therefore, institutions that are geographically close may need to create a sort of colloquium of women administrators and younger women professionals. This could be beneficial to not only ensure that there are senior level women to provide mentorship, but also to provide experiences and knowledge that cross institutional borders.

Better family leave and family environment. Additionally, the women in the study spoke about the need for their institutions to support their many identities such as mother, caregiver, and spouse or partner. This means creating actual policies that exist to support those

identities. Many of the women in the study discussed how their institution did not necessarily have a written policy around things such as flexible work schedules or if children are allowed in the workplace, but that they would continue to do so with their supervisor's support until they are told not to. However, for some women, that provided stress for the fear that there may be consequences for attempting to balance their work responsibilities with family and personal responsibilities. Therefore, policies in the employee handbook around such practices would be beneficial for not only women, but all employees. Regarding policies that currently exist, institutions should review their family leave policies to see how supportive they truly are of their employees. This would benefit not only women, but all employees as anyone regardless of gender may need to take family leave at some point during their tenure at the institution. It is important that institutions do not find themselves believing that because they meet the minimum requirements legally, that their family leave policies are supportive.

Promoting and Supporting More Research

Lastly, the institution can support, promote, and encourage currently faculty and staff to partake in research surrounding women administrators in the field of student affairs or even higher education. Since the current literature is very scant in this area, any additional research would be extremely beneficial. This could be done by financially supporting this type of research yearly through research grants to conduct the research or as a scholarship done as financial support to perhaps present their research at conferences. Additionally, institutions could recognize this type of research in the same ways they promote, support, and celebrate research that is more scientific in nature.

Further Research

While this research has provided a deeper insight into the lived experience of women middle managers in student affairs, there is more research that can be conducted in order to garner an even stronger understanding of their experience, how to support these women better, and how to increase the number of women aspiring to senior level leadership as well as successfully obtaining those positions. For this study, I chose to focus on middle-manager women, however it may be beneficial to expand the demographic to women that aspire to senior level leadership regardless of their current position. This would allow for the analysis of women who have already identified their career aspirations and potentially allow for a longitudinal study. Additionally, this study was not geographically bound, however each region of the United States has unique challenges that are gendered in nature. There could be women that are not ascending in certain geographical regions and additional research would bring that to light. This type of study may result in a case study type of qualitative study that allows for a strong understanding of the women's experience in that specific location. Furthermore, a different aspirations inventory might be beneficial as the CASR felt a little odd for some of the women to take due to where they were in their career. Therefore, an inventory that recognizes that the participants may be further in their career journey as opposed to young professionals might enhance the information collected. An inventory of this nature does not currently exist that I am aware of, therefore the first step would be to create a new or alternative inventory. This would be beneficial, especially for women who are thinking of leaving the field of student affairs and higher education to see what types of positions or new careers may fit their aspirations.

Outside of the research design, there are topics of research that came up during this study and warrant their own specific research as well. When discussing the balance between family and career it became apparent that very few women felt like they were really able to balance

everything. I would recommend a study specifically on women who actively chose to put career first and have children that focused on the balance that these women have and how they have achieved it or are working to achieving that balance. Along those same lines, more research on romantic relationships of women beyond middle managers is needed. Previous research shows that many senior level women administrators were not married or at least at a lesser rate than their male counterparts (ACE, 2016), but the women in the current study did not mirror the ACE study. That means that something occurs during the ascension process up to senior level leadership that causes some sort of strain and stress on their romantic relationships. Therefore, a study on women in senior level leadership positions that focuses on their romantic relationships would be beneficial to women who desire those top positions.

Conclusion

While women have fought tooth and nail to get where they are currently within education administration, there is so much room for continued improvement. This research study has shown me that while I desire to reach the top of my field in some capacity, it may not be worth the sacrifices I may have to make in order to reach that pinnacle. However, if institutions heed the warnings in this study and begin to make progress in removing the barriers by creating a supportive environment and encouraging women at their institutions, I and other women may not have to sacrifice as much as the women who have come before us. We may not have to choose between having a family and healthy romantic relationship or having a career. We may not have to continuously prove our worth and why we deserve our seat at the table. We may not have to feel like we need to plan our pregnancies and family leave around busy times of the year. We may not have to continuously defend that emotions are okay in the workplace or other feminine characteristics. We may not have to dress more masculine to gain approval and respect. We

may not have to apologize for being women. This research will hopefully stoke the embers of curiosity within others to delve into other ways in which the progress of women administrators in student affairs can be enhanced and supported through supplemental and unrelenting research.

Dear Student Affairs Professional:

The purpose of this letter is to introduce myself and invite you to participate in a study I am conducting on women, middle managers within Student Affairs. My name is Lindsey Gilmore and I am a Doctoral candidate in the Leadership in Higher Education program at Bellarmine University. I am also the Assistant Director of Housing and Residence Life at Bellarmine. I am currently working on a qualitative study examining the career aspirations of women, middle managers within the field of student affairs.

Participation by women, middle managers within Student Affairs is important for the success of this study. The research design for this study is organized into three areas: (1) Career Aspirations Scale (2) Individual Interview (3) and Resume Analysis.

In order to participate in this study, you must meet the following criteria:

1. Identify as a woman
2. Identify as a middle manager based on the following definition:
These individuals are the “the academic and non-academic support personnel within the structure of higher education organizations” (Rosser, 2000, p. 5). More specifically, for this study middle-managers generally fall within three title variations: assistant director, associate director, and director (Mather, Bryan, & Faulkner, 2009; Young, 1990).
3. Have earned a PhD or EdD
4. Currently work within a Student Affairs department or area

If you meet the above criteria for this study, participation involves:

1. Contacting the Co-Investigator to acknowledge interest in participating in the study and request a consent form.
2. Completing a consent form and agree to the terms and conditions of the study.
3. Completing an electronic career aspirations scale.
4. Sharing your current resume or vitae.
5. Participating in one semi-structured interview that will be conducted via Zoom with the researcher on an agreed upon time. The interview will take approximately two hours.
6. Engage in a member checking process, where you will be asked to review the transcripts of your interviews for accuracy.

I am excited to hear about your experiences as a woman, middle manager within Student Affairs. If this study is of interest, please email me at lgilmore@bellarmine.edu or call me at (502) 272-7275. If you know of other women who fit these criteria, please feel free to forward this letter of invitation to them as well. Thank you in advance for considering participation.

Sincerely,
Lindsey A. Gilmore
Assistant Director of Housing and Residence Life
Bellarmine University

Appendix B

Subject Informed Consent

Navigating the Murky Middle: How Career Aspirations and Experiences Influence Career Progression of Women, Student Affairs, Middle Managers

Introduction and Background Information

You are invited to participate in a research study. The study is being conducted by Lindsey Gilmore, Doctoral candidate and Dr. Mike Vetter, Associate Professor of Graduate Education within the School of Education. The study is sponsored by the Annsley Frazier Thornton School of Education at Bellarmine University. The study will take place electronically allowing for participation across the United States. Approximately 15 subjects will be invited to participate. Your participation in this study will last for two hours with the study ending in July 2020.

Purpose

The purpose of this research study is to add to the minimal research on women, middle managers in Student Affairs, explicitly focusing on their career aspirations. The focus will be on the participants' career experiences, as well as personal and professional factors and how these have shaped their career aspirations. The study seeks to provide implications for practice within Student Affairs.

Procedures

This study will consist of one electronic survey (career aspirations scale revised) (approximately 30 minutes to complete), one Zoom interview (approximately 2 hours), and resume analysis. Any participation in this study is voluntary and at any point throughout the study you may choose not to participate. You do not have to answer any questions that make you feel uncomfortable or you wish not to answer. You may also choose not to participate in this study at all. Upon completion of this consent form you will be assigned an alias to protect your identity and that will be used instead of your name.

Prior to the first interview you will be invited to complete an electronic survey, titled as a career aspirations scale revised, which will ask questions regarding what drives your career aspirations. The career aspirations scale revised will be administered via SurveyMonkey; your identity will be protected via the use of an alias, which will be given upon completing the consent form for this study. The career aspirations scale revised requests your alias versus your name.

Next, you will be invited to participate in an interview through Zoom. The interview will be scheduled at a time that is convenient for you. The interview will take approximately two hours. Prior to the interview you will be asked to share your resume where any follow up questions may be asked to aid in the document analysis. You will be asked approximately 25 questions seeking your perspectives or experiences. Your interview will be recorded via Zoom's recording function. Recordings will be transcribed within 24 hours and immediately following all digital recordings will be deleted. You will have the opportunity to review your transcribed interview and remove or edit any content. All transcriptions and data will be maintained on my locked laptop and any printed copies will be kept in a filing cabinet under lock and key in Petrik Hall, Room 134.

Potential Risks

There are no foreseeable risks associated with this study.

Benefits

The possible benefits of this study include opportunity to reflect upon your experiences as a woman, middle manager within Student Affairs. Additionally, through participating in this research you will be informing the field in an area where limited research has been conducted. The data collected in this study may not benefit you directly. However, the information learned from this research may be helpful to others in the future.

Confidentiality

Although absolute confidentiality cannot be guaranteed, confidentiality will be protected to the extent permitted by law. The study sponsor or the Institutional Review Board may inspect your research records. Should the data collected in this research study be published, your identity will not be revealed.

Voluntary Participation

Your participation in this research study is voluntary. You may refuse to participate or withdraw your consent at any time without penalty or losing benefit to which you are otherwise entitled. If you terminate participation with this study all recordings, transcripts, and data collected relevant to you will be destroyed, erased, or deleted.

Your Rights as a Research Subject and Contact Persons

If you have any questions about your rights as a research subject, you may call the Institutional Review Board Office at (502) 272-8032. You will be given the opportunity to discuss any questions, in confidence, with a member of the Board. This is an independent committee composed of members of the University community and lay members of the community not connected with this institution. The Board has reviewed this study. You acknowledge that all your present questions have been answered in language you can understand. If you have any questions about the study, please contact (PI) Dr. Mike Vetter, (502) 272-7987 or (Co Investigator) Lindsey Gilmore, (502) 272-7275.

Consent

You have discussed the above information and hereby consent to voluntarily participate in this study. You have been given a signed copy of this consent form.

 Signature of Subject or Legal Representative

 Date Signed

 Signature of Investigator

 Date Signed

 Signature of Person Explaining Consent if other than Investigator

 Date Signed

Appendix C

Career Aspirations Scale Revised Questionnaire

In the space next to the statements below please select a number from “0” (not at all true of me) to “4” (very true of me). If the statement does not apply, circle “0”. Please be completely honest. Your answers are entirely confidential and will be useful only if they accurately describe you.

- 0 = Not at all true of me
- 1 = Slightly true of me
- 2 = Moderately true of me
- 3 = Quite a bit true of me
- 4 = Very true of me

1. I hope to become a leader in my career field. _____
2. I do not plan to devote energy to getting promoted to a leadership position in the organization or business in which I am working. _____
3. I want to be among the very best in my field. _____
4. Becoming a leader in my job is not at all important to me. _____
5. When I am established in my career, I would like to manage other employees. _____
6. I plan to reach the highest level of education in my field. _____
7. I want to have responsibility for the future direction of my organization or business. _____
8. I want my work to have a lasting impact on my field. _____
9. I aspire to have my contributions at work recognized by my employer. _____
10. I will pursue additional training in my occupational area of interest. _____
11. I will always be knowledgeable about recent advances in my field. _____
12. Attaining leadership status in my career is not that important to me. _____
13. Being outstanding at what I do at work is very important to me. _____
14. I know I will work to remain current regarding knowledge in my field. _____
15. I hope to move up to a leadership position in my organization or business. _____
16. I will attend conferences annually to advance my knowledge. _____
17. I know that I will be recognized for my accomplishments in my field _____
18. Even if not required, I would take continuing education courses to become more knowledgeable. _____
19. I would pursue an advanced education program to gain specialized knowledge in my field. _____
20. Achieving in my career is not at all important to me. _____
21. I plan to obtain many promotions in my organization or business. _____
22. Being one of the best in my field is not important to me. _____
23. Every year, I will prioritize involvement in continuing education to advance my career. _____
24. I plan to rise to the top leadership position of my organization or business. _____
25. _____

Appendix D

Semi-Structured Interview Protocol

Introductory Questions

1. Tell me about your current position?
 - a. How many years have you been in this position?
 - b. Were you an internal candidate?
2. What attracted you to Student Affairs?
 - a. To your current position?
3. What attributes, skills, and/or strengths do you feel you bring to your current position?
4. Do you think there is anything that being female specifically positively brings to your position?

Family

1. How have your family planning decisions effected your career and aspirations?
2. How does your relationship effect your career path?
 - a. Have you ever or would you ever change your job/career for a relationship?
 - b. Why or why not?
3. What does a family friendly work environment look like for you?
 - a. How important is that for you in your workplace?
 - b. Do you feel like your current place of employment is family friendly/supportive of your family planning?

Mentorship, Sponsorship, and Chauvinistic Women

1. How many mentors have you had throughout your career?
 - a. How did the relationship form?
 - b. Were any of your mentors women?
2. How has mentorship helped you to obtain your current position?
3. How has the importance of mentoring changed throughout your career?
4. Do you currently feel like you are being groomed for an upper level position?
5. Are you a mentor? Why/why not?
6. Have you ever felt like another woman/other women have kept you from being successful or blatantly did not support you?
 - a. Can you talk about that experience?

Gender Discrimination

1. Have you ever felt like being a woman has negatively affected you in the workplace?
 - a. Can you provide any examples?
2. Do you feel like the policies and practices at your institution support you?
 - a. For example, Family Leave
 - b. Has this affected your career journey at all?

Aspirations

Explain McClelland's Needs (Achievement, Affiliation, and Power)

1. Which need most strongly resonates with you?
 - a. Why?
2. What was your end goal career wise when you were an entry level position?
 - a. Has that changed? Why/Why not?
 - b. What do you think shaped your aspirations?
3. Do you feel like you've arrived in your career?
 - a. Why or Why not?
 - b. What are your next steps?

Career Aspirations Scale

1. What thoughts did you find yourself having while taking the instrument?
2. Not knowing much about the Career Aspirations Scale – which area do you think you scored highest on: leadership, achievement or education? Why?
 - a. How do you see this area manifesting itself in your career?

Leadership Sub-questions (only for those scoring high in this area)

1. How have you sought out leadership opportunities during your career thus far?
 - a. Do you feel successful in those opportunities?
2. Have you actively sought out a promotion?
 - a. How did that process go?
 - b. Would you seek out a promotion again?
3. Do you feel the need to have a strong affiliation with others at work?
 - a. What about the field overall?
 - b. Why or why not?

Achievement Sub-questions (only for those scoring high in this area)

1. How does competition come into play with your work and career trajectory?
2. Do you feel like you are a master at the work that you do?
 - a. What steps do you take to master your current work?
 - b. How does that propel you forward?
3. Do you feel the need to have a strong affiliation with others at work?
 - a. What about the field overall?
 - b. Why or why not?

Education Sub-questions (only for those scoring high in this area)

1. Since you already have a terminal degree, how do you see this aspiration manifest itself in your career trajectory
2. What additional education/training do you feel is necessary for you to advance?
3. Do you feel the need to have a strong affiliation with others at work?
 - a. What about the field overall?
 - b. Why or why not?

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